

eProgress Notes . . . October 2009

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.

LI Keeps an Eye on Washington

Now that the Senate Finance Committee has passed its version of health reform – America’s Healthy Future Act of 2009 – the full Senate is poised to work on a compromise version of this bill and one previously adopted by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee. Three House committees previously adopted separate reform measures. Both chambers now take up the tremendous task of merging these pieces of legislation and bringing the revised bills for a vote before the full House and the full Senate.

Locally, Long Island hospitals continue to watch the debate closely with the hope that final reform legislation will ensure affordable coverage, access, and choice for all Long Islanders, including the 15 percent of the region’s population who are currently uninsured. Meeting this goal, while preserving reasonable hospital reimbursements and a mechanism to fund those hospitals that deliver a disproportionate amount of free and reduced care to patients, is a key challenge for lawmakers.

The hospital industry has pledged to absorb \$151 billion in reduced Medicare/Medicaid payments over the next 10 years to help fund reform. The agreement hinges on pre-determined levels of insurance expansion occurring before any cuts are triggered, until a rate of 95 percent insurance coverage is reached. Language in the Senate Finance Committee bill reflects this agreement, although the full expansion target is slightly reduced. The industry is hopeful that this language will survive the ensuing rounds of negotiation and compromise. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

Local Experts Debate Health Reform Bills

Health reform is the hot topic on everyone’s mind and six experts shared their views on unfolding reform efforts at an executive breakfast sponsored by the Hauppauge Industrial Association Thursday, October 15, 2009 at the Islandia Marriott. The group agreed that reform is inevitable although details of the final legislation are far from final at this point.



HIA “Update on Healthcare Reform” panelists from left: Kevin Dahill, President/CEO, Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; moderator Rita DeStefano, Portnoy, Messinger, Pearl and Associates; Joseph Molloy, Corporate Director Benefits, North Shore/LIJ Health System; Matt Lewis, President, The Wellness Center; John Bauer, Littler and Mendelson; Carmine Morano, Healthcare Consultant; Mark Portnoy, Portnoy, Messinger, Pearl and Associates.

Kevin Dahill, president and CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, said that until the business model for health care delivery in this country is fundamentally changed, we will not achieve true reform. Patients who are covered by insurance are not the direct purchasers of care and this has led to a misconception of the value of care relative to its costs and necessity. Further, provider incentives are not aligned and this has led to inadequate coordination of care, especially in the area of chronic disease, and less than desirable outcomes. Complicating a coordinated care approach are state and federal anti-trust statutes that prevent providers – most often physicians and hospitals – from designing collaborative clinical practice models for care delivery.

For Joseph Molloy, corporate director of benefits, North Shore/LIJ Health System, ensuring some level of personal accountability for one's health is paramount to successful and lasting health reform. This calls for a behavioral change in the way we view health care – one that moves away from episodic sick care to preventive, sustainable well care. Elements of wellness and prevention are included in most of the health reform bills Congress is currently debating. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

Governor Looks to Hospitals to Close Budget Hole

Nearly \$700 million could be stripped from NY's hospitals

Faced with an ever-widening budget gap, Governor Paterson is asking the legislature to consider his plan to cut about \$500 million in Medicaid funding to hospitals, which would force about another \$200 million loss in federal Medicaid matching money. The cuts would take effect November 15, 2009. The state faces a \$3 billion budget shortfall for this fiscal year, which ends March 31, 2010, and another \$2 billion shortfall for next fiscal.

If adopted by the legislature, this would be the fifth time in the last 24 months that hospitals experienced Medicaid cuts. So far, the damage to Long Island's not-for-profit hospitals totals \$123.74 million in direct Medicaid cuts.

Hospital leaders are outraged that the governor is once again targeting hospitals, a group that has already borne a disproportionate share of budget balancing cuts on behalf of the state. The cuts are unsustainable, say hospital administrators, and will result in staff reductions, program closures, and other disruptions in patient services.

About two-thirds of Long Island's 24 not-for-profit hospitals are operating with a daily margin of one percent or less, affecting their ability to meet payroll, utilities, and other basic expenses. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

ACT NOW ... Hospital employees and patients are urged to contact their state legislators now. Tell them indiscriminately cutting hospitals is no way to solve a budget crisis. Go to www.helpyourhospital.org for a direct link to your legislators and information on how your local hospital is affected.

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

Businesses Mean Wellness

Human resource directors and benefits managers from local businesses, hospitals and other health care providers learned how free or low-cost corporate wellness programs can save money and boost



From left: Fiona McLennan, Director of Global Benefits, Arrow Electronics, Inc. shares corporate wellness tips with attendees from St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center.

productivity. At a breakfast meeting sponsored jointly by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and Action Long Island on September 30, 2009, Fiona McLennan, global benefits director for the international firm Arrow Electronics, Inc. shared her knowledge about inexpensive and innovative ways to integrate wellness strategies into the overall employee health benefit plan. From lunch time walking clubs to

informational lunch and learns, McLennan had a tip for every employer in the room no matter their size or budget.

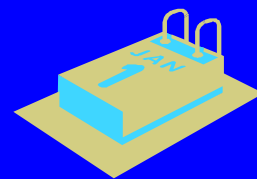
“The Road to Wellness” breakfast occurred as a result of Action Long Island’s Health Care Task Force on which the Hospital Council holds a seat. This group has met monthly for the past two years and it represents the views of small and large employers, educational institutions, hospitals and other health care providers, insurers, as well as a variety of human service not-for-profits. The group recently submitted a position paper about mandated physicals for consideration by state legislators.

Attendees left with a guide to free or low-cost wellness initiatives. Local hospitals are key providers of wellness programs, often bringing health screenings, lectures, and other wellness events to the workplace. Call 631-963-4153 for a copy of this free guide. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

News Briefs . . .

Conference sponsorships and participation . . . kept the Hospital Council staff busy through the months of September and October. Highlights include:

- Presentation on details of newly enacted managed care reform legislation
- Webconference conjointly with state agencies on new mandatory overtime prohibition law and funding opportunities for hospital energy efficiency improvements
- Presentation by Office of Civil Rights representatives for hospital translation coordinators and nurse administrators on federal requirements for Limited English Proficient and hearing impaired patients.
- Annual Center of Excellence in Wireless and Information Technology conference featured *Hospital Council COO Wendy Darwell* as moderator for the IT panel.



Mark Your Calendar for NSHC Events in November

- Nov. 3 Market Expert Fall Meeting (HANYs), 8:00 a.m.
- Nov. 5 NSHC Board of Directors Meeting, 8:00 p.m.
- Nov. 6 Grant Workshop, 8:30 a.m.
- Nov. 9 Finance Committee meeting, 8:00 a.m.
- Nov. 10 Nurse Managers Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.
- Nov. 11 CXL Finance Committee meeting, 8 a.m.
- Nov. 13 Revenue Cycle Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.
- Nov. 19 Nurse Executives Committee meeting, 2:00 p.m.
- Nov. 20 Human Resources Committee meeting, 9:00 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.

- New York Institute of Technology's annual Conference on the Aging – long-term care focus
- Long Island Economic and Social Policy Institute at Dowling College and the Hauppauge Industrial Association held separate discussions on health reform developments. *Hospital Council CEO Kevin Dahill* was a featured panelist at each of these events.

Special Briefing and Cocktail Reception for Hospital Trustees . . . takes place on Thursday, October 29, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Long Island, Islandia, 4 to 6:30 PM. Dr. John Combes, president of the Center for Healthcare Governance will speak about the implications of health care reform for hospital trustees. This is a joint event of the Healthcare Association of New York State and the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council. Call 631-963-4153 to register.

Nassau-Suffolk Excellence in Patient Safety Award . . . will be presented to a Hospital Council member hospital at the Trustee Briefing/Reception on October 29th.

Accessing Health Insurance . . . the Hospital Council's Facilitated Enrollment Program, which provides application assistance for the Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus and Medicaid programs, hosts open houses across Long Island, including in most member hospitals. Uninsured patients and community members can be directed to the program's website at <http://www.nshc.org/chpfhp.cfm> for information on the documents needed to apply for coverage and the calendar of open house events.



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*The collective voice of Long Island's
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