

NorMet News . . . June 2012

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.

Legislative Session Considers Patient and Provider Needs

Hospital advocates advanced legislation during the 2012 legislative session to close loopholes in managed care policies that hurt patients and providers and ensure the appropriate level of care is assigned to patients without the risk of hospitals unintentionally violating state and/or federal policies. These provisions are:

Observation Care: State regulations and federal regulations pertaining to the provision of observation care do not currently align. The Senate and Assembly unanimously passed legislation initiated by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC, which is designed to correct this. Because of this discrepancy, hospitals are hesitant to use observation care status, and instead, admit a patient to inpatient status, even though observation care is the more clinically appropriate designation. These short stays then trigger coding/payment audits. State regulations finalized in January require that observation care be provided in a discreet unit, under the direction of the emergency department, with a specific designation of beds for the purpose of providing observation care. This presents a conflict with Medicare rules, which allow hospitals to utilize beds on existing units that best meet patients' clinical needs, and would bar some hospitals from establishing observation units due to costs and physical plant restraints. The state also limited the time period in which a patient can be treated in an observation unit to 24 hours, but the legislation increased this to 48 hours, which is more in line with Medicare regulations. In rare cases, observation services can exceed 48 hours. This bill extends the time period to 48 hours, consistent with Medicare regulations

Managed Care Reforms: Both the Assembly and Senate passed a bill that reforms certain plan practices that result in unilateral reductions of payments and claims denials. Specifically, A.9946-B (Morelle) and S.7071-B (Hannon) would prevent health plans from unilaterally down coding claims without reviewing a medical record and from denying hospital reimbursement if a hospital fails to provide a notice of an emergency admission. The bill now goes to the governor for his signature.

Safe Patient Handling Mandate: An overreaching and overtly unworkable bill to mandate that all health care facilities have a safe patient handling program places undue financial burden on hospitals and discounts patient and facility specific considerations when determining appropriate equipment and technology needs. The legislation requires the DOH to impose mandated ratios of equipment and technology. Hospitals in the region, and indeed throughout the state, are highly committed to the goal of promoting patient and employee safety. Their expertise has been used throughout the years to inform the state's patient handling demonstration program that expires in 2013. The bill passed the Senate only.

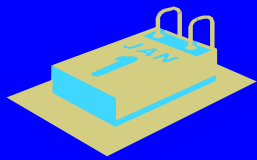
Hospitals Helping Veterans

With the support of NorMet's board of directors, hospitals in the region will embark on an effort to raise awareness about the employment, health, and resource needs of veterans in the region, particularly returning veterans. **Vet Connect** is an online service that offers one-stop shopping for veterans' employment, health, and community needs. The unique **Vet Connect** logo will appear on the NorMet website's home page. With one click, users can navigate to member hospital websites, community resources, educational institutions, and other veteran-specific sites. A priority of the program is to help veterans recognize how their military skills can apply to a variety of civilian jobs. By taking the **Vet Connect** pledge, hospitals in the Hudson Valley region affirm their commitment to veterans and hospitals' appreciation for our veterans' selfless dedication to this country. **Vet Connect** will officially launch mid-summer. More details about the initiative will follow.

VET CONNECT



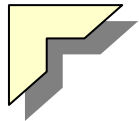
An employment, health, and community resource for veterans provided by the hospitals in the Hudson Valley



Mark Your Calendar for NorMet Events in July 2012

- July 13 Patient Safety Institute Meeting, 1 p.m. (restricted attendance) More info last page
- July 23 Quality Improvement Discussion with Leaders of Partnership for Patients 2 p.m.

Meetings for NorMet members only and are held at NorMet offices in Newburgh unless **otherwise** noted. To register/info call: 845-562-7520.



The Quality Corner

An update on quality reporting measures
Mary Jane Milano, Director

New Podcast Series about the AHRQ Quality Indicators™ Toolkit for Hospitals: A new series of seven 10-minute audio interviews features hospital experts explaining how to use the quality improvement tools in the *AHRQ Quality Indicators™ Toolkit for Hospitals*. The toolkit is a free resource to guide hospitals through the process of using the AHRQ Inpatient Quality Indicators and Patient Safety Indicators to improve care. For general information on the AHRQ Quality Indicators go to: <http://www.qualityindicators.ahrq.gov/>.

Medicare/Medicaid Conditions of Participation: CMS issued a **final rule** on Medicare/Medicaid Conditions of Participation (COP) on May 16, 2012. Although the rule provides some relief for hospitals by eliminating various burdensome requirements that were previously contained in the COP, the final rule includes two provisions problematic for hospitals. The first requires health care systems to have an independent/distinct medical staff for each hospital in the system and the second requires a medical staff member to be on the governing body of a hospital. The American Hospital Association and other stakeholders are advocating for a change in these requirements which are to be effective July 16, 2012. In mid-June, CMS told state surveyors to hold off on implementing the new requirements for hospital governing boards to include a medical staff

member stating that surveyors should not assess compliance with this requirement or cite deficiencies without receiving instructions from CMS. The agency also issued a **proposed rule** on May 4, 2012 on the Medicare/Medicaid Conditions of Participation. The proposed rule requires hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals to offer all inpatients and outpatients an annual flu vaccination and develop and implement policies and procedures to do so. Comments on this proposed rule are due by July 4, 2012.

Joint Commission Expands Requirement for Annual Influenza Vaccinations: Effective July 1, 2012, all Joint Commission-accredited health care organizations must establish annual influenza vaccinations for licensed independent practitioners and staff. The Joint Commission expanded this standard to include ambulatory care, behavioral health, home care, laboratories, and office-based surgery. Accredited organizations are required to set incremental goals for meeting 90 percent coverage by 2020.

NYSDOH New Office: The New York State Department of Health is establishing a new Office of Quality and Patient Safety to help coordinate and implement quality and safety initiatives in the state. We will keep you posted on how this office interacts with NYPORTS staff.

Summit Examines Reform/Real Estate Connection

New models of health care delivery are moving the industry in a much more patient-centered direction. This approach has bearing upon many ancillary industries, including the real estate market. Making the connection between point and place of health care service was explored by NorMet CEO/president Kevin Dahill at the *Healthcare and Real Estate 2012 Summit* held June 12, 2012 at the Scholastic Building in New York City. The summit brought together leading health care and medical, real estate and capital markets executives from the metropolitan region.

“The opportunity for the provider community and the real estate community to work together to meet patients’ and payers’ needs is critical and obvious,” said Dahill, who represented the health care industry through the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC. “It’s about bringing health care to the heart of the community and to the patient’s doorstep.” Dahill participated in the panel discussion “The Industry Response: How Will the Delivery of Services Continue to be Impacted under Reform?”



Suburban Hospitals Comment on Medicaid Waiver Process



On June 18, 2012, a representative of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC, provided comments, on behalf of the Alliance's 51 hospitals, pertaining to the state's application for a federal Medicaid waiver, which would allow

the state to diverge from federal rules on the operation of Medicaid in exchange for lower expenses. . . At the public hearing held in the Bronx, the Suburban Alliance emphasized that any waiver the state advances to the federal government must include capital for infrastructure and operational redesign, reform of burdensome and duplicative regulations, and commitment to safety net/essential care providers.

Recommendations specific to suburban institutions pointed to the diversity of communities served and variances in hospital physical size and scope of services provided by member hospitals. The waiver must take into consideration the range of needs and capabilities of providers when developing new models of care. In the suburban regions, this range spans from large health systems and academic medical centers to small rural and community hospitals that are not as far along in adopting technology and shifting away from inpatient care.

Additionally, the waiver design must ensure financial stability of safety net providers and public institutions. The Suburban Alliance recommended that the waiver be used to designate special funding streams for these institutions to take into consideration that the needs of suburban safety net hospitals may differ from those of urban and rural facilities.

For more information about the Medicaid 1115 waiver amendment, opportunities to comments, public engagement, and the application submission process, go to http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/.

The suburban Alliance is the joint advocacy arm of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association.

News Briefs . . .

HEAL Awards . . . totaling \$301.1 million statewide were recently announced by Governor Cuomo. Of that total, five hospitals and nursing homes in the mid-Hudson region will receive \$35.6 million in grants to fund continuing efforts to transform the state's health care system and to improve patient care, reduce costs, and enhance access. The awardees include *Catskill Regional Medical Center, Field Home-Holy Comforter, Sullivan County Adult Care Center, Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester, and St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers.*

Nurse Distinction . . . was bestowed upon *Orange Regional Medical Center* nurse director Ann DiAgostino RN by 1199 SEIU RN Division and the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes at the organization's annual ceremony held May 21, 2012.

Medical Home Experiment . . . is the focus of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Comprehensive Primary Care initiative. CMS will work with health plans and other payers, including Medicaid, to see if preventive care services improve when physicians are offered a per-patient monthly bonus payment. The New York plans chosen to participate are Aetna, Empire Blue Cross, Hudson Health Plan, MVP Health Care, and the Teamsters Multi-Employer Taft Hartley Funds Plan. Next step is to select primary care practices who will agree to serve as medical homes for the patients who enroll in the initiative.

Member Hospitals

Benedictine Hospital
Blythedale Children's Hospital
Bon Secours Community Hospital
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
Catskill Regional Medical Center
Ellenville Regional Hospital
Good Samaritan Hospital
Helen Hayes Hospital
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Keller Army Community Hospital
The Kingston 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
Westchester Medical Center
White Plains Hospital Center

Outstanding Blood Drive Achievement . . . was earned by *Catskill Regional Medical Center* Blood Donor Center. It recently received the Life Share Platinum Level Achievement Award from the American Red Cross for outstanding employee participation in 2011 blood drive donations.

National Recognition for Lab Services . . . was granted to *Sound Shore Medical Center's* main laboratory. It received ongoing accreditation by the Commission on Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists (CAP). This is the 47th year of continuous accreditation for Sound Shore's lab and distinguishes it as a laboratory with one of the longest records of CAP accreditation in New York State.

Emergency Preparedness Grant for FY 2012/13 . . . calls for hospital emergency management personnel and their partners to work toward developing healthcare coalitions. The New York State Department of Health will be spearheading this initiative, which will be rolled out in the coming months. The NorMet Region is ahead of many other regions in the state because of the Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) we have in place and the Mutual Aid Coordinating Entity (MACE), a group of volunteers who help hospitals in emergencies and disasters by operationalizing the MAA. All hospitals in the region are invited to participate in this planning.

Committee News . . .

The NorMet Compliance, Internal Audit, and HIPAA Privacy and Security Committee met on June 18, 2012 at the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center to discuss the New York State Office of Medicaid Inspector General's 2012-2013 Work Plan and corresponding Compliance Program Guidance for General Hospitals, and receive guidance from Laurie T. Cohen and Philip Rosenberg of Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker LLP. The next meeting will take place in September at a date and location most convenient for members.

*** * * JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES * * ***
HANYS 44th Annual Membership Conference June 28 and 29
The Sagamore in Bolton Landing, NY

Hear from the hospital CEO whose facility was the only health care organization to receive the prestigious *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2008, the nation's highest honor for organizational innovation and performance excellence . . .* and enjoy a special address offered by *Jason Helgeson, NY State Medicaid Director, and key architect of New York's Medicaid transformation.*

For more information contact: Rachel Hajos at 518-431-7838, rhajos@hanys.org.

Patient Safety Institute Committee Meetings

Patient Safety Institute 1 p.m.
Featuring John Morley MD,
FACP, former NYS DOH Medical
Director and current Senior AVP
Healthcare Improvement and
Deputy CMO at HHC in New
York City. Root cause analysis,
culture, accountability main
topics.

**In order that your hospital may enjoy the confidential and privileged nature of these discussions, ONLY staff from the 23 hospitals that have fully executed their Confidentiality and Participation Agreements with the Institute will be permitted to participate in these meetings. Contact Angela Skretta for more information.*



400 Stony Brook Court
Newburgh, New York 12550
845-562-7520 • Fax: 845-562-0187
www.normet.org