

MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

October 2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Government Relations and Special Projects - Tracey DeShields

State Policy Update

Staff have continued work on legislative initiatives. Senate Bill 837 – Health – Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives Workgroup (Advance Directives Workgroup) has had two meetings. In conjunction with the workgroup, two subgroups were formed and have met: The Technical Subgroup and the Policy Subgroup. Recommendations from both the workgroup and the subgroup meetings are being developed. The next meeting of the Advance Directives Workgroup is on November 4th.

Staff is continuing work on a report to the legislature to determine whether CRISP is a feasible entity to do financial eligibility determinations for patients with medical debt. Staff is working with the HSCRC on a report due to the legislature assessing the Hospital at Home model that Johns Hopkins Medical System is looking to pursue.

Lastly, staff completed a study to assess Medicare reimbursement for advance care planning in long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes. The findings of the study was presented at the October Commission meeting.

MHCC-related news coverage: selected articles and commentary

Health Facilities

[University of Maryland Charles Regional Hospital Center. “UM Charles Regional opens new behavioral health practice.” The Southern Maryland Chronicle. October 6, 2021. Available from: https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2021/10/06/um-charles-regional-opens-new-behavioral-health-practice/](https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2021/10/06/um-charles-regional-opens-new-behavioral-health-practice/)

[CBS Baltimore Staff. “Maryland delegation announces more than 12M in funding to renovate community health centers.” CBS Baltimore. October 7, 2021. Available from: https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2021/10/07/maryland-delegation-announces-more-than-12m-in-funding-to-renovate-community-health-centers/](https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2021/10/07/maryland-delegation-announces-more-than-12m-in-funding-to-renovate-community-health-centers/)

[Ahaghotu, C. “Gov. Hogan announces steps for new Therapeutic Treatment Center in Baltimore.” Fox 5 News. October 10, 2021. Available from: https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/gov-hogan-announces-steps-for-new-therapeutic-treatment-center-in-baltimore](https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/gov-hogan-announces-steps-for-new-therapeutic-treatment-center-in-baltimore)

Health Disparities and Health Equity

[Maryland Department of Health. “Maryland Department of Health announces Maryland Commission on health equity.” MDH. October 15, 2021. Available from: https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-announces-MD-Commission-on-Health-Equity.aspx](https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-announces-MD-Commission-on-Health-Equity.aspx)

[Pasia, N. “MCHRC launches RFP for \\$13 million health equity grant.” State of Reform. October 18, 2021. Available from: https://stateofreform.com/news/maryland/2021/10/mchrc-launches-rfp-for-13-million-health-equity-grant/](https://stateofreform.com/news/maryland/2021/10/mchrc-launches-rfp-for-13-million-health-equity-grant/)

Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund

Uncompensated Care Processing

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$160,350.38 for uncompensated care claims through October 2021.

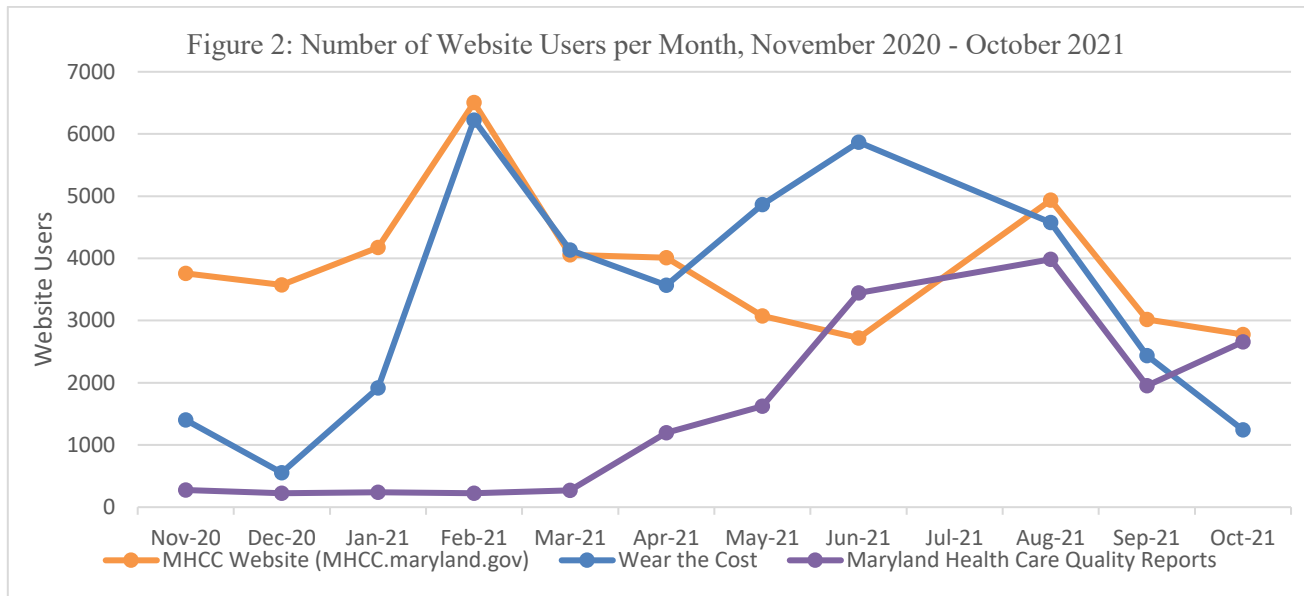
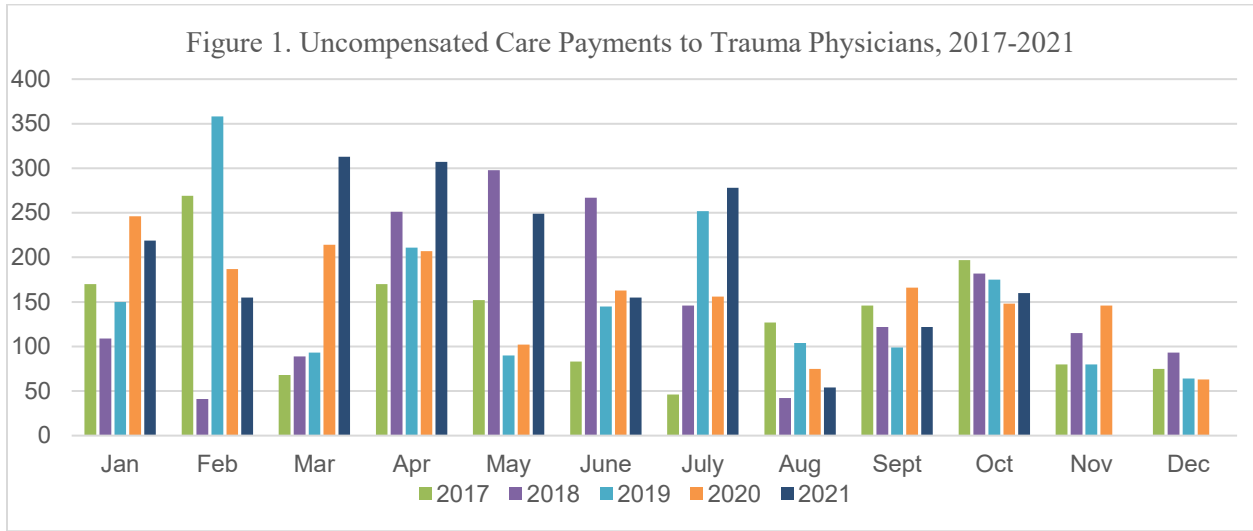


Figure 2 shows the number of website users over a 12-month period for each of the four websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is below.

MHCC Website: The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 2,774 users in the October.

Wear The Cost

MHCC release the Wear The Cost 2018/19 on October/8/2021. Web traffic for the month of October was 1245.

[Maryland Quality Reporting](#)

The Maryland Quality Reporting had 1,953 users, 2,659 sessions and 3,787 pageviews in September. The average session duration decreased 10.0% to 1 minute and 30 seconds.

The site receives the most website referrals from MHCC’s homepage (58.6%). Additionally, MHCC joined the Nextdoor platform, resulting in 24 referred users and accounting for 4.2% of all referrals following the inaugural welcome post.

Facebook continues to be the primary referral social media source, accounting for 90.0% of all social referrals and Yelp was a new source of social media referrals for the month.

CENTER FOR ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Cost and Quality Analysis – Shankar Mesta

MCDB Data Submission Status, Payor Compliance, and Technical Support

The 2020 annual MHBE and HSCRC standard analytical file (SAF) were delivered at the end of October 2021

Eight (23%) payors submitted complete clean Quarter 3 2021 data as of end of October 2021.

As the MHCC transitions to Onpoint Data Systems for Social and Scientific Systems as the MCDB data vendor, staff is paying a special attention to payors timely submission of the Quarter 3 2021 claims. To facilitate a smooth data transition to the new data vendor, MHCC staff has been sending weekly reminders to payors to submit clean 2021 Quarter 3 data before the deadline of 11/30/2021. Eight (23%) payors successfully passed the Tier 3 (final step) data quality validation checks for their Quarter 3 submissions. Sixteen payors’ (48%) data submissions under review. Ten (29%) payors have not made any submission to MCDB. MHCC will have to impose penalties if the deadlines are not met.

2022 MCDB Data Submission Manual

2022 MCDB Data Submission Manual has been successfully updated with new changes. There are no changes in Maryland’s reporting requirements. However, the manual will have the details of the new portal link where the payors will be uploading the raw data and new the vendor point of contact whom the payors can reach out to get technical information related to the data submission manual. MHCC staff shared the draft version with payor representatives for their feedback on the new changes. Staff will present the new manual for approval at the November Commissioners meeting. The manual will be posted immediately after the meeting, pending Commissioner’s approval.

APCD Public Reporting and Data Release – Mahlet 'Mahi' Nigatu

Data Release

MCDB data application from Center for Population Health IT, Health Policy and Management John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

The project to be undertaken by the school is titled: Advancing Maryland's Statewide Suicide Data Warehouse to Improve Individual and Population-level Mortality Prediction and Prevention. MHCC will start reviewing the application in the month of November.

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acute Care Policy and Planning – Eileen Fleck

Certification of Ongoing Performance

On October 21, 2021, the Commission approved a Certificate of Ongoing Performance for Suburban Hospital's provision of percutaneous coronary intervention services (Docket No. 19-15-CP031) and approved a Certificate of Ongoing Performance for Suburban Hospital's provision of cardiac surgery services (Docket No. 17-15-CP003). Both service programs were certified for a period of four years.

Long Term Care Policy and Planning – Linda Cole

Home Health Agency 2022 CON Review Schedule

As a follow-up to the Commission's approval of jurisdictional qualifying criteria and applicant qualification criteria, five jurisdictions have been identified as having a need for additional home health agency (HHA) service providers: Carroll, Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. The Commission will designate a Lower Eastern Shore region as the applicable geographic area for a review cycle covering the latter four jurisdictions. Carroll County will be offered as a single jurisdiction for a second review cycle. Notice of the review schedule will be published in the November 19, 2021 issue of the *Maryland Register*. The HHA CON review schedule will also be posted on the Commission's website.

Home Health Survey

Data collection for the FY 2020 Home Health Agency Survey continues. On October 12, 2021, 30-day reminder notices were transmitted to providers.

Certificate of Need – Wynnee Hawk

CON's Approved

Avenues Recovery Center of Chesapeake Bay – (Dorchester County) – Docket No. 21-09-2449

Establishment of a 20-bed alcoholism and drug abuse intermediate care facility (ICF) in Cambridge. The project will be located at existing center for alcoholism and drug abuse treatment that provides outpatient and residential service programs.

Approved Cost: \$55,000

CON Exemptions Approved

Grace Medical Center and Sinai Hospital of Baltimore – (Baltimore City) – Docket No. 21-24-EX013

Conversion of Grace Medical Center (Grace), a general hospital, to a freestanding medical facility (FMF) with Sinai Hospital of Baltimore serving as the parent hospital of the FMF, which will be located on the site of Grace. The FMF will have 27 emergency treatment spaces, a triage room, and a nine-bed observation unit. In addition, the FMF will provide rate-regulated outpatient surgical services (two operating rooms), diagnostic imaging services, cardiology, clinic services, infusion therapy, dialysis, intensive outpatient behavioral health and substance use treatment, laboratory services, and pharmacy services.

Approved Cost: \$61,648,000

First Use Approvals

University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Easton and University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Dorchester – (Dorchester County) - Docket No. 18-09-EX006

Conversion of the University of Maryland (UM) Shore Medical Center at Dorchester, a general hospital in Cambridge, to an FMF. UM Shore Medical Center at Easton will be the FMF's parent hospital.

Final Project Cost: \$37,113,212

UM Shore Medical Center at Easton (Talbot County) and UM Shore Medical Center at Dorchester – Docket No. 18-20-EX007

Introduction of acute psychiatric services, reviewed as a consolidation of inpatient hospital services within a merged asset system, at UM Shore Medical Center at Easton, replacing the acute psychiatric hospital services provided at UM Shore Medical Center at Dorchester, which is being converted to an FMF providing no inpatient services. A 12-bed psychiatric unit for adults was created through renovation at the hospital. This consolidation project "relocated" 17 general medical/surgical beds (no change in physical facilities) and 12 acute psychiatric beds from UM Shore Medical Center at Dorchester to UM Shore Medical Center at Easton.

Final Project Cost: \$5,379,052

Determinations of Coverage

- **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

Medstar Medical Group-Southern Maryland, LLC – (Charles County)

The addition of urological procedures at the above-referenced ambulatory surgery center and the addition of a new practitioner, Shafquat Meraj, M.D.

University of Maryland Shore Regional Health Surgery Center at Cambridge, LLC – (Dorchester County)

The addition of gynecology services at the above-referenced outpatient surgical center, for which a determination was previously made authorizing its establishment, a change in the anticipated opening date, and the addition of new practitioners; Javier H. Cajina, M.D., Palak K. Doshi, D.O., Audrey B. Drummey, M.D., and Barbara A. Keirns, M.D.

- **Acquisition/Change of Ownership**

Brighton Gardens of Tuckermans Lane – (Montgomery County)

Acquisition of the above-referenced comprehensive care facility by SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane LLC and SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane OpCo LLC. The facility is currently owned by HCP Bethesda MD OpCo, LLC. In the proposed transaction, the bed rights will be acquired by SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane OpCo LLC and this entity will also become the operator of the facility. The owner of the real property will be SJV 1 Tuckerman Lane LLC.

Purchase Price: \$10,400,000

Hearthstone Nursing and Rehabilitation Center – (Allegany County)

Acquisition of the above-referenced CCF by SJ Capital Group LLC and Cumberland HC Operations LLC. Currently, the land, building, bed rights and related assets are owned by Barton Healthcare Management Inc., which also operates the facility. In the proposed transaction, the building and land will be acquired by SJ Capital Group, LLC. Cumberland HC Operations LLC will acquire the assets related to the operation of the facility as well as the bed rights and will lease the facility from SJ Capital Group, LLC.

Purchase Price: \$15,150,000

“Waiver” Bed Additions (No CON required)

Shady Grove Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation – (Montgomery County)

Addition of 10 CCF beds for a total of 144 beds

Pending Notices of Acquisition/Change of Ownership for CCFs (Nursing Homes)

North Oaks Continuing Care Retirement Community (Autumn Ridge at North Oaks is the CCF)
(Baltimore County)

Transaction: Acquisition of the Assets

Current Owner of the Real Property: North Oaks Real Estate Partnership

Current owner of beds rights: North Oaks Partnership

Owner post-transaction: Wilson Lane Realty, LLC

Operator and owner of beds rights post-transaction: North Oaks Communities, LLC

Purchase Price: \$32,000,000

Ravenwood Nursing Care Center – (Washington County)

Transaction: Acquisition of the Assets

Current Owner of the Real Property, owner of the bed rights and operator of the facility: Diakon Lutheran Senior Living, Maryland, LLC

Owner post-transaction:

Owner of the real property and beds rights: 1183 Luther Drive, LLC

Operator of the facility: Creekside SNF Operating Company, LLC

Purchase Price: \$15,850,000

CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATION & INNOVATIVE CARE DELIVERY

Health Information Technology Division – Nikki Majewski, Division Chief

Telehealth Study

A kick-off meeting was held with the National Opinion Research Center (dba NORC), a research organization that was competitively selected to complete the telehealth study required by Chapter 70 (House Bill 123) and Chapter 71 (Senate Bill 3) of the 2021 Laws of Maryland (LOM). Staff developed a study web page where milestone updates will be posted. Recommendations on telehealth coverage and payment levels relative to in-person care are due to the Senate Finance Committee and House Health and Government Operations Committee by December 1, 2022.

Patient Generated Health Data

An environmental scan (scan) is nearing completion of privacy and security legislation in other states aimed at strengthening protections for patient generated health data. Consumers are increasingly using third-party applications to record health-related data that may be shared with providers. These applications often fall

outside the scope of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Scan findings will inform strategies to mitigate privacy and security concerns.

Hospital Assessment

Planning has begun for the *2022 Hospital Health Information Technology Survey* (survey). The survey will assess use of technology to improve the patient and provider experience and the perception of its impact on clinical and administrative outcomes. Select hospital representatives will be invited to contribute to the development of survey questions. The survey is targeted for release in February.

Electronic Data Interchange

An insights brief (brief) was completed using information from the 2020 Electronic Data Interchange Progress Report. Payers with a premium volume of \$1 million or more annually submit census-related data on administrative health care transactions required by COMAR 10.25.09, *Requirements for Payers to Designate Electronic Health Networks*. The brief highlights electronic claim submissions and includes anecdotal information on the rationale for submitting paper claims from several practices.

Nursing Home Assessment

Drafting of nursing home interview questions is progressing regarding use and perceived value of health IT. Select nursing home representatives will be invited to provide feedback on the draft questions. Findings will be combined with data gathered from the Annual Long Term Care Survey to inform initiatives aimed increasing the value of health IT in post-acute care.

Cybersecurity Symposium

More than 120 stakeholders attended the virtual Cybersecurity Symposium (symposium) on November 8th. The symposium was convened in collaboration with the Health Services Cost Review Commission, Maryland Hospital Association, Maryland Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, and Health Facilities Association of Maryland. Local and national health care leaders shared best practices to mitigate supply chain cyber risks and key business and regulatory considerations. This is the fourth symposium since 2016.

Cybersecurity Webinar

Planning commenced for an ambulatory practice webinar on cybersecurity best practices and key cyber liability considerations. Presentations will overview cyber-related risks and liability protection that practices can adopt to protect against leading cyber risks. The webinar is planned for the first quarter of 2022.

Innovative Care Delivery Division – Melanie Cavaliere, Division Chief

Advanced Care Delivery

Maryland Primary Care Program (MDPCP) Advisory Council

The MDPCP Advisory Council (council) convened to discuss a Track 3 proposal (proposal) for consideration by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI). The proposal builds on the Track 3 Policy Framework (framework) developed by the council in collaboration with the MDPCP Program Management Office (PMO) during the fourth quarter of 2020. The framework was not accepted by CMMI; additional alignment with the federal Primary Care First model was requested. The PMO plans to submit the proposal in November.

Practice Transformation Grant Activities

Practice recruitment for the *Advancing Practice Transformation in Ambulatory Practices* program is underway. The grantee, MedChi Care Transformation Organization (CTO), hosted a series of webinars aimed at providing practices with information about the program and application process. The program provides support for transformation activities that prepare practices to deliver efficient, high-quality, team-based care.

Practice Transformation Network

An environmental scan (scan) of practices that participated in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Practice Transformation Network (PTN) initiative (2016–2019) is underway. The scan assesses transformation progress since the PTN concluded and participation in value-based care delivery models.

Health Equity Study

Staff provided support for a telehealth health equity study (study) to the Maryland Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland, School of Public Health. The study aims to engage primary care providers in select communities to share their telehealth experience in care delivery with Black and Hispanic populations during the COVID-19 public health emergency. State Designated Management Service Organizations are assisting in practice identification efforts.

Learning Networks

Planning is progressing on a three-part ambulatory provider webinar series (series) focused on building practice awareness of advanced care delivery and payment models. Staff convened a podiatry webinar focused on increasing knowledge of the CMS Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) requirements. The webinar included a national podiatric MIPS subject matter expert; attendees received continuing medical education credits. Staff also presented at the 2021 National Telehealth Summit, which brings together industry leaders on telehealth policy and technology.

Electronic Health Network Workgroup

Staff is in discussions with the Cooperative Exchange, The National Clearinghouse Association, to identify technical challenges of implementing Chapters 790 (House Bill 1022) and 791 (Senate Bill 748) of the 2021 LOM. The law requires MHCC certified electronic health networks to submit administrative health care transactions originating from a Maryland-based provider to the State Designated HIE (CRISP) for public health and clinical purposes.

Health Information Exchange Division – Alana Sutherland, Division Chief

Privacy and Security Regulations

The HIE Policy Board (workgroup) convened to review proposed modifications to COMAR 10.25.18 *Health Information Exchanges: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information* (regulations) recommended by Post & Schell, P.C. (contractor). The contractor was engaged to identify changes to modernize the regulations. The workgroup completed a review of sections .01 through .05 of the regulations, which consist of 12 sections. The workgroup is expected to meet monthly through January 2022.

Consumer Consent Management

Development of a consumer consent management utility (CMU) application is advancing. Several MHCC registered HIEs were invited to participate in testing the CMU technical connection with CRISP. Chapter 798 (House Bill 1375) of the 2021 LOM requires the State Designated HIE to develop a centralized approach for consumers to opt-out or opt back into electronic health information exchange.

HIE Roundtable

An HIE Roundtable (roundtable) planning committee (committee) consisting of about 11 state and regional HIEs from across the country met to consider key policy questions for an MHCC roundtable event scheduled for early 2022. Roundtable participants deliberated on select shared policy challenges and potential solutions for advancing HIE. About 30 HIEs have expressed an interest in participating in the roundtable. The committee is expected to meet monthly through year end to finalize the agenda.

CENTER FOR QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The Maryland Quality Reporting (MQR) website

MQR Website Updates

Staff continue to work with Advanta Government Services (AGS), the website contractor, to update the newly redesigned website. Routine updates and maintenance are ongoing. Recent updates include adult medical day care providers and select long term care fact sheets. The next update will occur later this fall and will include refreshed data for hospitals, nursing homes and home health agencies. The health disparities

section of the website now includes an interactive feature that allows consumers to view the top 25 common medical conditions by race and ethnicity.

MQR Website Traffic

Staff monitors traffic to the site consumer site using Google Analytics software. Website traffic was slightly higher in October (2,061 users) compared to traffic from the previous month (1,953 users). The most frequently viewed topics on the MQR site include assisted living, nursing homes, and hospital price transparency. Traffic to the site is presented graphically under the Executive Direction section of this update.

MQR Website Promotion

Promotion of the MQR website is a Center priority. There were approximately 100 social media posts in October. Topics included National Health Care Quality Week, Health Literacy Month, and general promotional posts for the MQR website. These topics generally coincide with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Health Observances or other important health related events and are designed to link readers back to the MQR website.

Staff also continue to engage with various communities in the state using the NextDoor social media platform. Initial impressions and engagement from the platform were promising and staff will continue to tailor messaging based on different needs among different communities and neighborhoods.

The staff also continue to work with Maryland Public Television (MPT) to develop promotional options for increasing public awareness of the MQR website.

Hospital Quality Initiatives – Courtney Carta

Healthcare Associated Infections – State and National Comparisons during COVID

The Journal of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology recently published an article comparing national data HAI for 2019 and 2020, by quarter, to see how HAIs were impacted during the COVID pandemic. Results showed that Q1 2020 HAIs improved (significantly fewer infections than predicted) compared to Q1 2019. As the pandemic progressed further in to 2020, HAIs significantly increased, particularly in MRSA and device-associated infections (CLABSI and CAUTI). However, HAIs improved for surgical site infections (COLO and HYST) and CDI.

Staff replicated the study using Maryland data and results were not as varied. During the time of crisis, Maryland hospitals performance was relatively stable. Though infections increased in the later quarters of 2020 compared to 2019, the increases were only statistically significant for CLABSI and CAUTI. Surveillance for these infection types are location-based and include ICUs which were highly occupied units during the height of the pandemic in 2020. Despite the significant increases, Maryland hospital performance was still in the range of “no different than the national experience.”

Staff completed a regional analysis of this data at the request of Commissioners at the October Commission meeting. There were no notable trends or differences in health care associated infections across the various regions in the state. Hospitals in the central region of Maryland saw significant increases in standardized infection ratios for CLABSI and CAUTI in Q4 2020 which was similar to the nation. However, the overall performance was still in the range of “no different than the national experience.”

HCAHPS Data Collection

Patient satisfaction measures across Maryland hospitals have remained historically lower than national averages. Starting in January 2022, MHCC will require acute care hospitals to begin submitting detailed Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) data. This will allow for a more thorough analysis of potential differences in patient satisfaction across race, ethnicity, and service lines (e.g., maternity, surgical, medical). Staff are developing technical specifications, data submission materials, and communications to distribute to hospitals prior to the new requirement taking effect. Staff will host a webinar later this fall for hospitals in preparation for the new requirement.

Long Term Care and Health Plan Quality Initiatives—Stacy Howes

Long-Term Care Planning Guide

HB599 was passed in Spring 2021, and it required MHCC to create a Long-Term Care Planning Guide for Maryland residents. The guide includes information on what to plan for (including costs), how to start a conversation about long-term care planning needs, and useful contact information for local resources. The English and Spanish digital versions of the brochure have been completed. We have begun the process of designing a long term care planning section for the Maryland Quality Reporting page, and we will have physical copies of the brochure printed early next year.

Nursing Home Family Experience of Care Survey

All eligible participants have received invitations to complete the survey. A second physical mailing is scheduled before Thanksgiving. So far, we have a 16% response rate which is comparable to this point in data collection for previous years. Staff continue to respond to phone calls and emails about the survey.

Health Plan Quality Initiative

The current contract is ending, and a new Request for Proposals (RFP) is still in preparation. The new RFP will adjust the focus to include not only reporting on HEDIS and CAHPS measures but also will address information and data gaps in behavioral health and health disparities measures.

Outpatient Quality Initiative—Mariama Gondo

Health Disparities Initiative

In response to House Bill 309/Senate Bill 565, staff has drafted, tested, and implemented a brief questionnaire to collect information on the various MDH programs and activities, which serve vulnerable populations. This questionnaire will be used to create the report that is due to the legislature in December 2021. To ensure each office had an opportunity to respond, staff extended the submission deadline with the most recent extension expiring October 26th. To date, staff is analyzing the responses of over 200 programs and staff is currently working on drafting the report. Staff continues to collaborate with the Department of Health's Office of Minority Health on this project.