



STAT News

Published bi-monthly by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC, a consortium of 51 not-for-profit and public hospitals advocating for better health care policy for all those living and working in the nine counties north and east of New York City. **August 21, 2013**

STATE UPDATE: Navigator Agencies Named, Will Facilitate Enrollment in Online Insurance Marketplace

The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC), the Long Island regional office of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, was selected by the New York State Department of Health to serve as one of the state's Navigator Agencies (Long Island region) to directly enroll individuals and businesses into New York's online insurance marketplace – now called **New York State of Health**. 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. Beginning 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.

Navigators will undergo intense training provided by the New York State Department of Health during the next six weeks. At the completion of their training, they will become certified to serve as navigators for **New York State of Health - the official health plan marketplace**. Go to <http://healthbenefitexchange.ny.gov/IPANavigatorMap> for an interactive map of navigator agencies located in the nine counties that comprise the Suburban Hospital Alliance.

Since 2000, NSHC has served as a Facilitated Enrollment Agency, under a New York State Department of Health grant, to assist individuals and families in applying for Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and Family Health Plus. For these programs, NSHC currently maintains a separate website dedicated to enrollment – www.coverage4healthcare.com. 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 NSHC's website, www.nshc.org, and click on the ABCs of Health Care Reform.

FEDERAL UPDATE: 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 regions 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. **Permission to reprint articles granted. Attribution required.*

Hudson Valley Office
400 Stony Brook Court
Newburgh, NY 12550
(845) 562-7520
www.normet.org



Long Island Office
1383 Veterans Memorial Highway, Ste 26
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 435-3000
www.nshc.org