



FEDERAL UPDATE: ACA Repeal Set in Motion

With the House's vote on a budget resolution today, a framework for repealing the Affordable Care Act is set in motion. The Senate passed the resolution earlier this week. The budget resolution includes instructions to four key House and Senate committees, providing target levels for spending in different areas. These committees will now work on a bill to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act. Through the reconciliation process, items in the bill must be related to taxes or spending and the long-term federal debt in some way. The reconciliation process is a bit complex, and the hospital industry does not expect the details of that to be worked through until the spring. At risk is insurance for more than 2.7 million New Yorkers who obtained insurance through the marketplace and \$4.3 billion in lost revenue during the next 10 years to hospitals on Long Island and throughout the Hudson Valley. This is because there is no indication at this time that the repeal legislation will also restore the planned cuts to hospitals that were negotiated into the ACA in 2010, as one way to help pay for the law. According to Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State President/CEO Kevin Dahill, there is no easy or definitive answer about how these actions will impact consumers or providers. "Congressional leaders and the president-elect have talked about their intent to replace the coverage provided by the ACA, but there is no plan on the table at this time that addresses what will happen to people who have ACA coverage now, what the new coverage mechanism would be, or how it will be paid for. We continue to advocate for immediate and meaningful replacement," said Dahill.

STATE UPDATE: Marketplace Insurance Enrollment Intensifies

While Congress works to undo many aspects of the Affordable Care Act, the New York State of Health Insurance Marketplace remains open for business. The deadline for coverage that begins February 1, 2017 occurs January 18, 2017. Open enrollment continues, however, through January 31, 2017.

New York State Health Insurance Marketplace officials report that enrollment activity has been very high these past few weeks. Since the last Open Enrollment period ended January 31, 2016, participation in the New York State of Health Marketplace has increased more than 22 percent. In addition, enrollment has increased in all 62 counties of the state, and the overall share of New Yorkers now enrolled through the New York State of Health Marketplace has reached nearly 18 percent of the state's population.

Enrollment in the small business marketplace, Child Health Plus, Medicaid, and the Essential Plan are available year long, as is enrollment in Qualified Health Plans for individuals with a qualifying life event, like loss of employer-provided coverage. Individuals and small businesses can shop the marketplace through an online portal www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov, by calling the state's customer service number at 855-355-5777, or by meeting with a state-certified navigator.

On Long Island, Suburban Hospital Alliance regional affiliate the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) is one of three state-appointed navigator agencies for the region. The Hudson Valley region is serviced by the Community Service Society of New York, Maternal Infant Services Network of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, and the Westchester County and Rockland County Departments of Health. Navigators are available to assist individuals, businesses, and families in understanding insurance options offered and in purchasing insurance. The NSHC navigator agency maintains a user-friendly, bilingual website that lists enrollment sites and dates and other helpful information at www.coverage4healthcare.org. **NSHC will hold open enrollment at its Hauppauge location (1383 Veterans Memorial Highway, Suite 26) on January 26, 2017 from 4 to 8 p.m.** *Permission to reprint articles granted. Attribution required.