

eProgress Notes . . . October 2010

A Monthly Publication of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, Inc.

eProgress Notes publication is a summary of regulatory and legislative news, advocacy messages, and other relevant issues affecting the delivery of hospital and health care on Long Island.

Election Outcomes Shape Future of Health Policy on Several Levels

While the focus is on the elections, the Hospital Council continues to reach out to members, professional groups, the media and public in an effort to distill the complexities of the new health care reform law into laymen's language. Even as control of the state legislature and Congress hangs in the balance, elements of the new health care legislation are already in place and others could be modified, depending on the November 2nd election results.

On the state level, the fate of the control of the Senate will have far reaching ramifications for Medicaid reform. A new governor will usher in new leaders in key departments, especially health and insurance, and it will be important to protect the progress health care has made, particularly in the area of managed care reform.

The hospital community, in alliance with the skilled nursing and home care providers, also continues to challenge the state's implementation of its Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) Contingency Plan law on the basis of its legality and necessity.

We contend that the state's FMAP Contingency Plan rests on an unstable legal and logical foundation. Regardless, New York State has gone ahead and filed the required State Plan Amendment with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), even though the amount of federal aid that the state received was more than expected at the time the contingency plan was enacted. Further, the state plans to implement the Medicaid payment reductions without receiving prior approval from CMS – a move that is potentially unlawful. Earlier attempts to forward repeal legislation at the state level were unsuccessful.

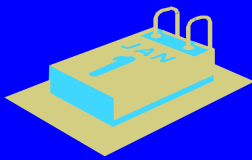
Medicaid payment reductions taken from September 16, 2010 through March 31, 2011, when the state fiscal year ends, would be diverted to a Contingency Fund. This is the very same fund that would have been tapped to close the state's budget hole, if Congress had not enacted FMAP extension legislation.

On the county level, the budget for Nassau will impose new charges on hospitals for sewer usage and property tax assessment refunds. Wendy Darwell, chief operating officer for the Hospital Council, testified before the county legislature to express hospitals' concerns regarding the sewer usage tax. We continue to express our concern about the methodology the county will use to determine an institutions' fee, whether it be the installation of a sub-metering system or billing based on water utilization from the winter months. A workgroup charged with settling this matter will be convened by the county with representation from either the hospitals and/or the Hospital Council. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org*.



Advisory Panel Tackles Suffolk's Heroin Epidemic

The Hospital Council has held a seat on the Suffolk County Heroin Advisory Panel since a resolution to establish a panel of experts to look at this problem was passed by the legislature in August. The group of health treatment professionals, policy analysts, agency regulators, and community advocates representing schools, law enforcement, and health providers has met a half dozen times since August. Most recently, two public hearings were held. The panel is charged with gathering statistical information related to drug abuse and treatment, among adolescents and young adults, as well as compiling testimony from the public and others. The group will deliver a report to the legislature in the coming months that examines the heroin/opiate epidemic from prevention, education, and treatment perspectives. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org*.



Mark Your Calendar for NSHC Events in November

- Nov 4 Nassau-Suffolk Council of Hospital Auxiliaries Conference, 9 a.m. Crest Hollow
- Nov 9 Nurse Managers Committee, 12:30 p.m.
- Nov 10 Finance Committee, 8 a.m.
- Nov 11 NSHC Board of Directors, 8 a.m.
- Nov 12 Nurse Executives Committee, 1 p.m.
- Nov 16 Chief Informational Officers Roundtable, 9:30 a.m.
- Nov 17 Bi-county/LI Hospitals Briefing on Smoking Cessation, 11 a.m. Hofstra University Atrium
- Nov 18 Human Resources Committee, 9 a.m.

*Meetings for NSHC members only and are held at the Hospital Council office in Hauppauge unless otherwise noted. To register/info call: 631-963-4153.

NSHC Committee News ...

Communications Committee . . . met October 28. The meeting was hosted by Stony Brook University Hospital. The Hospital Council's chief operating officer, Wendy Darwell, presented committee members with a strategic look at aspects of the health care reform law that will affect their role as hospital communicators and spokespersons. Next up on November 17 is a briefing at Hofstra University with health commissioners, hospitals, and Tobacco Cessation Workgroups from both counties. The event is designed to call attention to the smoking cessation efforts these entities engage in and is strategically slated to occur the day before the American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke Out. The November event will place an emphasis on youth smoking cessation education and outreach, as well as the influence of point of sale merchandising.

Finance Committee . . . met on October 13 and discussed the progress of its annual Medicare wage index auditing project, implementation of the across-the-board Medicaid rate cut and other Medicaid rate changes, and ongoing advocacy regarding Disproportionate Share (DSH) and HCRA surcharge audits being conducted on behalf of the Department of Health.

Nurse Managers Committee . . . met October 12 and received a briefing from Wendy Darwell, Hospital Council Chief Operating Officer, on the HIV testing and education law that took effect September 1. Mary Lynn Brassel, a nurse and perinatal educator at Winthrop-University Hospital, gave an educational presentation on post-partum hemorrhage.

Revenue Cycle Committee . . . met October 8 and discussed local audit activity by the Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC), and listened to a briefing by HANYS managed care staff on the health care reform provisions affecting commercial and self-funded insurance plans that took effect September 23.

Corporate Compliance . . . met October 26 and received a guest briefing from Al Conti of Holtz Rubenstein Reminick on establishing an internal risk assessment program. NSHC general counsel Mark Thomas and Wendy Darwell, Hospital Council chief operating officer, provided updates on the OMIG audit advisory workgroup, the newly released CMS physician self-referral disclosure protocol, and the HIV testing and education law.

NYPORT Committee . . . met October 27 and received an update from Wendy Darwell, Hospital Council chief operating officer, on NYPORTS reform legislation and the National Quality Forum framework for adverse event reporting.

News Briefs . . .

Updated Health Care Career Guide . . . is now available from NSHC for a nominal fee of \$4 per book to cover production costs. Supplies are limited. To order contact Janine Logan at jlogan@nshc.org.

Great Prostate Cancer Challenge of 2010 . . . takes place Sunday, November 14 at 8 a.m., Town of Oyster Bay Golf Course, Woodbury. Event coordinated by Integrated Medical Foundation. More info go to www.IMFCARES.com

Regional Member Program for Trustees and Executives

Monday, December 6, 2010 4 – 7 p.m.

LaGuardia Marriott

Featuring:

Richard Umbdenstock, President
American Hospital Association

Dan Sisto, President
Healthcare Association of New York State

Event Highlight

**Presentation of NSHC and NorMet
Member Quality Awards**

Please register online at www.htnys.org to give us an accurate count for planning purposes. NO FEE FOR EVENT.

Questions:

About the program: Contact Sheila Taylor at 518-431-7717 or staylor@hanys.org

About registration: Contact Joan Stewart at 518-431-7990 or jstewart@hanys.org.

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

East End Health Alliance

- Eastern Long Island Hospital
- Peconic Bay Medical Center
- Southampton Hospital

Long Beach Medical Center


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

Stony Brook University Hospital
Veterans Affairs Medical Center –
Northport

Winthrop South Nassau University
Health System

- South Nassau Communities Hospital
- Winthrop-University Hospital



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*The collective voice of Long Island's
not-for-profit and public hospitals.*