

# NorMet News . . . August 2013

**A Monthly Publication of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association**

*NorMet News publication is a summary of regulatory and legislative news, advocacy messages, and other relevant issues affecting the delivery of hospital and health care in the Hudson Valley.*

## **Federal Funding Deadlines Imminent**

When Congress returns to Washington, DC in September, members will have less than two full weeks to strike a compromise to raise the debt ceiling and agree on funding for the next federal fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2013. If no agreement is reached, the nation once again faces default and a government shutdown. Such a situation would wreak havoc on the nation's fragile recovery, agree economists.

Meanwhile, automatic sequestration cuts remain in place; there have been no overtures by either party to develop a plan to replace the sequester cuts. Medicare payments to hospitals were cut two percent for Medicare services provided on and after April 1, 2013. If left in place, Medicare sequestration cuts to hospitals in the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State regions, which include hospitals in the Hudson Valley and on Long Island, will total \$629 million (2013 – 2021). Compounding the situation is the Medicare physician payment cut of 24.4 percent that will occur January 1, 2014, if Congress does not act to stop it. Every year since 2002, Congress has stepped in with a "doc fix" to avert such a draconian cut to the nation's physicians. Just this past January, hospitals absorbed about \$30 billion in additional Medicare cuts to offset the physician reimbursement fix. Without a reasonable solution to the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula – the 1997 Balanced Budget Act inflation-based provision that guides and restricts physician reimbursement - hospitals once again remain vulnerable to more cuts. – Janine Logan [jlogan@normet.org](mailto:jlogan@normet.org).

## **Head to Washington DC for Fall Advocacy Days September 17 and October 29**

The Washington office of the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) will assist NorMet members in scheduling meetings with Congressional representatives at American Hospital Association fall advocacy days. Hospitals remain at risk for further Medicare and Medicaid cuts, especially as Congress negotiates spending bills, the debt ceiling increase, and the "doc fix." Contact Elyse Oveson, HANYS director of federal relations, at [eoveson@hanys.org](mailto:eoveson@hanys.org) – 202-488-1275 – to schedule your meetings.

## **STATE UPDATE: Hundreds of Bills Await Governor's Action, While New Regs Related to Patient Safety Now in Effect**

Only half of the bills passed by the legislature in June have been acted upon by the governor. Major health-care related bills backed by HANYS and NorMet, such as managed care, Hepatitis C, observation status, and smoking prohibition legislation, are still waiting. Meanwhile, state-mandated sepsis protocols must be filed with the state by all hospitals by September 3, 2013, and the Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP) went into effect August 27, 2013.

### **Sepsis Protocols**

This past spring, final rules were adopted that require hospitals to have in place evidence-based protocols for the early recognition and treatment of patients with severe sepsis and septic shock that are based on generally accepted standards. The Department of Health developed a website through which protocol documents should be submitted. The documents will be reviewed for compliance and completeness. *continued on page 2*

*State Update . . . continued from page 1*

To help hospitals with compliance and understanding of the new regulation, HANYS developed a *Hospital Sepsis Care Resource Guide* that is available on the HANYS website. The guide was developed by the HANYS Sepsis Advisory Committee and clinical experts from the national Surviving Sepsis Campaign. The guide builds upon successful strategies of hospitals and professional associations, nationally and internationally, that have improved sepsis care and outcomes. **HANYS is also offering two webinars – Sepsis and Executive Leadership, Tuesday, September 10, 2013, from 1 to 2 p.m., and Update on the Surviving Sepsis Campaign, Thursday, October 10, 2013, from 10 to 11 a.m. Register online [cguyon@hanys.org](mailto:cguyon@hanys.org).**

#### **I-STOP Law**

New York is the first state in the nation to mandate that physicians or their designees consult a database of a patient's prescription history before prescribing controlled substances. The requirement took effect August 27, 2013. The law also requires pharmacists to report in real time when they fill a controlled substance prescription into the state's Prescription Monitoring Registry. The law includes several exemptions from the consulting requirements, such as when a controlled substance is prescribed within a hospital emergency department, prescribed under hospice care, and when a practitioner is directly administering the controlled substance, to name a few. – Janine Logan, [jlogan@normet.org](mailto:jlogan@normet.org).

## **Navigators Prepare for Online Insurance Exchange Opening, October 1**

With the formal renaming of New York State's online insurance exchange – **New York State of Health** – the health department is moving forward with formal navigator training. The Hudson Valley region will be serviced mainly by a variety of subcontracted local agencies under the Community Service Society of New York, as well as the Maternal Infant Services Network of Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties and the Westchester County and Rockland County Departments of Health. Enrollers at these agencies will be fully trained and certified to serve as navigators in time for the online marketplace's opening on October 1, 2013.

Trained and certified enrollers will assist individuals, families, and businesses in understanding the insurance options offered on the online insurance marketplace and in purchasing insurance. Insurance purchased from the marketplace becomes effective January 1, 2014 - the date the Affordable Care Act's individual insurance mandate also takes hold. The navigators will assist individuals in completing the application for coverage, and will determine whether their income levels and family size qualify them for subsidized insurance premiums, Medicaid coverage, or Child Health Plus enrollment. The navigators will also help small business owners determine if they are eligible for any tax credits.

For more details and a broader view of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which directed the development of New York's online insurance marketplace, go to [www.nshc.org](http://www.nshc.org), and click on the **ABCs** of Health Care Reform. – Janine Logan, [jlogan@normet.org](mailto:jlogan@normet.org)

## **News Briefs . . .**

**Orthopedic Care Excellence . . .** was achieved by **Northern Dutchess Hospital** when it was designated an Aetna Institute of Quality® Orthopedic Care Facility for total joint replacement for the third year in a row.

**Insurer Rebates . . .** to consumers will total about \$500 million this year. This is according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. About 8.5 million Americans will receive the rebates with an average rebate of about \$100 per family. The rebates are the result of a provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that requires insurers to spend at least 80 cents of every insurance premium dollar on patient care, known as the medical loss ratio. Large employers can pass the rebate along to employees or use it to lower employee premium payments. New York had a medical loss ratio rule in place prior to the ACA.

**New York State Hospital Report Card . . .** produced by the Niagara Health Quality Coalition noted that **White Plains Hospital Center, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, and Putnam Hospital Center** are among "America's Safest Hospitals," according to the coalition's 2013 grading criteria. These hospitals received a three-star rating from the coalition.

## 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  
Helen Hayes Hospital  
Hudson Valley Hospital Center  
Keller Army Community  
Hospital  
Lawrence Hospital Center  
The Mount Vernon 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  
Saint Francis Hospital  
St. Joseph's Medical Center  
St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital  
St. Vincent's Westchester  
(Division of St. Joseph's  
Medical Center)  
Sound Shore Medical Center of  
Westchester  
Vassar Brothers Medical  
Center  
VA Hudson Valley Health Care  
System  
White Plains Hospital

**Revised Sepsis Rule Guidance for Hospitals** . . . can be accessed through the Health Commerce System. The New York State Department of Health's revised guidance provides an amended definition of pediatric severe sepsis to include cardiovascular organ dysfunction. Since IPRO will assist the Department of Health with the collection and review of protocols due on September 3, 2013, IPRO will send a separate communication to hospitals with instructions on how to submit the required information.

**Excellence in Transitions of Care** . . . was awarded to **Vassar Brothers Medical Center and Northern Dutchess Hospital** by IPRO, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for New York State. The 2013 IPRO Quality Award recognizes organizations that demonstrate a commitment to improving the quality of care transitions through community partnerships.

**NYPORTS Changes** . . . effective July 15, 2013 require hospitals to submit their reports using the revised reporting guide and glossary. The revised Reporting Guide and Glossary are available on the NYPORTS bulletin board. Hospitals with questions about the changes can contact the Division of Hospitals and Diagnostic Treatment Centers at 518-402-1004.

**National Quality Award Applications** . . . sought for the American Hospital Association's McKesson Quest for Quality Prize. The award is presented annually to honor hospitals pursuing excellence through hospital leadership and innovation in quality improvement and safety. Cash awards and/or merit recognition awarded. To nominate a hospital download an application from [www.aha.org/questforquality](http://www.aha.org/questforquality). Completed applications must be e-mailed by midnight, Central Time, Sunday, October 13, 2013 to [questforquality@aha.org](mailto:questforquality@aha.org)

**New Infection Reporting Mandate** . . . from the New York State Department of Health requires all hospitals to participate in a pilot program to report laboratory carbapenems-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE), effective July 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013. During the pilot phase data will not be publicly reported. Following the pilot, the DOH will discuss the preliminary results with its Technical Advisory Workgroup and make a determination if CRE should be made part of the public infection reporting program in the future.

**New Tracking System** . . . to locate patients during emergencies and evacuations was recently launched by New York State. The New York State Evacuation of Facilities in Disasters System (NYS e-FINDS) is a secure, confidential, fast, and easy-to-use system to provide real-time access to patient locations. The system will be in place for the 2013 hurricane season, with training for providers already taking place.

**Community Health Assessment** . . . is happening now throughout the state as part of the State Department of Health's 2013 – 2017 Prevention Agenda and a new federal-level IRS requirement. Hospitals are required to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to meet the reporting requirements of the state's 2013 – 2017 Prevention Agenda and the IRS' Form 990 charitable reporting mandate.

NorMet is a regional partner with HANYS in this effort and will be helping HANYS

implement its recently-awarded Community Health State Grant. NorMet together with the New York State Association of County Health Departments is the Hudson Valley regional collaborative under the HANYS grant. Contact Janine Logan, director of communications, at [jlogan@normet.org](mailto:jlogan@normet.org) if you have questions and/or need assistance with any phase of the community assessment and plan activities.

## The 2013 Academy for Healthcare Leadership Advancement

Three-day opening session: September 29 – October 1, 2013 • Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Participants will then engage in six online sessions before returning to Cornell November 10 – 12 for the closing session, project fair, and certificate ceremony. Through the joint sponsorship of Winthrop-University Hospital, HANYS, and the Johnson School at Cornell University, the program has been approved for 50.0 American Medical Association Physicians Recognition Award (AMA PRA) Category 1 Credit(s)™. Contact: Rachel Hajos (518) 431-7838.

### \* \* \* **Blood Donations Needed** \* \* \*

The blood supply typically drops off in the summer months. This is especially true as the summer ends and we enter the Labor Day Weekend holiday. In addition, this year the region's blood supply and donation schedule was further taxed by the disruptive force of Superstorm Sandy. Please consider scheduling a blood drive at your hospital sometime in the next few weeks. Doing so will ensure that the blood supply does not drop to critically low levels during the few remaining weeks of the summer. **Call Andrea Cefarelli at our region's blood supplier, the New York Blood Center, at 914-760-3173 to arrange a blood drive at your hospital.**



Go to [www.normet.org](http://www.normet.org) and click on this Vet Connect icon to find online links to hospitals' job banks, health care services, and other community resources. The initiative is coordinated by NorMet and members of its Communications Committee. The Vet Connect icon is also located on each member hospitals' website.



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