

NorMet News . . . May 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.

Nurse Staffing Ratio Legislation Equates to Largest Unfunded Mandate in History

Proposed legislation would cost New York's health care industry an additional \$3 billion

With just a few working days left in the 2013 state legislative session, hospital leaders are meeting with state legislators and urging them to vote against the proposed nurse staffing ratio legislation (S.3691-A Hannon and A.6571 Gottfried). Not only is this legislation excessively costly to implement, it also runs the risk of harming patients. As proposed, the bills require prescriptive nurse patient ratios at all times, which would result in delays for some care services and would force providers to re-allocate financial resources from other support care personnel, such as aides and therapists, to nursing.

There is a lack of regional and national evidence that mandated staffing ratios improve care, as proponents assert. And even more importantly, the varied patient

acuity mix present every day at the region's hospitals requires the availability and response of a flexible workforce pool.

Mandated staffing ratios also ignore the influx of patients soon to arrive as a result of health care reform and insurance expansion. The State Department of Health predicts that about one million newly insured New Yorkers will gain access to coverage and care, beginning next year when the insurance mandate takes hold.

In recent days, the bills gained numerous additional legislative sponsors, hastening the urgency for hospital advocates to contact their state representatives now and urging them to oppose any and all nurse staffing ratio legislation. - Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org.

Improving Managed Care Market Conduct . . . is the focus of bill (S. 5256) proposed by Senator Kemp Hannon and supported by NorMet and HANYS. The bill further reforms managed care practices, ensuring fairer consideration of patients' access to quality care and providers' ability to process claims and payments. Specifically, this legislation would:

- Change statute so that failure to make a determination within established timeframes represents an approved claim rather than a denial;
- Require utilization review agents to substantiate verbal pre-authorizations in writing; and
- Harmonize the provider external appeal timeframe with the timeframe allowed for consumers.

NorMet, through its affiliation with the Suburban Alliance of New York State, LLC, has advanced nearly a dozen market conduct reforms since 2006.

Proposed Legislation Seeks RAC/Audit Improvements

Last week, legislation designed to improve the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) process was introduced in the U.S. Senate. The Medicare Audit Improvement Act of 2013 (S.1012) is companion legislation to very similar legislation previously introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 1250). The bills would establish a consolidated time limit for medical record requests, improve auditor performance and transparency, assure due process appeals for claims re-openings, allow accurate payment for re-billed claims, and require physician review for Medicare denials.

Hospitals Donate Supplies and Equipment to Underserved Areas



Nearly a dozen hospitals in the Hudson Valley region are making an astounding difference in the lives of children and adults living in medically-underserved regions of the world, including the United States.

Through the **Afya Foundation**, a non-profit medical supply recovery organization (MSRO), these hospitals are donating surplus medical supplies, hospital equipment, and humanitarian provisions to the Afya Foundation, which then develops a categorized inventory to support ongoing health initiatives, especially in Africa and Haiti.

Founded about five years ago by former managed care executive Danielle Butin, Afya offers U.S.-based health care institutions and professionals with a simple mechanism to contribute to both global health and increased access. Afya, based in Yonkers, NY, arranges for collection of donated items and then works with its domestic and international

partners to ship the items to recipient organizations. The foundation uses a unique inventory system to meet recipient needs. A deserving organization is given access to the inventory database and then submits a "wish list" to Afya. For items not currently listed in the inventory, Afya works with its donating partners and other suppliers to secure the requested items. To date, Afya has shipped more than 100 40-foot containers to medical facilities and clinics around the globe.

The program is also environmentally friendly. "By diverting 'waste' from landfills and incineration to the most underserved people in other countries that are in need of these items, we reduce the environmental impact in our own country," said Butin.

For more information about Afya's programs and how to donate, contact Sarah Schuyler, sarah.schuyler@afyafoundation.org.

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

Medicaid Reforms Saving Money, Improving Care

The New York State Department of Health recently announced that the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) reforms now in place are resulting in decreasing costs, even as enrollment continues to increase, and that the quality of care provided by the Medicaid program is among the best in the nation. Most of the savings are in the long-term care services sector. A recent study by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) analyzed New York State's Medicaid health plans against 76 different quality measures and found that when it comes to offering the right type of care for costly health factors like diabetes, childhood obesity, smoking cessation and follow-up care for the mentally ill, New York is a national leader, second only to Massachusetts. According to the State Department of Health, the total state Medicaid expenditures under the Medicaid Global Spending Cap for state fiscal year 2012-13 through February are \$192 million or 1.3% **below** projections. The State is anticipating ending this fiscal year with \$200 million in savings to the Medicaid program.

News Briefs . . .

2013 Nominations for Trustee Award ... are due by June 12. Healthcare Trustees of New York State (HTNYS) is seeking nominations for its 2013 Trustee Leadership and Advocacy Award, which recognizes trustees and their exemplary leadership and advocacy initiatives. The award nominations are being accepted online only. Please visit www.htnys.org and click on "awards" for nomination criteria, including eligibility requirements. Submissions must be e-mailed to HTNYS by June 12. The award will be presented at HTNYS Annual Conference at the Sagamore Resort on September 20, 2013.

Excellence in Stroke Care . . . was awarded to Hudson Valley Hospital Center. It received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get with the Guidelines Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award.

Top 20 Designation . . . goes to Ellenville Regional Hospital and Catskill Regional Medical Center's Grover M. Hermann Hospital. Both Ellenville Regional Hospital and Catskill's Grover Hermann Hospital scored best among critical access hospitals on iVantage Health Analytics' Hospital Strength Index™ for Quality. The Quality Index is a rating of hospital performance based on the percentile rank across five categories of Hospital Compare Process of Care measures. The rankings were recently announced by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA). An awards ceremony will be held during NRHA's Critical Access Hospital Conference in October in Austin, TX.

Sleep Center Accreditation . . . was earned by White Plains Hospital Sleep Center. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine granted the center another five-year accreditation.

DNV Grants Top Certification . . . to St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers. The facility earned a three-year full re-accreditation through 2016 from Det Norske Veritas Healthcare, Inc. (DNV). Additionally, DNV has recommended St. Francis for International Standards Organization (ISO) certification, which would make it one of only, approximately, 46 hospitals in the nation to earn that distinction.

Palliative Care Award . . . applications are now being accepted for the Circle of Life Award presented by the American Hospital Association. This award recognizes innovation in palliative and end-of-life care and is presented annually to honor organizations striving to improve the care provided to patients with life-threatening conditions or near the end of life. Applications are due August 3, 2013. For more information contact the AHA at (312) 422-2700; circleoflife@aha.org.

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. The state is asking hospitals and local health departments, as well as other community organizations and partners, to work collaboratively to determine health needs of local communities. These groups are asked to select two priorities from among the five priority areas outlined in the Prevention Agenda and to work together to develop programs and services that meet those identified needs – a Community Service Plan (CSP) for hospitals and a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for counties. The IRS Form 990 requires hospitals to complete a (CHNA) as part of their charitable filing requirements. 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. **Register for FREE HANYS webinar "Coalition Building and Sustaining Partnerships" June 3, 2013, 1 – 2:30 p.m. Register: cguyon@hanys.org 518-431-7834. Other FREE webinars: June 10 and 17.**

Take Note of Upcoming Events and Programs

Metro New York HFMA's Spring Academy

Thursday, June 13, 2013 • LaGuardia Marriott • 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The Spring Academy features three unique sessions on the lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy, followed by afternoon breakout sessions: Revenue Cycle, Managed Care, Compliance and Patient Financial Services. 9.5 hours CEP awarded. Register at:

<http://www.hfmametrony.org/Portals/0/metronyhfmaseminar.pdf>.

HANYS' 45th Annual Membership Meeting

June 27-28, 2013 • The Sagamore Hotel, Bolton Landing, NY

The Conference program includes an exciting lineup of speakers and interactive panel discussions focusing on timely issues such as for-profit interest in New York State hospitals, New York's Health Benefit Exchange, health care reform, and accountable care/population health management. Register online only at: www.hanys.org. Questions: contact Chris Guyon at cguyon@hanys.org. *The registration deadline is June 14.*

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.



Go to 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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