

eProgress Notes . . . May 2009

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

Welcome to the third electronic edition of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's eProgress Notes publication, a summary of regulatory and legislative news, advocacy messages, and other relevant issues affecting the delivery of hospital and health care on Long Island. If you know of others on your staff or in the healthcare community who would be interested in receiving this publication,, please contact Janine Logan at (631) 963-4156 or jlogan@nshc.org to subscribe.

*Kevin W. Dahill,
President and CEO*

Key Legislation, Reforms Move Ahead in Albany

Managed Care

Many of NSHC's key priorities are gaining momentum in Albany. The governor has presented a package of managed care reforms that closely mirrors the legislation proposed by the hospital associations. The package includes requiring insurers to pay electronically submitted claims within 15 days, giving hospitals an explicit right to an external appeals process, and requiring that insurers treat services provided at a participating hospital as an in-network visit, regardless of whether the treating physician is covered by the patient's plan. We are also closely monitoring a program bill the governor is expected to introduce that would more broadly address the managed care industry's market conduct. While we have advocated that insurers making excessive profits be obligated to return some of those profits to the community through a regional reinvestment fund, the Administration may take the much bigger step of restoring authority to the Insurance Department to approve premium increases.

Transitional Care Units

The Assembly has already acted on another key NSHC priority, the expansion of Transitional Care Units (TCUs). TCUs provide interim care for Medicare beneficiaries whose acute conditions have been stabilized but who are not well enough to be discharged or transferred to a nursing home. Under current law, only five sites are allowed; the Assembly bill increases the number of demonstration sites to 10. NSHC is lobbying for an increase to 20 sites as the Senate begins its consideration of the bill. – Wendy Darwell, wdarwell@nshc.org.

Comprehensive Health Reform Gaining More Supporters

Member Hospitals

Brookhaven Memorial Hospital
Medical Center
Catholic Health Services of Long
Island

- Good Samaritan Hospital
Medical Center
- St. Catherine of Siena Medical
Center
- St. Charles 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
New Island Hospital

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

Groups that had opposed health reform just 15 years ago are joining hands in Washington now to help move this country toward an expansion of health care coverage to all Americans. Most notably, commercial insurers, pharmaceutical companies, and union representatives see their role in the process as crucial.

While the historic meeting of these groups with physicians, hospitals, and the President garnered much attention earlier this month, there is a tremendous amount of collaborative work that must take place in order to realize the reduction of health care costs, both short and long term, needed to achieve meaningful and affordable reform.

The NSHC along with its national and state hospital association counterparts will be working closely with members of Congress and the administration, as reform proposals and legislation unfolds during the coming months.

In particular, the Senate Finance Committee has forwarded three Medicare reimbursement reforms related to quality that are of significant interest to hospitals. They are:

- Expansion of value-based purchasing, which would begin paying hospitals in 2013 for their actual performance on CMS-selected quality measures. All hospitals would be required to contribute to a funding pool, and would “earn back” their contributions on a sliding scale based upon their performance relative to all other hospitals.
- Reduced payments for re-admissions deemed preventable by the CMS. This policy would expire when payment bundling is fully phased in.
- Bundling payment for acute and post-acute services, fully phased in by 2019. One payment would be made to a hospital, which would then be responsible for paying all post-acute providers needed for that patient’s care.

Congress and the Obama Administration are hoping to have viable health reform legislation on the table early this summer, with final health reform legislation expected by October 15 of this year. Choice, affordability, and accessibility will be top priorities, as reform legislation is crafted. - Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.



NSHC Committee News . . .

Communications Committee . . . donated food to the Smithtown Emergency Food Panty, as a result of the committee’s Winter Food Drive. The pantry, located in St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church, collects donations from seven area churches, schools, businesses, and town employees. In photo l to r: Marilyn Fabbriante, Chair of the NSHC Communications Committee and Director, Public and External Affairs, St. Charles Hospital; Marilyn Weller and Josephine Raleigh, food pantry volunteers.

Finance Committee . . .On May 13, the Finance Committee hosted a special briefing for Chief Financial and Chief Medical Officers on the three quality-related Medicare reimbursement reforms proposed for the 2010 federal budget: an expansion of value-based purchasing, reduced reimbursements for hospitals that have high rates of readmissions, and bundling of acute and post-acute payments.

Revenue Cycle Committee. . .At its May 8 meeting, the committee received briefings on the Department of Health’s revised billing policy for laboratory and radiology tests following a clinic visit and the managed care reforms under consideration in Albany.

Human Resources Committee . . .The committee met by conference call on April 13 to discuss changes to its annual survey of wages and salaries, conducted in partnership with the Association of Healthcare Human Resource Administrators (AHHRA) of Greater New York. At its May 15 meeting, the committee received a briefing on pending workforce legislation in Albany and Washington.



June Calendar

- 6/1 Nassu-Suffolk Hospital Council of Auxiliaries Annual Luncheon, Noon, Watermill Inn
- 6/2 Finance Committee meeting, 8 a.m.
- 6/4 Executive Committee meeting, 8 a.m.
- 6/5 Ann Marie Brown Scholarship Luncheon, Noon, Blackstone Steakhouse
- 6/9 Life Safety Committee meeting, 10 a.m.
- 6/9 Nurse Managers Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.
- 6/12 Revenue Cycle Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.
- 6/17 NYPORTS Committee meeting, 10 a.m.

6/24 – 6/26, HANYS Annual Meeting

**Meetings open to NSHC members only, unless otherwise noted.*

Corporate Compliance Committee . . . The Compliance Committee hosted a visit from Jeffrey Spitz, the DOH's regional hospital program director, who discussed his office's role in investigating patient complaints, the hospital inspection process, and his division's priorities for 2009.

Life Safety Committee . . . The Life Safety Committee is hosting an educational seminar on June 16 at Stony Brook University from 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. The morning session will feature presentations on fire pumps and flow testing presented by Bert Stipe of Quimby Equipment Company and Nestor Escribano of Metron, Inc. The afternoon presentations, by Jeffrey Sheridan of Absolute Clean Environment, will be on management of environmental health concerns during renovations and facility management. The seminar will offer attendees AIA and New York State Department of State continuing education credits.

News Briefs . . .

LI Hospital Trustees recognized . . . by the United Hospital Fund (UHF). Arthur Kalish, North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System, and George Miner MD, Nassau HealthCare Corporation, were among 39 trustees to receive the UHF's 2009 Distinguished Trustee Award.

Nassau County Department of Health . . . is conducting an online survey to help develop the Community Health Assessment for the years 2010-2013. The document is compiled every few years to track the current health of the community and helps the county direct future public health priorities. The anonymous survey is available online until June 8. Go to www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/health and click on Community Health Assessment Survey.

Outstanding public relations efforts . . . at Long Island hospitals and others throughout the state may be recognized through the Healthcare Association of New York's State's Public Relations Excellence Award. Submissions of effective communications/advocacy plans related to the state budget process must be submitted by July 22. Visit www.hanys.org for more details or call 518-431-7742.

NASSAU-SUFFOLK HOSPITAL COUNCIL
1383 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 26
Hauppauge, NY 11788 • (631) 435-3000
www.nshc.org
The collective voice of Long Island's not-for-profit and public hospitals.