

NorMet News . . . September 2011

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.

“Super Committee” Momentum Grows

The 12 members of Congress who sit on the new bi-partisan deficit reduction committee, also dubbed the “super committee,” have met twice and early indications are that entitlement programs, especially Medicare, will suffer further cuts. The “super committee” must deliver a deficit reduction package of \$1.2 trillion in savings (2012 through 2021) by Thanksgiving.

If this committee’s agreement does not pass Congress by December 23, automatic, across-the-board cuts, including up to two percent to Medicare providers will go into effect starting 2012 through 2021. The committee has broad authority to change the tax code, cut funding to entitlement programs, and engage other means to achieve the targeted savings.

Nationwide, hospitals voluntarily agreed to \$155 billion in Medicare cuts during the next 10 years, as one way to fund the Affordable Care Act. As insurance coverage expands under the new law, some of this sacrifice would be recouped by hospital providers. The value of this shared sacrifice on the part of Hudson Valley hospitals will total \$1.4 billion after the 10 years. For more timely information about the committee’s progress, go to <http://deficitreduction.senate.gov/public>.

More Complications

The deficit reduction movement could also gain strength and include even deeper cuts, as a result of the jobs bill recently unveiled by President Obama. The \$447 billion American Jobs Act allows the “super committee” to increase its required savings target to cover the full cost of the act. The president made it clear in his recent address to Congress and the nation that the Medicare and Medicaid programs are ripe for changes and even more cuts. Details of the president’s proposals to fund the Jobs Act are due shortly and these are expected to include steep cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

At this juncture in the nation’s struggling economy, reductions to these programs are seemingly unwise, as cuts to hospital jobs will inevitably occur. This is counterintuitive to the president’s jobs creation “battle cry” and his reason for introducing the jobs bill. – Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org.

Advocacy Logo Signifies Strength in Numbers



Given the delivery and payment reforms underway in Albany and Washington, DC, hospitals in the suburban regions immediately east and north of New York City are strengthening their advocacy efforts to ensure their regions’ specific concerns are heard by lawmakers. The group, known as the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State (SHA), recently unveiled a logo geared toward solidifying its presence and heightening its identification among lawmakers, the business community, the media, and the public.

Hospitals in nine suburban counties are represented by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, stretching from the eastern counties of Nassau and Suffolk

on Long Island to the seven counties north and westward that comprise the lower and mid-Hudson Valley. The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) on Long Island and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) in the Hudson Valley are the primary advocacy organizations for hospitals in these respective regions.

“As health insurers gain more market dominance and issues such as malpractice reform, the MTA payroll tax, and formation of a state health insurance exchange intensify, these hospitals realize a strong voice that can articulate their unique needs if necessary,” said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of NSHC and NorMet. “In 2006, the Alliance published a ground breaking white paper that highlighted the startling disparity in commercial reimbursements between these regions and hospitals located in state in the immediate tri-state area. This was the beginning of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org*.

State’s Health Insurance Exchange Legislation Stalled

The prospect of the state legislature reconvening and developing state insurance exchange legislation before the next federal funding deadline of September 30 looks grim. States must have an exchange in place by 2013 for the anticipated start up of these exchanges in 2014. If not, the federal government will set up the exchange.

The health insurance exchange is a state-run marketplace where individuals and small businesses will be able to buy competitively-priced and affordable health insurance. Resistance has come from some of the state’s Republican lawmakers who see enactment of exchange legislation as a blind acceptance of the entire Affordable Care Act. Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders worked out a compromise exchange bill toward the close of the legislative session in June, but several

Republican lawmakers’ fears about passing such a bill without more deliberate debate killed it.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 11.5 million people nationwide will get their insurance through exchanges when they begin operating in 2014. Several studies indicate that exchanges will bring down the cost of health care for families, businesses, and taxpayers.

New York has already received \$39 million in federal grant money to start the exchange planning process. More grant money is at stake under the September 30 deadline. There are two more federal financing deadlines – March 30 and June 29 of 2012. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@normet.org*.

Publicizing Quality Achievement

At a press conference on August 15, 2011 at Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern, which is a member of the Bon Secours Charity Health System, CEO Philip Patterson got to publicly thank the care team that led to Bon Secours’ winning a quality award from the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet). Bon Secours was recognized for reducing the rates of patients who leave the emergency room before achieving a medical screening to about one percent.

Bon Secours won under the System or Multi-Level Entry category. Patterson credited Bon Secours’ Patient Flow Team with improving service at Good Samaritan, Bon Secours Community Hospital in Port Jervis, and St. Anthony Hospital in Warwick.

The entire system saw more than 50,000 trips to the emergency room in 2010, with 35,149 at Good Samaritan. Good Samaritan is undergoing a \$15.8 million expansion of the emergency department that will result in a 70 percent increase in the number of patient treatment areas. The hospital is also installing new imaging and diagnostic technology in the ER.



From left: Bon Secours Charity Health System CEO Philip Patterson with Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee (D-Suffern), Rockland County Legislature Chairwoman Harriet Cornell (D-West Nyack) and Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of NorMet.

Top Performers Recognized

Six hospitals located in the regions served by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State were recognized by The Joint Commission for having demonstrated sustained excellence in the accrediting body's accountability measures. The six hospitals are: **Bon Secours Community Hospital, John T. Mather Memorial Hospital, North Shore University Hospital, Plainview Hospital, Southside Hospital, and St. Charles Hospital.** These facilities are among an elite

group of 405 acute care and critical access hospitals nationwide to have achieved this status.

The accountability measures are process of care measures that meet tests for reliability, validity, and importance to patient outcomes. The Top Performer is based on hospital data reported on evidence-based clinical processes, including heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care, and children's asthma. A top performing hospital may be recognized for any and all of the five measures. The Top Performers program is designed to celebrate success and inspire continued improvement. Go to The Joint Commission website for more information and details about the top performers.

News Briefs . . .

Welcome to Hospital Quality Expert . . . *Mary Jane Milano* who was named the director of quality and education for the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) and its two sister organizations – the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) headquartered in Hauppauge, NY and the Rochester Regional Health Care Association headquartered in Rochester, NY. Milano will assist hospital members in all areas of performance improvement and quality standards, including patient safety. This newly created position supports existing staff at NorMet who lead several quality-improvement initiatives, under both the Association

and the state's first federally-certified patient safety organization, the NorMet Patient Safety Institute. NorMet's focus in these areas reflects the commitment of its 27 member hospitals to continuous improvement and to providing the safest, highest quality patient care.

Milano most recently served as director of the Physician Quality Collaborative for the Monroe County Medical Society in Rochester and as project director, Emergency Preparedness Program for the Rochester Regional Healthcare Association. Through her policy work on the regional level, as well as on the national level with the American Hospital Association, Milano understands the interplay between health care quality, cost, access, and value.

She holds a Master's Degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.



Mary Jane Milano

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
Sound Shore Medical Center of
Westchester
Vassar Brothers Medical Center
VA Hudson Valley Health Care System
Westchester Medical Center
White Plains Hospital Center

Second NorMet Quality and Patient Safety Awards Competition . . . submission and review process is underway. NorMet hospitals that entered the HANYS Pinnacle Award competition held earlier this year are automatically placed in the pool of candidates for NorMet's 2011 quality and patient safety award. The judging process for both awards will remain aligned, but NorMet regional awards will continue to be reviewed by a regional panel of hospital peers later this year. For additional information about the competition and/or to submit an application if you did not previously submit one to the HANYS Pinnacle Award competition or to advise us that you do not want your HANYS Pinnacle Award submission considered in the NorMet 2011 quality and patient safety competition, please contact qualityawards@normet.org by October 21, 2011. Winners will be publicly recognized on Monday, December 5, 2011 at the joint NorMet/NSHC Trustee briefing to be held at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel.

The Mid-Hudson Economic Regional Development Council . . . is open for business and NorMet senior staff has already weighed in with the council regarding the economic value that hospitals in the Hudson Valley bring to the region. These hospitals contribute \$8.3 billion to the local economy and nearly 51,000 jobs, both directly in hospitals and indirectly in related health care industries and businesses that support the area's health care workforce. NorMet vice president Angela Skretta is co-chair of the council's Health Care Cluster. The Mid-Hudson Council is also seeking public input and hospitals are encouraged to complete the council's online survey at <http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/mid-hudson>. For updates and information about all regional councils go to <http://nyworks.ny.gov>.

National Marketing Awards . . . were bestowed upon Orange Regional Medical Center for excellence in these communications areas. In partnership with their agency, Focus Media, the marketing and public relations department won two meritorious awards from Healthcare Advertising Awards, sponsored by Healthcare Marketing Report, in the categories of Imprinted Materials and Radio single category. The department also earned a Bronze Aster Award in the category of advertising specialty and three silver level awards for other media campaigns and projects.

DataGen Academy 2011 Fall Courses . . . began this month. The academy, a division of HANYS, helps health care professionals understand the complexities and find solutions to issues they face every day. Cost is \$295 per connection. The online courses bring the classroom to the desktop for one or to the conference room for 50 staff to view. Go to HANYS website for the complete fall schedule, program details, and registration information.

Per Minute Rate Drop . . . for HANYS Solutions and Language Line Services became effective July 1, 2011. The per-minute rate for HANYS' members who use Language Line's telephonic interpretation services was reduced to \$1.10 per minute for any language, any time of the day. For more information about all of Language Line's services contact Marty Conroy, Senior Manager, Health Care and Public Sector Programs, Language Line at (877) 862-1285.



Mark Your Calendar for NorMet Events in September/October

- Sept. 26 Environmental Services Directors 9 a.m.
- Sept. 27 RQI Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.
- Sept. 27 Fiscal Policy Committee, noon
- Sept. 27 Quality Leaders and Others: Sorry Works – Disclosure of Event; Palliative Care, 9 a.m. (Video Conference at Vassar Hospital)

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

Upcoming Patient Safety Institute Meetings

Medical Directors Committee	October 6	9:00 – 10:45 a.m.
Patient Falls Committee	October 7	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Patient Safety Committee	October 7	1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Surgical Site Infection Committee	October 18	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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



Northern Metropolitan
Patient Safety Institute
Collaborating to provide the safest, highest quality patient care.

Healthcare Symposium, September 22nd at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown. Go to <https://www.westchester.org>.



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