

Progress Notes

January 2015



Published monthly by the *Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC* . . . a consortium of 52 not-for-profit and public hospitals advocating for better health care policy for all those living and working in the nine counties north and east of New York City.

Governor's Proposed Budget Hopeful, But Advocacy Needed to Achieve Hospitals' Goals

The \$141.6 billion state budget proposed by Governor Cuomo on January 21, 2015 includes substantial money for hospitals that would, among other initiatives, provide hospitals with much-needed investments in capital and debt restructuring, bridge funding for financially-struggling hospitals, and elimination and/or reduction of some Medicaid payment penalties and taxes on inpatient revenue. It is a good start for the hospital industry, but these and other proposals remain vulnerable throughout the upcoming

negotiation process between the legislature and governor's office – a process now complicated by the removal of Sheldon Silver as the Assembly's leader.

"We are by no means in a safe place yet," said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the Suburban Hospital Alliance. "It's imperative that the hospital industry keep the pressure on Albany to ensure that these investments are included in the final budget and previous promises, such as the elimination of the two-percent Medicaid cut, are upheld." - jlogan@nshc.org; jlogan@normet.org.

Regional State Budget Briefings – Register Now

In-depth analysis of the implications of the governor's proposed budget will be outlined by Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) staff and leadership from the Suburban Hospital Alliance at **two convenient regional briefings**.

Long Island Region – Thursday, February 5, 2015 – 9 to 11 a.m.

Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Offices in Hauppauge, NY

Hudson Valley Region – Thursday, February 5, 2015 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Doubletree Hilton, 455 Broadway, Tarrytown, NY

Contact Ramona Bielawski at rbielaws@nshc.org or 631-435-3000 to reserve your spot.

Take Your Voice to Albany - Suburban Alliance/ HANYS Advocacy Days

March 3 and 4 – meet with key committee chairs and Senate/Assembly leadership

Make room reservations by February 2 at [74 State Street Hotel](http://74StateStreetHotel.com) to get the Suburban Alliance discount rate.

Contact Ramona Bielawski at rbielaws@nshc.org for more information.

HIT Concerns, Ebola Funding on DC Agenda

Regulators in Washington, DC are leaning toward modifications to the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record (EHR) Incentive Programs that would reduce some of the reporting burden on hospitals. Separately, officials at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a broad plan in mid-January about how to use the emergency funds for Ebola preparedness and response.

- **Health IT:** On January 29, 2015, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced its intention to impart more flexibility into the EHR program. The agency is considering shortening the 2015 reporting period to 90 days from the current 365 days. The agency is also considering converting the reporting periods to the calendar year. Both modifications are welcomed by hospitals, as hospitals remain concerned about their ability to meet the current EHR timeline. Of note, it has been very difficult to find other providers technically capable of receiving summary of care documents to meet the transitions of care objective in the EHR incentive program. Without relief from this mandate and full year of use and reporting requirement, hospitals could face financial penalties even while they work assiduously toward compliance. The recently introduced Flexibility in Health IT Reporting Act in the House seeks to achieve similar changes through the legislative process.
- **Ebola Funding:** In December 2014, President Obama approved a \$1.01 trillion spending bill that included \$5.4 billion in emergency funding to combat Ebola internationally and domestically. Of that amount, \$733 million goes to the Department of Health and Human Services Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund for the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and of the \$1.8 billion allocated to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), \$571 million will be used for domestic Ebola preparedness. Hospital will be able to apply for funding for costs related to renovation and/or construction of Ebola treatment spaces, as well as expenses for staff training, equipment and supply needs. The HHS plan does not include details about the timing or process by which funds will be distributed. However, it appears that applications for funds will be made available in late February. New York's hospital industry estimates the designated Ebola centers alone have already spent between \$50 million and \$75 million. The Suburban Hospital Alliance will continue to work with the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANY) to ensure New York hospitals receive their fair share of this Ebola money. – jlogan@nshc.org; jlogan@normet.org.



SPOTLIGHT ON: *Quality*

By Kate Warner, Director of Quality and Education

On November 13, 2014, The Joint Commission released a list of hospitals recognized by the *Top Performer on Key Quality Measures* program in its 2014 Annual Report. To be named a *Top Performer*, a hospital must:

- Achieve cumulative performance of 95 percent or above across all reported accountability measures
- Achieve performance of 95 percent or above on each reported accountability measure where there are at least 30 denominator cases

- Have at least one core measure set with a composite rate of 95 percent or above and individual accountability measures within the set with a performance rate of 95 percent or above

TJC reports that 160 hospitals in New York State submitted data in 2013, and 45 were recognized for their achievements. Congratulations to our member hospitals and their staff on this achievement! kwerner@seagatealliance.com.

DSRIP Update . . .

Twenty-five emerging Performing Provider Systems (PPS) applied to participate in the **Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP)** program. PDFs of the applications are posted on the state's website for viewing and public comment. The comment period ends February 12, 2015. DSRIP Project Plan awards are expected in early March.

In related DSRIP news, the state released the **Capital Restructuring Finance Program (CRFP)** request for applications. The applications were originally due the same time as the DSRIP applications, but the state now extended the Capital Restructuring Finance Program deadline to February 20, 2015. The CRFP is jointly administered by the DOH and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York. It will make available \$1.2 billion over the next six years for capital projects that aim to enhance quality, financial viability, and efficiency of the healthcare delivery system in New York State. CRFP funding will be made available to DSRIP and non-DSRIP applicants.

The DSRIP [dashboard](#) on the state's website and HANYS' [Medicaid Waiver website](#) are helpful resources. Additionally, the [United Hospital Fund](#) offers a matrix of the projects chosen by the 25 PPSs.

News Briefs

IRS Financial Assistance Final Rule . . . was released by the Agency December 29, 2014. The IRS rule outlines requirements hospitals must meet to maintain tax-exempt status. The final rule implementing Sector 501(r) of the IRS code prescribes federal requirements in these areas: establishment and disclosure of financial assistance policies; limitations on the amounts charged to patients who are eligible for financial assistance; rules governing billing and collection practices; and standards for conducting and publishing a Community Health Needs Assessment. The final regulations did not differ much from the proposed regulations. However, the final rule does not offer special flexibility to hospitals in states like New York where robust financial assistance laws and policies already exist. The rule offers even more detailed standards that all hospitals must meet. The final rule will take effect for taxable years beginning after December 29, 2015.

Making Use of Surplus Medical Supplies . . . is the focus of the Afya Foundation. The organization's executive director, Danielle Butin, spoke about the organization and its humanitarian mission before the boards of NSHC and NorMet. Afya is a unique medical supply recovery organization that collects surplus medical supplies from healthcare centers in the United States and ships these critical materials to public health missions in African and Caribbean nations. Supplies in three categories are accepted: equipment durables that work, but are being replaced with newer technology; dead inventory/consumables that are still within expiration date and not damaged; and operating room or medical floor consumables that were not contaminated during surgery or medical care. Afya arranges all transport of donations. To donate contact Sarah Schuyler at sarah.schuyler@afyafoundation.org.

Nominations for Community Health Improvement Award . . . applications are due to HANYS by March 5, 2015.

HANYS' Community Health Improvement Award recognizes outstanding initiatives by members to improve the health and well-being of their communities. [Electronic submission](#) on is required.

Information about the Healthcare Workforce . . . is needed for the 2015 Nursing and Allied Health Workforce Advocacy Survey sponsored by HANYS. While the 2015 edition continues to include questions on vacancy, turnover, and recruitment and retention of specific health worker titles, the main focus this year is on the emerging workforce (case managers, patient navigators, community health workers, etc.) Surveys were emailed to all members. Responses are due by February 26, 2015. For more information contact: Sherry Chorost, director of workforce, at schorost@hanys.org.

Honoring Achievements in Quality . . . is the focus of HANYS' Pinnacle Award. Nominations are now being accepted for the 2015 competition. The Pinnacle Award for Quality and Patient Safety recognizes organizations that are playing a leading role in promoting improvements in healthcare delivery in New York State. An applicant [webconference](#) will be held February 12. The submission deadline is March 9, 2015.

Who Are the Hospital Heroes . . . is a new online initiative sponsored by the Coalition to Protect America's Health Care and the American Hospital Association. The program showcases hospital caregivers and many others, from administrative staff and nurses, to physicians and other allied health professionals, maintenance and security, who go above and beyond in their work to help patients in their communities. Visit the [Hospital Heroes website](#) to view featured heroes and to nominate a hospital hero.

Hospitals Adhere to the Triple Aim . . . and varied stories about how New York's hospitals are doing so are highlighted on the HANYS website through its "NYS Triple Aim" campaign. The campaign captures the widespread efforts of hospitals that are pursuing the Triple Aim approach of improving population health, enhancing the quality of patient care, and reducing the cost of healthcare. New York's hospitals are actively engaged in implementing new and innovative approaches to healthcare delivery despite fiscal constraints. Go to www.HANYS.org/tripleaim. Feel free to re-tweet and post the outstanding work performed by hospitals. To submit a story for the campaign, contact Michael Pauley at mpauley@hanys.org.

Educational Discount . . . available to employees of Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC, hospital members. Mercy College and the Suburban Hospital Alliance entered into a partnership that will allow employees of member hospitals a 15 percent discount on all undergraduate and graduate classes at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY. The Suburban Hospital Alliance includes all member hospitals of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association. For more information contact Mercy College at: 1-877-MERCY-GO.

Claims Data Assistance

Managed Care Advisory Group: The Hospital Council has expanded its business relationship with the Managed Care Advisory Group to offer to members its Contract Payment Review (CPR) product. The focus is ensuring that insurers are complying with negotiated reimbursement rates and payment policies. MCAG will analyze claims data to assess where underpayments have occurred, identify reimbursement trends, implement recovery efforts and make recommendations on contractual changes. For more information, contact Wendy Darwell at wdarwell@nshc.org or 631-963-4152.

News from the Long Island Region . . .

A Report on Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council member hospital achievements and notable activities



Population Health Activities . . . continue to move forward in the region through the efforts of members of the Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC). These members include the senior communications/public affairs directors at



connecting you to better health

each hospital, community health directors, as well as other members from hospitals' executive and clinical teams. The LIHC is the state's Population Health Improvement Program (PHIP) contractor for the Long Island region. It will interface with a wide array of community and social service organizations, academic institutions, local government, and the business sector, as well as the region's two DSRIP emerging Performing Provider Systems to support the region's adoption of a more patient-centric, population-based health system.

If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@nshc.org.

News from the Hudson Valley Region. . .

A Report on the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association member hospital achievements and notable activities



St. Joseph's Medical Center CEO Elected Chair of NorMet

President/CEO of St. Joseph's Medical Center, Yonkers, NY, Michael J. Spicer was named chairman of the board of directors of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet). The appointment was announced at NorMet's December 1, 2014 board meeting. The two-year term expires January 1, 2017. The CEOs from each of the member hospitals comprise the board of directors.

Spicer is an accomplished healthcare executive and leader with more than 20 years of hospital and long term care experience. Prior to his appointment as CEO in 2000, Spicer served St. Joseph's as executive vice president and chief operating officer and then as its president.

Under Spicer's leadership, St. Joseph's has greatly expanded its clinical programs – both inpatient and outpatient. The medical center was the first in Westchester County to have a Family Residency Program, and it also now sponsors residencies in podiatric



Michael J. Spicer

medicine and surgery. Spicer holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Fairfield University and an MBA from St. John's University. He is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and sits on numerous community organization boards.

"I am happy to assume the role of chairman of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association and continue to build on the foundations set by my predecessor, Steve Kelley, CEO of Ellenville Regional Hospital," said Spicer. "I believe the goal of NorMet is to continue to use the resources available through NorMet and our statewide partner the Healthcare Association of New York State to represent hospitals and healthcare providers in our region in the federal and state arenas. In addition, it will be important to foster collaboration within the NorMet region and other regions to meet the needs of a rapidly changing healthcare environment."

NorMet, along with its sister organization, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council on Long Island, form the core of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, which is the advocacy coalition for all hospitals located in these two suburban regions.

Excellence in Obstetrics Care . . . was bestowed upon Health Quest Affiliate hospitals – **Northern Dutchess Hospital and Vassar Brothers Hospital** – by the New York State Department of Health. The hospitals received the New York State Perinatal Quality Collaborative Obstetrical Improvement Project's 2013 Quality Improvement Award. Northern Dutchess reported fewer than three scheduled deliveries via induction or cesarean without medical indication for all of 2013, while Vassar did the same during the six-month period of July – December 2013.

Paul Hochenberg . . . is the newly named executive director of the **MidHudson Regional Hospital of Westchester Medical Center**. Hochenberg has 42 years of experience in healthcare. He has worked for Westchester Medical for nine years as a member of the senior team.

Daniel Blum . . . assumed the presidency of **Phelps Memorial Hospital Medical Center** on December 1, 2014. He previously served Phelps as its senior vice president. Prior to joining Phelps, Blum served as senior vice president at White Plains Hospital, vice president of operations of the Stellaris Health Network, and administrator of St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center in New York City.

If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@normet.org.

NSHC Events/Meetings Report. . .

Fiscal Policy Committee: The committee kicked off its January 14 meeting with a presentation from RelayHealth, a strategic partner of HANYS, about its revenue cycle analytic tools. Ms. Darwell briefed the group on the release of final 501(r) regulations by the IRS, which require changes to hospitals' charity care, billing and collections policies, and provided an update on RAC and two-midnight rule-related audit activity. HANYS vice president of economics and finance Kevin Krawiecki discussed the implications of the State Health Innovations Plan (SHIP) waiver and forecasted the state budget proposal.

Nurse Executives Committee: On January 21, the group held a substantive discussion about workforce needs related to the Medicaid waiver programs, particularly the need to reorient existing staff toward outpatient care, care coordination and population health goals, and to expand nurses' scope of practice. Ms. Darwell and Ms. Warner provided policy updates.

NSHC Member Hospitals

Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center
Catholic Health Services of Long Island

- Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
- Mercy Medical Center
- St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center
- St. Charles Hospital
- St. Francis Hospital
- St. Joseph Hospital

Eastern Long Island Hospital

John T. Mather Memorial Hospital

Nassau University Medical Center

North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System

- Franklin Hospital
- Glen Cove Hospital
- Huntington Hospital
- North Shore University Hospital
- Plainview Hospital
- Southside Hospital
- Syosset Hospital

Peconic Bay Medical Center

Southampton Hospital

Stony Brook University Hospital

Veterans Affairs Medical Center – Northport

South Nassau Communities Hospital

Winthrop-University Hospital

NorMet Member Hospitals

Blythedale Children's Hospital

Bon Secours Community Hospital

Burke Rehabilitation Hospital

Catskill Regional Medical Center

Ellenville Regional Hospital

Good Samaritan Hospital

HealthAlliance Hospital Broadway Campus

HealthAlliance Hospital Mary's Avenue Campus

Helen Hayes Hospital

Hudson Valley Hospital Center

Keller Army Community Hospital

Lawrence Hospital Center

MidHudson Regional Hospital

Of Westchester Medical Center

Montefiore Mt. Vernon Hospital

Montefiore New Rochelle 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

St. Joseph's Medical Center

St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital

St. Vincent's Westchester (Division of St. Joseph's Medical Center)

Vassar Brothers Medical Center

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

Westchester Medical Center