



MAY 28, 2001

# Skyline news

REPORTING ON NEW YORK'S HEALTH CARE NEWS

## Engel, Perry Introduce “Nurse of Tomorrow” Bills

In response to GNYHA and GNYHA member concerns regarding the shortage of registered nurses and other health care workers, New York members of Congress and the State Legislature have introduced significant health care workforce legislation.

In Washington, Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY) has introduced H.R.1897, the Nurse of Tomorrow Act of 2001. The bill would provide grants to hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and nursing schools to help them deal with different aspects of the nursing shortage. Grants would be provided to help hospital-based nursing programs expand enrollments and upgrade their facilities, to help hospitals and nursing homes recruit and retain staff and provide tuition assistance and other educational assistance to help employees upgrade their skills, and to help private and government agencies promote nursing as a profession through links with secondary schools. Congresswomen Mary Bono (R-CA) and Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) have cosponsored the bill.

In Albany, Assemblyman Nick Perry (D-Brooklyn) has also worked with GNYHA to introduce similar legislation. Assemblyman Perry's bill, also entitled the Nurse of Tomorrow Act of 2001 (A.7730), would create nurse recruitment and retention grants for hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Grants would be provided to hospitals and nursing homes to enable them

to provide tuition and other educational assistance for health care workers, to schools of nursing to help them expand enrollments, and to a variety of entities to help them work with local school districts in developing programs within secondary

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House Ways and Means Subcommittee Chair Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and GNYHA President Kenneth E. Raske discussed Medicare funding at GNYHA last week.

## Fourteen New York Congressional Delegates Cosponsor BBA Relief Legislation

Members of the New York Congressional Delegation continue to show their support of the health care community by cosponsoring legislation to relieve hospitals from some

of the remaining Medicare cuts contained in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). As *Skyline News* went to press, 10 more New Yorkers had cosponsored H.R.1556,

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### GNYHA Board Meets

*The GNYHA Board of Governors met on May 22, 2001, and took the following actions:*

- approved the audit report of the 2000 financial statements of GNYHA and its subsidiaries and affiliates;
- approved an application for Institutional Membership by New York Westchester Square Medical Center, an application for Associate Membership by Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, and an application for Associate Membership by Yale-New Haven Hospital;
- approved the continuation of GNYHA's various initiatives to secure funding to help members acquire and implement needed information technology, including the proposed creation of a Healthcare Information Technology Corporation, which would be a not-for-profit entity designed to facilitate financing for and promote the development of health care information technology;
- heard a report on GNYHA's various payer reform legislative proposals and ongoing efforts to assist member hospitals in addressing payer practices that result in payment denials; and
- was briefed on hospital-specific summary results from the new QMS 2000 *Quality and Length of Stay Reports*, which are available exclusively to GNYHA members. ■

## SHRPC to Consider New Adult Day Rate Modifications

On May 24, 2001, the State Hospital Review and Planning Council's (SHRPC's) Fiscal Policy Committee voted to recommend that the New York State Department of Health's (DOH's) proposed new rate methodology for Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) programs be changed in several important respects. Under the original DOH proposal, all ADHC programs would have their rates calculated based on actual, not budgeted, costs, with 1998 established as the base year for the calculation of the rates. Also under the proposal, any ADHC program that had achieved occupancy levels of 90% or more in the base year would be subject to a retroactive application of the new rates going back to the first day of the base year. Under the proposal put forward by the SHRPC Fiscal Policy Committee,

the base year would be set at 1999 instead of 1998, reducing by one year the extent to which the new rates could be applied retroactively. In addition, the Committee recommended, subject to approval by DOH counsel, that the rates of approximately 20 ADHC programs that are now reimbursed on a cost basis be exempted from mandatory readjustment under the proposed new rate methodology. In public comments, GNYHA endorsed the exemption of existing cost-based programs from the new rate methodology. However, GNYHA strongly stressed that the only way to avoid causing potentially severe financial losses for certain existing programs is to make the proposed new rates fully prospective, such that they would begin no earlier than January 2002. The Committee's recommendation will be considered at the next full SHRPC meeting, scheduled for June 7, 2001. ■

## NYS Residency Graduates Practicing in Inner City, Rural Areas

A recent analysis conducted by the Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS), School of Public Health, State University of New York at Albany, finds that New York residency program graduates are going to practice in inner city and rural areas in addition to other locations. The finding was reported in the April 2001 report, *Residency Training Outcomes by Specialty in 2000 for New York State*. The report includes a summary of responses to CHWS's survey of resi-

dents graduating from New York training programs. Data on the practice location for graduates in selected specialty categories are included in the table below. ■

Practice Location for Medical Graduates in Selected Specialty Categories			
Specialty Category	Percent Practicing		
	Inner City	Rural	Other
Primary care	25%	10%	65%
Medicine subspecialties	18%	9%	73%
General surgery	33%	7%	60%
Psychiatry	50%	8%	42%

## Fourteen New York Congressional Delegates Cosponsor BBA Relief Legislation *continued from page 1*

which would freeze indirect medical education payments at 6.5% and provide a full inpatient market basket update for Federal fiscal years 2002 and 2003. The additional cosponsors of the bill are Congressmen Sherwood Boehlert, Joseph Crowley, Eliot Engel, Vito Fossella, Peter King, Gregory

Meeks, Jerold Nadler, Jack Quinn, John Sweeney, and Edolphus Towns, raising the total number of New York cosponsors to 14. The bill is expected to save New York State from \$765 million in cuts over five years. Passage of H.R.1556 and its Senate companion bill, S.839, is one of GNYHA's

## Engel, Perry Introduce "Nurse of Tomorrow" Bills *continued from page 1*

schools to encourage students to choose nursing as a profession.

The concept for Nurse of Tomorrow legislation is included in GNYHA's legislative agenda and is based on the Teacher of Tomorrow bill enacted into law by the State Legislature last year. GNYHA is extremely grateful to both Congressman Engel and Assemblyman Perry for their support of our members' concerns. We will continue to work with both of them as these bills move through the legislative process. ■

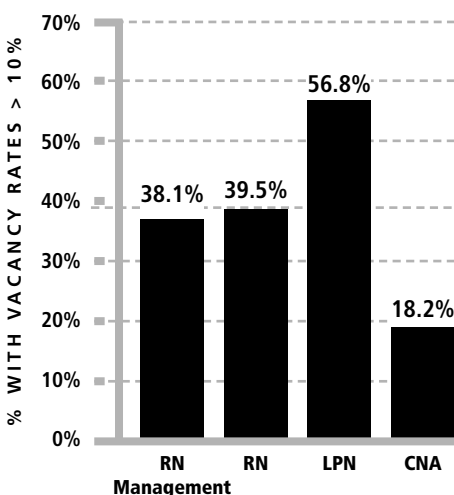
## GNYHA Part of Press Conference on Law that Protects Abandoned Babies

On May 24, 2001, GNYHA President Kenneth E. Raske joined New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and other public officials at a City Hall press conference to raise awareness of a State law designed to protect abandoned newborns. Signed into law in July 2000 by Governor George E. Pataki, the New York State Abandoned Infant Protection Act creates an affirmative defense to criminal prosecution for any individual who abandons a newborn child unharmed and in a safe place, such as a hospital. "We want to get the word out that our hospitals are ready to take in abandoned newborns, no questions asked," said Mr. Raske. GNYHA will hold a member briefing on this law on June 22, 2001; see "Upcoming GNYHA Briefings" on page 4. ■

# GNYHA Survey Quantifies Workforce Shortage in Continuing Care

The recently completed GNYHA survey, *Continuing Care Staffing in the New York City Region, 2001*, shows that nearly 40% of member residential health care facilities experienced vacancy rates of 10% or higher (see chart below) for management registered nurses (RNs), staff RNs, licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and certified nurse assistants (CNAs). GNYHA member facilities experienced the largest number of vacancies for staff RNs (16.0%) and LPNs (15.6%), while management RN vacancies (10.5%) trailed close behind. Although facilities experienced lower vacancies for CNAs (6.7%), the survey found that nearly one-third of facilities were actively

Percentage of GNYHA Continuing Care Members with Vacancy Rates Above 10%



recruiting for more than 10 CNAs and over one-third of facilities employed agency CNAs to fill vacancies. The findings represent responses from continuing care facilities located in New York City, Westchester County, and Long Island.

**Recruiting Issues:** Faced with competition with other jobs that do not require the emotional and physical strengths needed to work in continuing care, the general workforce shortage, and an increasingly aging workforce, facilities are experiencing great difficulty recruiting well-trained direct care staff to care for New York's older and disabled population receiving long term care services. Facilities reported that they have the most difficult time recruiting staff RNs (80%), LPNs (72%), and management RNs (70%). The survey found that management RNs take the longest amount of time to recruit, with 65% of facilities reporting that it took over 60 days to find an appropriately trained RN manager or supervisor.

**Retention Challenges:** In addition to vacancy rates, turnover rates underscored the anecdotal evidence by continuing care members that the turnover within facilities was troublesome. For all categories of direct care staff, median turnover rates were at least 10%. The survey also found that turnover rates among facilities for staff RNs varied broadly, ranging from 0% to 100% per year in 2000.

**Agency Staff:** Continuing care facilities are incurring high costs related to supplement-

tal staffing to compensate for direct care staff vacancies. The survey found that almost one-third of facilities employed agency staff to fill vacancies for CNAs (34%), staff RNs (34%), and LPNs (45%), with 9% of facilities utilizing agency staff to fill management RN vacancies.

**GNYHA's Action Plan:** GNYHA's action plan to address workforce shortages provides a multifaceted approach to the problem, including State and Federal funding to support costs related to recruitment and staffing, financial support for direct care staff education, collaboration with local school boards to promote health careers among students and guidance counselors, and educational programs to promote positive work environments. ■

## Legislative Digest

In recent weeks, the New York State Assembly has taken action on the following health-related legislation.

**Surrogate Decision-Maker:** The Assembly Codes Committee approved A.5523, sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried. The bill creates a process for allowing surrogates to make decisions on behalf of patients who become incapacitated but have neither appointed a health care proxy nor provided "clear and convincing" evidence of their wishes. The bill will be heard next in the Assembly Rules Committee. GNYHA supports this legislation. ■

# GNYHA Staff Appointed to Task Force on the Nursing Shortage

GNYHA staff member Patricia O'Brien, Ph.D., R.N., Associate Vice President for Regulatory and Professional Affairs, has been asked by the New York State Board of Regents to participate in a statewide task force on the future of nursing. Johanna Duncan-Poitier, Deputy Commissioner for the Department's Office of the Professions, extended the invitation to join what she describes as a 21-member "Blue Ribbon" task force of experts on nursing, health care, education, and workforce issues, including Richard P. Mills, M.B.A., Ed.D.,

Commissioner of Education, and Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H., New York State Commissioner of Health. The task force is being chaired by Regent Diane O'Neill McGovern, B.S.N., M.A., Ph.D.

Dr. O'Brien has led GNYHA's initiatives on workforce issues, including the *GNYHA Survey on Nurse Staffing in Hospitals in the New York City Region, 2001* and the Nursing Leadership Seminar Series for nurse managers that is currently taking place through June 2001. On average, over 300 nurses have registered for each of the five seminars, which

are designed to promote a positive work environment. GNYHA has also been actively promoting increased funding to address the nursing shortage, as well as collaboration with the local school board, colleges, schools of nursing, and the 1199/SEIU Employment-Training and Job Security Fund to develop creative recruitment and education strategies for nursing and other health careers. The State task force, scheduled to meet in June and September in New York City, will recommend a State action plan to address the nursing shortage. ■

# GNYHA Holds Briefing on HCFA Study of Clinical Performance Measures

On May 11, 2001, GNYHA held a briefing with the national leadership of the U.S. Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) study on measures of care delivered to Medicare beneficiaries. The study examined treatment and preventive care for six medical conditions prevalent among Medicare beneficiaries.

An analysis of the study methodology and findings was presented, as well as information about best practices to improve performance on the study indicators. Stephen Jencks, M.D., the lead investigator of the HCFA study and Director of the Quality Improvement Group, Office of Clinical Standards and Quality at HCFA, discussed the findings and HCFA's priorities for new initiatives on patient safety. He noted that HCFA's patient safety agenda includes a focus on surgical complications including surgical site infections, medication and device complications, and tracking of adverse events.

The Island Peer Review Organization (IPRO), under contract with HCFA to collect the study data and provide counseling to hos-

pitals to design improvement strategies, discussed frequently identified performance problems and effective strategies implemented in hospitals in NYS. Mary Hibbard, M.D., Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs at IPRO, noted that IPRO has materials for hospitals to advance improvement on the study indicators. David Battleman, M.D., Associate Director of Outcomes Research for the New York Presbyterian Healthcare System, presented data on a systemwide project that significantly improved treatment for pneumonia and performance on the HCFA study indicators.

The HCFA study has immediate implications for hospital-specific performance measurement because the indicators for heart failure, acute myocardial infarction, diabetes, and pneumonia are identical to the indicators that are part of the core measures adopted by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Beginning in 2002, hospitals will be required to report on these measures, which will be integrated into the JCAHO evaluation process. ■

## News About Grants

### Federal Funding Available for Internet Connection for Health-Related Institutions

The National Library of Medicine recently announced the availability of approximately \$600,000 in funds to encourage health-related institutions to connect to the Internet for the purposes of administration, education, research, patient care initiatives, and/or community outreach. Applications are due June 22, 2001.

Approximately 15 one-year grants are expected to be made—up to \$30,000 for a single institution and \$50,000 for a group of institutions. Grants will support the purchase and installation of equipment and services to install a new Internet connection, extend an existing connection to other organizations, or broaden access within an institution that currently has a limited connection.

The Request for Applications (RFA) and Application Form PHS 398, which must be used when submitting a proposal, may both be downloaded at [www.nlm.nih.gov/ep](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/ep). Examples of previously funded projects, as well as information on other relevant grant programs, are also available at this Web site.

For further assistance, please contact Dr. Valerie Florance at (301) 594-4882 or [floranv@mail.nlm.nih.gov](mailto:floranv@mail.nlm.nih.gov). ■

## Upcoming GNYHA Briefings

The following briefings will be held at the GNYHA Conference Center, 555 West 57th Street, 15th Floor. To register, please call Barbara Marino at GNYHA.

### Work Organization Practices: Balancing Quality Care and Cost-Effectiveness

Date: Friday, June 8, 2001

Time: 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

At this briefing, Gil Preuss, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Labor and Human Resource Management at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management, will provide theoretical and practical models to guide the development of new staffing and work organization practices aimed at balancing the seemingly competing priorities of delivering quality care and maintaining cost-effectiveness. The program is co-sponsored by the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes of New York and is part of the GNYHA action plan to address the shortages of registered nurses and other workers. For more information, contact Patricia O'Brien, Ph.D., R.N. at GNYHA.

### New York City Medicaid Managed Care Training Sessions

Date: Monday, June 11, 2001

Time: 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. (each session will cover the same information)

These sessions will provide information about the implementation of Phase II of NYC's mandatory Medicaid managed care program. The training will cover enrollment, the exemption and exclusion processes, the managed care benefits package, and the rules for providers participating in managed care plans. In June or July, GNYHA will host a training session on Medicaid managed care payment issues as well, and it is recommended that staff from patient accounts departments who are already familiar with NYC's mandatory Medicaid man-

aged care program attend that special training session instead of one of the June 11 sessions. For more information contact Bryant Wong at GNYHA.

### OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard

Date: Thursday, June 14, 2001

Time: 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

This member briefing will cover the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) revised Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, which recently became effective for private-sector employees (including voluntary hospitals and nursing homes). Gil Gillen, Assistant Regional Administrator for Federal/State Operations at OSHA, will also discuss OSHA's 1999 compliance directive. For more information, call Doris R. Varlese at GNYHA.

### New York State Abandoned Infant Protection Act

Date: Friday, June 22, 2001

Time: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

This member briefing, held in conjunction with the NYC Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, will cover the NYS State Abandoned Infant Protection Act, which provides an affirmative defense in a prosecution for abandonment of a child who is left in a safe location. Representatives from the NYC Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator, the NYC Administration for Children's Services, District Attorney's offices in GNYHA member counties, GNYHA members, and the Children of Hope Foundation will provide information on the law and their experiences with it. For more information, call Doris R. Varlese at GNYHA.