



MAY 1, 2000

Skyline news

REPORTING ON NEW YORK'S HEALTH CARE NEWS

Effective Date of Proposed Risk-Transfer Regulation Extended

The New York State Department of Insurance has extended the effective date of a proposed regulation that would impose new financial reserve requirements on independent practice associations (IPAs) and other groups that share financial risk with health plans. As a result of the extension, the regulation—which was to have gone into effect in mid-April—will not be effective until June 16, 2000. The extension was provided to give the Department additional time to consid-

er the comments of health plans and provider groups. GNYHA is participating in the process established by the Insurance Department to receive and discuss such comments. GNYHA has recognized the importance of many of the Department's concerns regarding capitated groups' financial experience under risk-sharing arrangements, but believes that, rather than imposing prohibitive reserve requirements on IPAs and others, other steps can and should be taken to address those concerns. ■

Increases in Child Health Plus Coverage Offset by Declines in Medicaid Coverage of Children

A sharp increase over the last several years in the number of children enrolled in Child Health Plus (CHP), New York's subsidized health insurance program for children in lower-income working families, has been offset by a decline in enrollment of low-income children in Medicaid, according to a recent United Hospital Fund report entitled *From Promise to Practice: Expanding Health Insurance for New Yorkers*. Between 1994 and 1999, enrollment in

CHP increased 800%, from 42,270 to 378,765, while the number of children enrolled in Medicaid declined from 1.514 million to 1.301 million, a 14% drop in coverage, during the same period. These changes have translated into a total increase in public coverage of children of only 8% in five years, in spite of New York's success in enrolling children in CHP. The increase in CHP enrollment can be attributed largely to recent expan-

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PIX Receives NCQA Certification

The Professional Information Exchange (PIX, LLC), a credentials verification organization (CVO), has received certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for 10 out of 10 verification services for both managed care organizations and managed behavioral health organization practitioners. PIX is jointly owned by GNYHA Ventures, Inc. and the Medical Society of the State of New York-Medical

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SAVE THE DATE!

**GNYHA
Reception and Cocktail Buffet
Thursday, June 1, 2000
6:30 p.m.**

- Special Recognition of U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, with remarks by U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer
- Installation of the GNYHA Officers and Board of Governors

Invitations will be mailed to Chief Executive Officers this week.

Post-Acute Medicare Spending Declines

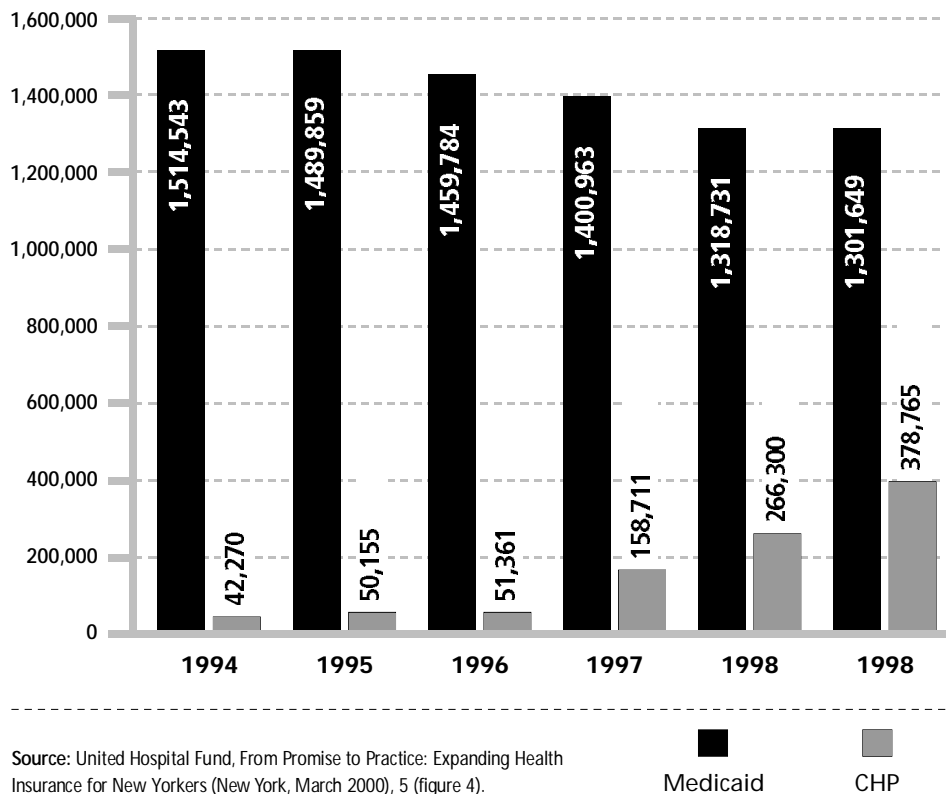
Medicare spending for home health care dropped 45% from Federal fiscal year (FY) 1997 to FY 1999, according to the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO's) April 2000 and April 1999 reports, which analyze the President's budgetary proposals for FY 2000 and FY 2001. In the most recent analysis of the President's proposals for FY 2001, the CBO identified a 12.5% drop in Medicare spending for skilled nursing facility (SNF) services and a 34.9% drop in Medicare spending for home health services in 1999. The CBO attributed the declines to the new payment systems established in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). The CBO indicated that increases in the time to process claims accounted for an average of 3.9 percentage points of the drop in SNF payments and 1.5 percentage points in home health payments. According to the CBO estimates, which take into account changes in Medicare SNF and home health payments adopted as part of the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999, post-acute care payments are projected to increase at an average annual rate of 7% for SNF services and 12% for home health services from FY 2000 through FY 2010. GNYHA believes that the CBO data confirm that the BBA made excessive cuts in payments to SNFs and home health agencies, and support GNYHA's efforts to secure additional post-acute care relief at the Federal level. ■

Increases in Child Health Plus Coverage Offset by Declines in Medicaid Coverage of Children continued from page 1

sions in eligibility and the State's expanded marketing and outreach campaign to alert families to their children's potential eligibility. With a total enrollment of over 450,000 children, New York currently has the largest non-Medicaid health insurance program for children in the nation. On

the other hand, the decline in Medicaid enrollment—a national trend—appears to be due largely to changes in welfare policies that reduced eligibility for cash assistance without providing effective mechanisms to alert individuals to their continued eligibility for Medicaid. ■

NYS Children Enrolled in Medicaid and Child Health Plus, 1994–99



PIX Receives NCQA Certification continued from page 1

Liability Mutual Insurance Company Management Services, LLC.

The 10 verification services are license to practice, drug enforcement agency registration, hospital privileges, education and training, malpractice claims history, national practitioner data bank query, Medical Board sanctions, Medicare/Medicaid sanctions, malpractice insurance, and practitioner application processing. This certification is effective for a two-year period, until April 7, 2002.

NCQA Certification: The NCQA certification process evaluates a CVO's management of its data collection and verification

operation, as well as its process for continuously improving service. NCQA certification also reduces duplicative oversight and inefficient gathering of information by health plans and CVOs. Certification is awarded to participating organizations on the basis of individual credentials elements. PIX's Credentials Verification Experience: Since 1998, PIX has been serving the credentials verification needs of hospitals, managed care plans, long term care facilities, ambulatory surgery centers, and physician organizations. A noteworthy feature of PIX is its practitioner "PROFILE," an

electronically generated composite of verification events and findings, which can serve as a presentation tool for credentials committee deliberations and as an audit tool for reviewing files. Other PIX services include applications processing, online or dictation-enabled application completion, credentials verification, practitioner database management, and periodic Federal/State sanctions checking to meet Federal compliance guidelines. Additionally, PIX helps hospital networks to implement a coordinated approach to credentialing for strategic market positioning. ■

NEWSFLASH . . .

Hospitals Nationwide Are Participating in BabyPressConference.com

BabyPressConference.com, the new maternity service that enables parents to introduce their newborn—in full-motion video—to family and friends via the Internet, has captured the attention of hospitals, parents, and the media across the country. Twenty-four hospitals are currently participating in the service—from Laguna Hills, California, to Everett, Washington, to Beverly, Massachusetts, to Norfolk, Virginia—with another 50 contracts signed for participation. To date, more than 1,000 parents have registered to participate in BabyPressConference.com.

First Maternity Service of Its Kind: Using the latest streaming audio and video technology, BabyPressConference.com is the first service of its kind to let parents participate in a live, interactive netcast directly from the hospital after their baby is born. Invited viewers, who must have a confidential password, can interact with the new family by typing questions to the parents and then hearing and watching the responses on their computer monitors. The service, which is free to parents and viewers, is provided directly in the hospital at an Internet Broadcast Center (IBC) containing the computer and the camera. The IBC, which BabyPressConference.com installs, requires only a 100-square-foot area and high-speed Internet connectivity.

Growing Interest Among Hospitals and in the Press: BabyPressConference.com is up and running in several GNYHA member hospitals, and about 40 New York hospitals will have the service installed by this summer.

Over the last several weeks, BabyPressConference.com has been featured in numerous print and broadcast outlets around the country. As BabyPressConference.com is introduced in a new city, a press conference is held to announce the new service offered by the local hospital.

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Upcoming Briefings and Meetings for GNYHA Members

All of the following events will take place in the GNYHA Conference Center at 555 West 57th Street in Manhattan.

Hospital Nursing Staff Shortages

Date: Thursday, May 4, 2000

Time: 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

At this meeting, Vice Presidents and Directors of Nursing from GNYHA member hospitals will discuss strategies that address current nurse vacancies. The meeting is the first step in GNYHA's initiative to assist hospitals in responding to the shortage of experienced nurses that was identified in the GNYHA Survey of Nurse Staffing in the New York City Region (November 1999). For more information, call Patricia O'Brien, and to register, call Adele Danahy, at GNYHA.

Nursing Home MDS Submission and Correction Training

Date: Monday, May 8, 2000

Time: 2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

GNYHA and NYS Department of Health (DOH) officials will conduct a training session for nursing home staff who prepare and submit Minimum Data Set (MDS) information for residents receiving Medicare services. An update concerning changes in MDS submission will be presented, including the new requirement to submit MDS information to the U.S. Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA's) nationwide data network, the Minimum Data Communications Network, instead of DOH's Health Provider Network. The training will also cover HCFA's new correction policy, which allows facilities to submit corrections for errors detected after submission and to deactivate erroneous MDS records. For more information, call Roxanne Tena-Nelson, and to register, call Jenifer Fergusson, at GNYHA.

HIPAA Workgroup Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2000

Time: 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

GNYHA's first Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) workgroup meeting will help members identify, plan, and prioritize the tasks that need to be completed in order to come into compliance with HIPAA by the time the regulations become effective. Topics to be addressed are proposed privacy regulations and the standards for transactions and code sets. For more information, contact Stewart Presser or Lorraine Ryan, and to register, call Adele Danahy, at GNYHA.

Assisted Living Symposium

Date: Thursday, May 11, 2000

Time: 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

GNYHA's Center for Continuing Care is hosting a one-day symposium entitled *From Vision to Reality: Developing Affordable Assisted Living in New York*. The symposium will address strategic planning issues for members interested in developing assisted living projects for low- and moderate-income populations. The program is designed to take the participant through the development, design, and financing of an assisted living project, and will provide case studies of existing and developing programs. The symposium is intended for chief executive officers, administrators, and directors of planning and implementation. GNYHA has submitted an application for continuing education credits from the National Association of Boards of Examiners of Long Term Care. For more information, contact Roxanne Tena-Nelson, and to register, contact Jenifer Fergusson, at GNYHA.

HIV Reporting and Partner Notification

Date: Monday, May 15, 2000

Time: 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

A final briefing session for GNYHA members will be held to provide information on the implementation of the HIV reporting and partner notification regulations that will become effective on June 1, 2000. The briefing will cover the general requirements of the new regulations and will include a component on occupational exposures. For more information, call Doris Varlese, and to register, call Adele Danahy, at GNYHA.

Medicare Payment Denials for Outpatient Psychiatric Services

Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Time: 1:00–4:00 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss problems GNYHA members are having when billing for outpatient psychiatric services. A representative of Empire Medicare Services, the fiscal intermediary for the U.S. Health Care Financing Administration, will present information on the Medicare Part A Local Medical Review Policy on Outpatient Psychiatric Services, including covered services, medical necessity, documentation, treatment plan requirements, and additional development requests. These services were the focus of a recently published audit conducted by the Office of the Inspector General. For more information, call Patricia O'Brien, and to register, call Adele Danahy, at GNYHA.

AROUND

Arthur Klein, M.D., has been appointed Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President of the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System. Dr. Klein will continue in his role as President of the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare Network and will also remain Executive Vice Chairman of Pediatrics, Associate Director of Pediatric Cardiology, and Professor of Clinical Pediatrics. • **Mary Ellen Schattman** was appointed Director of the Office of Insured Healthcare Facilities, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Housing, Federal Housing Administration, where she will help hospitals access affordable financing. Her prior positions include service on the Texas Hospital Association Blue Ribbon Task Force for Hospital Reform, Texas Health Policy Task Force, and the Hospital Payment Advisory Committee. ■

In recent weeks, the New York State Senate and Assembly have considered the following health care-related legislation.

Nursing Care Quality Protection Act: A.2623/S.3234, sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried and Senator John DeFrancisco, passed the full Assembly and was referred to the Senate Health Committee on April 17. This legislation would require facilities to disclose nursing quality indicators and directs the Commissioner of Health to promulgate rules and regulations on information to be disclosed. GNYHA has concerns that such information would be unclear and difficult to interpret. Also, GNYHA acknowledges hospitals' responsibility to provide quality patient care and fully believes that the current mechanisms for ensuring hospitals' compliance with recognized standards of care are adequate. GNYHA, therefore, believes that this legislation is unnecessary. •

Mental Health Treatment Plans: A.2204, sponsored by Assemblyman James Brennan, passed the full Assembly and was referred to the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities on April 17. A.2204 would extend the same treatment plan requirements that currently apply to State-operated facilities to all facilities licensed or certified by the NYS Office of Mental Health. GNYHA opposes A.2204, as the need for this legislation is not clear. Treatment plans are already developed for all inpatients in Article 28 hospitals. Moreover, the requirements set by the current statute are appropriate for inpatients who are receiving long-term care. The same requirements, when applied to short-term, acute-care inpatient settings, are onerous and interfere with safe and efficient patient care. •

New York State Sharps Safety Act: A.7144-C, sponsored by Assemblyman Brian McLaughlin, passed the full Assembly on April 17 and was referred to the Senate Health Committee. This bill would require the development of regulations governing the use of needles in the health care industry to prevent and reduce sharp injuries by using safer technologies. •

Hearing-Impaired Patients: A.842, introduced by Assemblyman Steven Sanders, was referred to the full Assembly on April 17. A.842 requires DOH to develop regulations pertaining to hard-of-hearing hospital patients. GNYHA supports the general intent of this bill, but believes that the requirement to furnish a qualified interpreter, when necessary, duplicates existing State regulations and would be difficult to implement. GNYHA believes that existing law requiring hospitals to provide an interpreter for a hearing-impaired patient within 10 minutes in an emergency setting and within 20 minutes in regular inpatient and outpatient settings is sufficient. •

Whistle-Blower Protection: A.3089, introduced by Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, which would provide whistle-blower protection to employees of health facilities who provide information to the press and government officials concerning an alleged violation of law that creates a health or safety risk to the public, passed the full Assembly on April 17. •

Emergency Medical Services: A.3322, introduced by Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez, would provide for the revocation or suspension of an ambulance service certificate or advanced life support first-response service certificate in instances where a certificate holder has improperly requested information about an individual's health care coverage or denied services because of health care coverage. A.3322 was referred by the Assembly Rules Committee to the full Assembly on April 17. •

Scope of Practice of Nurse Practitioners: A.5100, sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, passed the full Assembly and was referred to the Senate Health Committee on April 17. When the Legislature authorized the practice of nurse practitioner in 1988 to include the ability to treat, diagnose, refer, and prescribe care, conforming changes to other statutes were not made. A.5100 would make these necessary changes to reflect the previously authorized scope of practice of nurse practitioners. •

Access to Medical Records: A.2590 would authorize guardians of incompetent persons and surrogates' court fiduciaries to be included as qualified persons eligible to request access to medical records when necessary for the performance of their responsibilities to the incompetent person. A.2590, sponsored by Assemblyman Vito Lopez, passed the full Assembly and was referred to the Senate Health Committee on April 17. •

Eye Screening of Newborn Infants: S.7287/A.10841 would require hospitals to establish programs for eye screening of certain newborn infants prior to discharge as well as establish a newborn eye-screening task force. S.7287, sponsored by Senator Dean Skelos, passed the Senate Health Committee on April 18 and was referred to the full Senate. A.10841 was introduced by Assemblywoman Nettie Mayersohn and was referred to the Health Committee in the Assembly on April 12. •

Extension of Medicaid Eligibility: S.7373/A.10220 would extend for one year, to July 1, 2001, the Office of Children and Family Services' authority to provide six months guaranteed Medicaid eligibility to welfare recipients enrolled in comprehensive health services plans. S.7373, introduced by Senator Kemp Hannon, passed the Senate Health Committee and was referred to the full Senate on April 18. A.10220, sponsored by Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez, was introduced and referred to the Assembly Social Services Committee on March 27. ■

State Approves Eight HIV SNP Applications

On April 26, 2000, Governor George E. Pataki announced the approval of eight organizations to be HIV special needs plans (SNPs). HIV SNPs are intended to be managed care plans that will provide comprehensive health services to eligible Medicaid recipients who are diagnosed with HIV and/or AIDS. The State is authorized to certify up to 12 HIV SNPs statewide, but received only 10 applications in total. The organizations whose plans were approved are AIDS Day Services Association of New York State; Community Care Partners, Inc.; Fidelis Care New York; HealthFirst PHSP, Inc.; Health Pact, LLC; Healthy Futures; MetroPlus Health Plan; and New York Presbyterian Healthcare System. The State also announced that \$12 million in grant funding will be provided to the eight plans to assist with developmental needs and other costs. ■

Hospitals Nationwide Are Participating in BabyPressConference.com

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With the help of the hospital public relations departments, these press conferences have been extremely successful and generated dozens of stories and feature articles about BabyPressConference.com. Coverage to date has included front-page articles in the Orange County Register and The Salem Evening News articles in USA Today, Time, and dozens of daily and weekly newspapers, and compelling broadcast segments on more than 100 television stations, including the Fox News Channel, which ran the story nationally.

BabyPressConference.com was created by GNYHA Ventures, Inc., a wholly owned, for-profit subsidiary of GNYHA. Interested hospitals and individuals can learn more about BabyPressConference.com at the Web site, www.BabyPressConference.com, or by calling 1-877-VIEW-BPC (1-877-843-9272). ■