

A Monthly Publication of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association
Vital Signs 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.

NorMet to Help Boost Economic Development for Westchester County



From left: Kevin Dahill, President/CEO, Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association; Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino; Al DelBello, Chair of the Westchester County Association (WCA) at the press conference announcing the WCA’s “Blueprint for Westchester” at the May 12th press conference.

The Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) will be an integral part of the Westchester County Association’s economic revitalization plan “The Blueprint for Westchester,” which was unveiled on May 12, 2011. NorMet president/CEO Kevin Dahill will provide the task force with guidance and information pertaining to the hospital and health care industry and that industry’s role in the county’s economy and social service infrastructure.

The multi-year, multi-million campaign to revitalize Westchester’s economy was developed through a strong collaboration of Westchester’s business, real estate, academic, health care, and urban communities. The Blueprint is spearheaded by the private sector in collaboration with the county. William Cuddy, Jr., executive vice president of CB Richard Ellis will chair the campaign and initiative.

Hospitals in Westchester County contribute about \$6 billion to the region’s economy, both in direct and indirect purchase of supplies, services, and payment of

wages, and are responsible for 20,310 hospital jobs and an additional 11,650 jobs as a result of the economic multiplier effect.

NorMet joined with the Westchester County Association in 2005 in an effort to re-balance the marketplace between commercial insurers, providers, and employers. Since this initial collaboration, the re-balance initiative has grown to include the 24 hospitals located on Long Island represented by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council. The Long Island region is similar to Westchester and other suburban counties north of New York City. Today, this collaborative is known as the Suburban Hospital Alliance. Some of the Alliance’s managed care reforms on the state level include common coding, payment guarantee for pre-authorized services, expedited physician credentialing, more equitable medical loss ratio thresholds, and restoration of prior approval for premium rate increases.

“Robust health care services are vital to the survival of businesses in Westchester County,” said Dahill, “and NorMet is pleased to work with the Westchester County Association and its Blueprint Campaign in ensuring that the hospital and health industry, as well as all other industries in the area from manufacturing to education to real estate and retail, remain strong.”

Medical Malpractice Legislation Stalled for One more Year...Nurse Staffing Ratio Bill a Continuing Threat . . . See page 2 for details.

Session Ends Leaving Hospitals Hopeful for the Future

The New York State legislative session was scheduled to end June 20, 2011, but due to lack of agreement on three of the Governor's key issues, is running at least until Tuesday, June 21. Some of the legislature's unfinished business was good news for the hospital industry. Most importantly, medical malpractice legislation that had been gaining momentum was stalled.

Senate Leader Dean Skelos made a decision to not bring any of the damaging medical malpractice bills to the Senate floor this session. Hospitals are especially grateful that the *Arons* decision was not overturned. Proposed legislation would have overturned the 2007 Court of Appeals ruling that reaffirmed the need for all litigants to seek out relevant information to assure greater fairness in the adjudication of civil lawsuits. The Lancman and DeFrancisco proposals would have prohibited defense counsel in a malpractice lawsuit from privately interviewing the plaintiff's treating physician. No limit would have been placed, however, on the plaintiff's attorney.

Legislation mandating staffing ratios for nurses and other direct care staff in hospitals and nursing homes made a surprising and swift move through the early stages of the legislative process. Having passed the Senate Health Committee, the bill has not progressed in the Assembly. However, this particular issue has strong support in the Assembly and could move quickly and will most likely re-emerge next session.

On a positive note, **Certificate of Need (CON) Reform bills passed both chambers.** This legislation developed by the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYs) would provide regulatory relief to hospitals in the Hudson Valley and promote the more efficient use of state and provider resources. It would remove all routine maintenance and non-clinical projects from the Department of Health's CON process. The governor is expected to sign the bill.

Schumer Pushes for Legislation to End Medication Shortages

White Plains Hospital hosts Senator and sheds light on national crisis

White Plains Hospital in Westchester County served as the backdrop for announcement of legislation proposed by U.S. Senator Charles Schumer that would ensure citizens throughout the country get the medicines they need even when certain medications are in short supply. NorMet CEO/president Kevin Dahill joined the Senator at his May 16 press conference at White Plains Hospital.

The Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act would require drug makers to immediately notify the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) when a raw material shortage, manufacturing problem, or production decision is likely to cause a drug shortage. The early notification would allow the FDA to work with other manufacturers, both domestic and international, to find new sources, and ensure that the supply chain is not interrupted.

“With very little warning, hospitals, doctors, patients at hospitals are told that prescription drugs necessary for a patient's care are unavailable,” said Senator Schumer.

“Hospitals tell us that commonly used drugs that have been available for over a decade are suddenly in short supply across the nation,” said Dahill. “This bill would help solve this problem.”

The shortages often cause clinicians to modify treatment solutions such as substituting oral medications for the intravenous version even though an IV drip is clinically indicated, particularly in pain management cases.

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Executive in medical marketing. The Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards are sponsored by Healthcare Marketing Report. The Medical Center earned a Merit Award in the category of radio, single advertisement for its "The People

were recently bestowed upon Catskill Regional Medical Center's Healthcare Advertising Awards competition and the Aster Awards for "The People behind Catskill Regional Medical Center" radio ad. The department received a Gold Aster Award in the newspaper advertising series category for its "Outpatient Rehabilitation" advertising campaign, and two Bronze Awards in the internal newsletter and radio, single advertisement categories for its internal newsletter and once again for "The People behind Catskill Regional Medical Center" radio ad. More than 3,000 entries were submitted for this year's competition and entries had to score in the top five percent for a Gold Award and top 16 percent for a Bronze Award.

Top Dad Recognition . . . goes to White Plain Hospital president/CEO Jon B. Schandler who was named a 2011 Father of the Year by the American Diabetes Association Father's Day Council of Westchester County. Each year the Father's Day Council identifies and honors fathers who have demonstrated the ability to balance their personal lives with their professional careers, to serve as role models for their children, and to help make a positive difference in their communities. Schandler, who is a past chair of NorMet, and a HANYS board member, was one of three men to receive the honor.

Tools to Prevent Hospital-Acquired Infections . . . are available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Healthcare Quality. A new interactive learning tool, Partnering to Heal: Teaming Up Against Healthcare Associated Infections provides training and information on basic infection protocols for most common disease transmissions and promotes six key behaviors: teamwork; communication; hand-washing; vaccinations against influenza; appropriate use of antibiotics; and proper insertion, use, removal of catheters and ventilators.

Graduate Study Opportunity in Health Care . . . is now available through the Long Island University's Westchester Graduate Campus in Purchase, NY. The Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association helped the university's MBA Advisory Group kick off its new program on Thursday, June 16 at an informational event "The Health Care Reform Fall-out: Strategic Choices for Health Care Leaders," featuring Gayle Capozzalo, president elect of the American College of Healthcare Executives. For those already in or seeking to enter the healthcare field, cohort enrollment opened June 16 for the

Advanced Certificate in Health Care Sector Management, and for the concentration in Health Care Sector Management for those wishing to pursue an MBA. Information: call 845-450-5403 or e-mail rockland@liu.edu.

HANYS' 43rd Annual Membership Conference. . . Implementing Health Care Reform: Putting the Plan in Place will be held June 23 and 24 at the Sagamore on Lake George. The 2011 theme reflects health care providers' need to be proactive agents of change to shape health care reform at the local, state, and national levels. Panel discussions will include: Partnerships, The Future of Medicaid, and Innovative Physician Relationships. Registration and agenda information is available online. Go to www.hanys.org.

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
St. 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



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