

NorMet News . . . December 2012

A Monthly Publication of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association

NorMet News publication is a summary of regulatory and legislative news, advocacy messages, and other Relevant issues affecting the delivery of hospital and health care in the Hudson Valley.

Fiscal Cliff, Now a Slippery Slope

The White House and GOP leaders are moving closer to an agreement, as House speaker John Boehner and President Obama both gave up some ground on their demands. At recent meetings between the two, Boehner is now willing to allow tax rates to rise on annual incomes higher than one million dollars and President Obama is open to curtailing future cost-of-living increases for recipients of Social Security. However, these two offers represent only a small portion of the fiscal cliff negotiations and a final agreement must ultimately include broader concessions from both sides on tax rates and hikes and spending cuts to domestic programs.

Hospitals in the Hudson Valley region fear that agreement could include massive new cuts to Medicare providers. In addition, hospitals could be on the hook for even more cuts, as Congress and the president look for a funding stream to avert a scheduled 27 percent cut in Medicare payments to the nation's physicians. **The cuts could amount to \$459 million to the region's hospitals.**

Meanwhile, hospitals do know that automatic two-percent across-the-board cuts to Medicare – sequestration – will occur come January 1, 2013, unless Congress finds funding to plug this hole before that date. Sequestration is the result of the bi-partisan super committee's inability to reach a deficit reduction agreement in November 2011. The idea a year ago was that sequestration cuts would be so massive and

burdensome that Congress would never let such cuts happen. **Hospitals in the region are looking at \$255 million in cuts (2013 – 2021) as a result of sequestration.**

“When you consider these new Medicare cuts and the already adopted Affordable Care Act cuts and other Medicare and federal Medicaid cuts (2013 – 2021) worth \$2.3 billion, **the total hit to hospitals in this region is a staggering \$3 billion,**” said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of NorMet.

Dahill and other hospital CEOs, as well as hospital trustees, traveled to Washington, DC on December 11, 2012 to personally protest these cuts. They joined their peers from other areas of the country for this American Hospital Association-sponsored Advocacy Day.

Other components of the fiscal cliff include the expiration on January 1, 2013 of the Bush-era tax cuts for all income earners, as well as an end to the Social Security payroll tax holiday that has benefited all Americans. Also due to expire are unemployment benefits for the long term unemployed. Economists agree that the fiscal cliff would short-circuit the nation's fragile economic recovery. The hospital industry, long touted as one of the sectors that saw job growth throughout the recession, may have to turn to staff reductions in the wake of such unprecedented cuts. – Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org.

Superstorm Sandy Recovery Update . . .

Hospitals have until December 31, 2012 to complete the New York State Department of Health survey regarding costs related to the storm. These include damage to the physical plant, as well as staff costs and other operational expenses related to evacuation and/or surge capacity needs. All hospitals in the Hudson Valley region were fully operational during the storm, with several operating on generator power. Some Westchester facilities accepted evacuated hospital and nursing home patients from New York City facilities. Thousands of hospital workers, mostly in the hardest hit areas, lost homes and other property due to the storm. The **Hurricane Sandy Health Care Employee Relief Fund** was established by regional and state hospital associations, including the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association, as well as the American Hospital Association, to provide assistance to these impacted employees. To donate: http://www.uhfny.org/hurricane_sandy_relief_fund. The United Hospital Fund is receiving the charitable donations. Hospital CEOs should submit names of impacted employees to UHF and grants will be disbursed to facilities for distribution to employees.

State GOP Race Favors Republicans; Appeal of Decision Pending

The outcome of the 46th State Senatorial District race is in favor of Republican George Amedore, according to a State Supreme Court judge in Montgomery County who reviewed the much contested race. However, Democrats said they will appeal the decision in court.

The decision gives the Republicans a working majority of 32 votes in the chamber, when Democrat Simcha Felder is counted. The Brooklyn Democrat said many weeks ago that he would vote with the GOP.

Regardless of the decision, the bi-partisan governing coalition announced by Senator Dean Skelos, a Republican, and Senator Jeffrey Klein, a Democrat and leader of the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC), will move forward with its power-sharing arrangement. The IDC is a group of five breakaway Democrats. Under the bi-partisan agreement, the IDC will formally be recognized as a third, permanent Senate conference. Senators Skelos and Klein will alternate the Senate leadership post every two weeks, starting January 1, 2013. The arrangement is unprecedented in state history.

State's Prevention Agenda Promotes Healthy Communities

At its December 6, 2012 meeting, the Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC) approved the state's 2013 – 2017 Prevention Agenda with a goal to move New York State toward being the healthiest state in the nation. The work of this new Prevention Agenda builds on the public health advances made in the 2008 – 2012 State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), also known as the Prevention Agenda.

The 2013 – 2017 Prevention Agenda or SHIP focuses on five areas:

- Chronic disease
- Healthy environment
- Healthy mothers, babies, and children
- Substance abuse and mental illness
- Sexually-transmitted infections, HIV, and vaccine-preventable diseases

The state's new Prevention Agenda will be linked to hospital Community Service Plan (CSP) requirements, which are similar to the new Internal Revenue Service Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) requirement, which is borne out of regulation contained in the Affordable Care Act. Refer to the August and October 2012 issues of NorMet News for more information on deadlines related to state CSP and federal CHNA. The issues are available on NorMet's website: www.normet.org/publications.

Through the Prevention Agenda, the state is encouraging whole "communities" – entities such as hospitals, local county health departments, community-based service organizations, and even businesses – to work together to identify community needs and to develop a plan to collaboratively address those needs. The state's goal is to improve the overall health of local communities, and it is consistent with the federal government's and health care reform's move toward population health management.

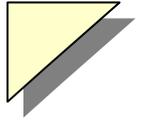
Each of the state's five new priority areas has goals and interventions for hospitals and county health departments to achieve as part of their planning processes. The state has indicated that hospitals will be required to choose two of the five priorities on which to focus. The state encourages hospitals and county health departments to work together to choose the same priorities, as this will no doubt result in more intense and focused community health programming.

The Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYs) plans education webinars in early 2013. The state Department of Health will also offer regional

Member Hospitals

Benedictine Hospital
Blythedale Children's Hospital
Bon Secours Community
Hospital
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
Catskill Regional Medical
Center
Ellenville Regional Hospital
Good Samaritan Hospital
Helen Hayes Hospital
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Keller Army Community
Hospital
The Kingston Hospital
Lawrence Hospital Center
The Mount Vernon Hospital
The New York Presbyterian
Hospital Westchester
Division
Northern Dutchess Hospital
Northern Westchester Hospital
Orange Regional Medical
Center
Phelps Memorial Hospital
Center
Putnam Hospital Center
St. Anthony Community
Hospital
Saint Francis Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital
St. Vincent's Westchester
(Division of St. Joseph's
Medical Center)
Sound Shore Medical Center of
Westchester
Vassar Brothers Medical
Center
VA Hudson Valley Health Care
System
White Plains Hospital

programming for hospitals and counties. Look for more details in upcoming newsletters and communications from NorMet. – Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org.



The Quality Corner

An update on quality improvement issues

Mary Jane Milano, Director

New Inpatient Quality Measures: January 1, 2013 will see the start of the collection of some new inpatient quality reporting measures and measure sets. Hospitals must start collecting data on stroke and venous thromboembolism, (VTE), as well as an additional perinatal care measure. The stroke measures focus on drug regimens (antithrombotic therapy, anticoagulation therapy), patient and family education, and assessment for rehabilitation of stroke patients. The VTE measures are directed at three separate subpopulations – patients with no VTE, those with a principal VTE diagnosis, and those with a secondary diagnosis of VTE. The measures look at VTE prophylaxis, specific drug regimens (anticoagulation, warfarin and IV unfractionated heparin therapies) for patients who fall into certain categories, discharge instructions for VTE patients and incidence of preventable VTE. The perinatal care measure focuses on elective deliveries occurring between 37 and 38 weeks gestation.

NYSDOH Requirement for Sepsis Care: New York State Department of Health has asked for stakeholder input into its process of developing a new hospital requirement to improve sepsis care. The state expects to issue a requirement in 2013 mandating that hospitals put in place a protocol to address the early recognition, treatment, and care of both children and adults for sepsis. There are 23 hospitals in New York State currently participating in a Medicaid Medical Home project that requires a focus on sepsis care. At a recent Healthcare Association of New York State (HANY) meeting, hospital executives stressed to the state the importance of there being consistency in requirements of both sepsis programs.

Team STEPPS Tools for Enhancing Safety for Patients with Limited English Proficiency: The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) offers educational and training materials to boost safety for patients with limited English proficiency at hospitals. Team STEPPS, developed by the AHRQ, offers a guide for hospitals covering three chapters: background on patient safety and limited English proficiency patients; five key recommendations to improve safety for this population; and steps to improve team communication. Interested health care organizations may also access the Team STEPPS evaluation tools to measure improvement and outcomes after implementing safety measures for patients with limited English proficiency.

Business Leaders Learn More about Affordable Care Act at Chamber Workshop

NorMet president/CEO Kevin Dahill set the stage on Wednesday, December 5, 2012, at a workshop discussing the Affordable Care Act, as he framed this issue and welcomed a panel of insurance industry experts and hospital leaders from Orange and Dutchess counties. This first in a series of workshops was sponsored by the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce. The workshop was held at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

In his welcoming remarks, Dahill noted that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) one common thread among different types of hospitals and insurers is the law's push toward more integrated, coordinated care that emphasizes prevention and wellness and the need to manage the health of populations. "Businesses and hospitals are vital partners," he said, "in keeping employees and communities well."

He cautioned that this partnership is threatened by proposed cuts to hospital providers that could descend upon the region's hospital in January 2013, if fiscal cliff talks fail. The region is looking at cuts of about \$3 billion when already enacted ACA cuts and other adopted Medicare and Federal Medicaid cuts, sequestration cuts, and other additional Medicare cuts under consideration are added up. – Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org.



Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of NorMet (at left) returned to address members of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce in December at the chamber's first workshop about the Affordable Care Act. Pictured with Dahill is Charles S. North, President/CEO of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

News Briefs . . .

Medicaid Global Spending Cap . . . remains within limits. The Department of Health's most recent report shows that expenditures are \$35 million (0.4 percent) under projections for the first seven months of the state fiscal year. The report

indicates that the state submitted a request to relax administrative and oversight requirements for providers impacted by superstorm Sandy. It also mentions the steps the state is taking to secure federal relief funds. The report does not address whether or how storm-related costs will impact the global cap. State share of Medicaid spending is capped at \$15.9 billion for fiscal year 2012 – 2013.

Excellence in Marketing Communications . . . was bestowed upon NorMet Communications Committee when it received a 2012 Gold MarCom Award for its web-based public information campaign – Vet Connect. The international awards competition recognizes outstanding creative achievement by marketing communications professionals. There were over 6,000 entries from throughout the United States, Canada and several other countries. The awards program is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals. NorMet’s Director Lisa Corcoran spearheaded the NorMet Vet Connect program with the assistance of NorMet’s Director of Communications Janine Logan. The Vet Connect program was launched in July 2012 and offers veterans a one-stop, web-based service to health care services, health care employment, and other community resources. Access it via www.normet.org and click on the Vet Connect logo found on the home page.

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) . . . announced that Helen Hayes Hospital has been accredited for another three-year period. Helen Hayes received accreditation for 13 rehabilitation programs, one of the largest number bestowed by the accrediting body to any one organization.

Historic National Cancer Prevention Study . . . involves six hospitals in the NorMet region. The American Cancer Society’s Epidemiology Research Program will be enrolling participants for their newest research study, the Cancer Prevention Study-3 (CPS-3). The study will follow participants for 20 years in an effort to figure out who gets cancer and why. Weight and physical activity will be a major focus of the study, but other behaviors, including the use of medications, will be examined as well. NorMet member hospitals participating in the study are **Hudson Valley Hospital Center, Lawrence Hospital, Northern Westchester Hospital, Orange Regional Medical Center, Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, and St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital**. For more information go to:

<http://www.cancer.org/Research/ResearchProgramsFunding/Epidemiology-CancerPreventionStudies/CancerPreventionStudy-3/cps3-locations#ny>



Go to www.normet.org and click on this **Vet Connect icon** to find online links to hospitals’ job banks, health care services, and other community resources. The initiative is coordinated by NorMet and members of its **Communications Committee**. The **Vet Connect icon** is also located on each member hospitals’ website.

Committee/Meeting News . . .

The NorMet Hospital Leadership Retreat is set for Wednesday, January 30, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel, 455 South Broadway, Tarrytown. Member hospital CEOs, medical directors, and other administrative leaders will participate in a program entitled *Promoting Professional Accountability: Dealing with Behaviors that Undermine a Culture of Safety*, presented by Gerald B. Hickson, M.D., the Joseph C. Ross Chair in Medical Education and Administration, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Patient and Professional Advocacy, Director of Clinical Risk and Loss Prevention, Professor of Pediatrics and Associate Professor of Family and Health Systems Nursing at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Root Cause Analysis program held December 14, 2012 at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital and led by two nationally-renowned leaders in the culture of safety and quality movement offered 35 NorMet members a four-hour intense training session. The program focused on strategies and tools to conduct effective root cause analyses and incorporate system improvements from the findings of the RCAs. Distinguished faculty: Gary Yates, MD, President of Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI), and the Chief Medical Officer of Sentara Healthcare and nuclear engineer Craig Clapper, PE, CMQ/OE, Founding Partner and Chief Knowledge Officer for HPI.

Hurricane Sandy Debriefing. Emergency preparedness coordinators and members from the New York State Department of Health and New York State Office of Emergency Management met at NorMet on Thursday, December 13, 2012 to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the response to Hurricane Sandy and its aftermath, and identify lessons learned to help guide future response efforts. Communication between hospitals, local health departments, county departments of emergency services, and the NYSDOH MARO was the key challenge. In 2013, the Mutual Aid Coordinating Entity (MACE) will focus on ways in which the MACE can assist communication efforts between hospitals and their partners prior to, during, and after emergencies and disasters.

The **NorMet Communications Committee** held an educational program – Leveraging Digital Media – at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital on Wednesday, December 12, 2012. Richard Sgaglio, PhD, director of marketing and external affairs for Burke and Jorina Fontelera, coordinator of marketing and external affairs, shared their success with search engine optimization tools and social media strategies to enhance Burke’s reach and presence. They were joined by Jon Plesser of ReachLocal, an Internet marketing consultant. He emphasized that a hospital’s website and marketing needs to be relevant everywhere – on the web, between a hospital and its insurers, a hospital and its physicians, for example. “People search, surf, and socialize on the web,” said Plesser.

**Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Healthy and Prosperous
New Year to All Our Members!!!**

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