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## Hospital Auxiliary Group Names New Officers

The Nassau-Suffolk Council of Hospital Auxiliaries recently elected new officers for the upcoming year. From left: Eleanor Watson (St. Charles Hospital) treasurer; Uta Dee (Stony Brook University Hospital) corresponding secretary; Bernadette Nee (Good Samaritan Hospital) second vice president; Carol Seery (Huntington Hospital) first vice president; Vera Rich (Good Samaritan Hospital) president. Missing from photo is Vickie DeFriest (Eastern Long Island Hospital) recording secretary. This auxiliary group is a component of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, which represents Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals. Hospital auxiliaries play a vital role in the delivery of compassionate care at each of their facilities and are major fund raisers for their respective institutions. Collectively, Long Island's volunteer hospital auxiliaries raise millions through gift shop and thrift store sales, fashion shows and boutiques, and other events.



*The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council helps enhance health care for all Long Islanders by representing the interests of its 24 member hospitals before lawmakers, regulatory agencies, the media, and the public.*



# Progress Notes

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## Rep. Bishop Hears Hospitals' Concerns

Congressman Tim Bishop met with CEOs from hospitals in the first Congressional District on Thursday August 16, 2007 at the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council office in Hauppauge.

The event was hosted by the Hospital Council at the request of Congressman Bishop, who wanted to meet with hospital CEOs from his district to learn first hand about their major concerns and issues facing their hospitals. This was the first in a series of Issues Roundtables that the Hospital Council hopes to offer to other member hospitals.

Issues that topped the agenda included the ever widening gap between the actual cost to provide care and the Medicare reimbursement rate for that care, the out-migration of Suffolk County



**Congressman Tim Bishop (right) with NSHC President/CEO Kevin Dahill at the recent Issues Roundtable hosted by the Hospital Council.**

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## CMS Regs Injure Hospitals/Patients

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently published new rulings that will harm not only hospitals, but the patients these facilities serve. One rule threatens New York's expansion of its Child Health Plus insurance program, while another seeks to stop payment for hospital services rendered as a result of an acquired infection.

These rulings pose serious financial and clinical consequences for hospitals. New York's and California's Governors joined hands in the fight to abate restrictions on the Child Health Plus insurance program and New York's two senators voiced their outrage about the new rules to President Bush. However, CMS held fast to its rule changes for Child Health Plus.

Locally, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, working with its state partner the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYs), has contacted our elected leaders and asked for their assistance in stopping these adverse administrative changes issued by the CMS and the President.

Here's a quick issues summary:

**Child Health Plus** New rules make it practically impossible for states to offer subsidized coverage to families over 250% of the federal poverty level. New York had approved an expansion to 400% of the poverty level. The new rule also requires that states prove they have enrolled 95% of children whose parents make less than two times the poverty line figure – a standard that no state can or will ever meet - in order to raise eligibility thresholds. CMS' rule would also require states to establish a minimum of one-year period of uninsurance prior to coverage. This issue is also part of the larger debate taking place in

*Another  
Market  
Reform  
Becomes Law...*

Read more about  
it on page 3

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## A Message from the CEO

We have a full plate, advocacy-wise, during the upcoming months.

After the success of our market conduct reforms in June, and earlier, our relative success with the state budget, we now focus our attention on federal issues.

Both pending and proposed regulatory measures will have a profound effect upon how our hospitals are financed, and ultimately, how our patients will be treated.

Some of the more pressing matters include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) 75% rule for inpatient rehabilitation facilities, restrictions on our state's expansion of Child Health Plus, CMS' harsh stand on "preventable" medical mistakes and subsequent reimbursement, and MedPac's adverse Wage Index proposals, which are based on less reliable U.S. department of labor data rather than hospital reported data.

These and other proposed regulatory and legislative changes sometimes move along swiftly, sometimes more slowly, but nonetheless they are initiatives that the Hospital Council closely monitors on a daily basis. Toward that goal we regularly meet with our elected leaders and provide our members with venues to dialog with their lawmakers.

This was the case with the Issues Roundtable we held in late summer in conjunction with Representative Tim Bishop for hospitals in Congressional District One. This format sparked honest and open discussion between the Congressman and hospital leaders about the pressing issues facing hospitals. It worked very well in furthering Congressman Bishop's understanding about the needs of his hospitals in his district. We offer this same service to other member hospitals and their respective legislative leaders.

Our hospitals' interests were also represented when Senator Charles Schumer's office asked us to participate in a press conference to protest CMS' proposed 75% rule for inpatient rehabilitation facilities. This kind of "on-the-spot" advocacy is often what's needed to push a bill in the right direction or call attention to a practice or regulation that will



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## Medipent Guarantees Increases in Cash Flow

HANYS Solutions has partnered with MEDIPENT, Inc., a company whose unique services shift 100% of the accounts receivable collection risk to collection agencies and outsourcing companies who contractually guarantee their results. MEDIPENT's service offerings maximize cash flow, minimize provider risk, and improve customer satisfaction.

Failure to receive expected and needed cash flow from collection agencies and outsourcing partners has plagued health care providers for years. Agencies promise performance but their collection results are not guaranteed. Before MEDIPENT's *Guar-*

*anteed Collection*™ program, health care providers assumed 100% of collection risk while controlling 0% of collection effort.

MEDIPENT, in conjunction with Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and HANYS Solutions, has successfully launched the *Guaranteed Collection*™ program in New York. Three Long Island hospitals received contractually guaranteed increases in cash flow from self-pay bad debt of 62% or \$420,000 annually, a substantial improvement over results achieved prior to MEDIPENT's program.

To learn more about MEDIPENT, Inc. and the *Guaranteed Receivables Programs*™, contact Michael Ilnicki, Vice President and Chief of Operations, HANYS Solutions, at (518) 431-7829 or at [milnicki@hanys.org](mailto:milnicki@hanys.org).

## CMS Regs Injure Hospitals/Patients

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Congress right now on renewing the 10-year old State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), set to expire on September 30, 2007.

**Medical Mistakes** CMS identified certain "preventable" conditions that should not arise if established clinical guidelines are followed. Starting October 1, 2008, Medicare will no longer cover the costs when a patient's treatment is the result of one of these conditions, such as a hospital acquired infection. Such a rule will prompt hospitals to expand pre-surgical testing in an effort to prove an infection did or did not exist prior to hospitalization. And all this will be at the hospital's expense. Further, the ruling sets a precedent for commercial health insurers to follow suit.

## Airlines & Critical Care What can airline pilots teach hospitals about patient safety?

Find out at HANYS' workshop:

**Teamwork and Technique: Achieving Critical Care Excellence**

**Tuesday, September 18, 2007 • 8 AM to 4 PM**

**LaGuardia Marriott Hotel**

**102-05 Ditmars Blvd., East Elmhurst, NY**

The program will integrate the principles of crew management that have been so successful in the aviation industry with evidence-based clinical practices drawn from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement quality initiatives. The program is perfect for members of the critical care team, including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, allied professionals, and quality managers.

For a registration form go to [http://www.hanys.org/ihc\\_campaign/upload/quality\\_critical\\_care\\_registration\\_2007.pdf](http://www.hanys.org/ihc_campaign/upload/quality_critical_care_registration_2007.pdf) or call HANYS at 518-431-7661.

## Rep. Bishop Hears Hospitals' Concerns

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patients, lack of capital to invest in facility and equipment upgrades, and restraints – both clinical and economic –

that commercial health plans impose upon hospitals.

"It was a rare opportunity to bring together the health care leaders from throughout Suffolk County. This was an extremely informative and honest exchange of ideas and it will allow me to be even more effective in advocating for the hospitals I represent and the patients they serve. The fact is that there are many health care challenges facing our community, but with the leadership of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and continued cooperation, we can continue to benefit from world class health care," said Congressman Tim Bishop.

The hospitals in Congressional District One are: Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center; Eastern Long Island Hospital; John T. Mather Memorial Hospital; Peconic Bay Medical Center; Southampton Hospital; St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center; St. Charles Hospital; Stony Brook University Medical Center.

"This roundtable format was one of the most productive and informative meetings we've ever sponsored on behalf of our members," said NSHC president/CEO Kevin Dahill. "In an atmosphere of collegiality and congeniality, our hospital leaders and our elected official easily exchanged ideas and concerns."

**Want to hold an Issues Roundtable with your elected representative(s)?**

**Contact Janine Logan, director of communications, at 631-963-4156 or [jlogan@nshc.org](mailto:jlogan@nshc.org).**

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## Of Critical Interest ...

### Businesses Feel the Premium Pinch

Health insurance costs are increasingly affecting the bottom line for businesses, as many have asked employees to share a greater percentage of the premium costs, while others have eliminated health insurance as a benefit altogether. The recently formed national coalition, Better Health Care Together, calls for cooperative health care reform and is based upon the same premise that national, state, and regional hospital associations have been pushing for in recent years.

In New York, the **Suburban Healthcare Alliance**, comprised of 57 not-for-profit hospitals throughout Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley, as well as physician members of the New York State Medical Society, consumer groups, and business leaders, continues to lobby the state legislature for market reforms in the health insurance industry. **Following in the footsteps of last year's successful passage of three market reforms, the group succeeded this past legislative session in passing a Health Summit Bill**, which will afford patients and providers greater rights. **These include enhanced consumer and provider protections in relation to limitations on denial of claims for pre-authorized health services and external appeals procedures.**

"Commercial health insurers are one member of the team that will affect meaningful health care reform, not only in New York State, but eventually, nationwide," said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, the association that represents Long Island's 24 not-for-profit hospitals and is a founding member of the Suburban Alliance.

The Better Health Care Together Campaign points to soaring health care costs as a threat to "worker's livelihoods and companies' competitiveness." The fear is made worse by the burgeoning numbers of uninsured Americans – about 47 million at the most recent Census count – who are a further drain on business' resources, as the insured insidiously absorb the health care costs of the uninsured.

"I think businesses now realize that until all Americans have some kind of health insurance coverage and easy access to all levels of health care, businesses will be fighting an uphill battle," said Dahill.

New York's business community is hearing and understanding this message, as many of its corporate leaders, some who are hospital trustees, are seeking greater accountability not only from health insurers, but from government, labor, and hospitals themselves. Such a collaborative approach is as it should be, says Dahill, who has long said that hospitals shouldn't be the only ones responsible for society's problem of the uninsured and out-of-control health insurance costs and unfair market practices.

The Better Health Care Together Campaign is such a group of diverse entities. From Wal-Mart to the Communications Workers of America, the campaign seeks to achieve a new health care system by 2012.

For more information about the Suburban Healthcare Alliance and its market re-balance initiatives log onto [www.nsch.org/pending/issues](http://www.nsch.org/pending/issues).

### Headline News ...

## Logo Unravels Itself



The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's new logo breaks out of the circular mold that has defined it for several decades and now sports a look that more accurately and easily identifies the organization. The new logo reflects the Hospital Council's geographical boundaries and hospital-specific focus. It redefines the Hospital Council's core mission of enhancing health care for all Long Islanders by representing the interests of Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals before lawmakers, regulatory agencies, the media, and the public. This is accomplished through advocacy, education, and information.

The new logo will appear in all print and electronic publications and materials during the next few months. Member hospitals may download the logo from [www.nshc.org](http://www.nshc.org) under What's New.

### News Briefs ...

**Advocacy Honors** . . . were bestowed upon **Joan Flauenbaum** and **Jack Howlett** (New Island Hospital), when the Healthcare Trustees of New York State nominated them for the Trustee Leadership Award. The group also nominated trustee **Salvatore Sodano** (Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center) for its Trustee Advocacy Award.

**Cardiac trials** . . . to study elective angioplasty in community hospitals were sanctioned by the state health department at **South Nassau Communities Hospital** and **Southside Hospital**.

## A Message from the CEO

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adversely affect patients.

The Hospital Council is ever mindful of the unique and local ramifications legislation and regulations could and will have upon our member hospitals. The needs of Long Island's hospitals are specific and our advocacy efforts, on your behalf, ensure that these positions are heard by lawmakers, the media, and the public.

Please feel free to contact me or any Hospital Council staff member with your questions or information needs.