

MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

UPDATE OF ACTIVITIES

January 2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Government Relations and Special Projects- Tracey DeShields

State Policy Update

On January 13th, the 2021 legislative session will begin. All sessions and hearings will be held virtually due to the COVID19 pandemic.

On January 29th, MHCC Legislative Policy Calls with Commissioners will begin and will be held as needed on Fridays at 8AM during the legislative session. Maryland Department of Health legislative meetings will begin on January 15th and will be held as needed on Fridays at 9:00am.

On January 27th, the Senate Finance Committee will hold a bill hearing on SB0003, the Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021. MHCC will be tracking and taking a position on this bill. The Maryland Department of Health approved the MHCC's Health Information Exchange Infrastructure (HIE) for Public Health as a departmental bill.

MHCC-related news coverage: selected articles and commentary

Health Facilities and COVID19

Aegis Staff. "Marco Priolo named new vice president, chief financial officer of Upper Chesapeake Health." The Baltimore Sun. December 2, 2020. Available from:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/harford/aegis/cng-ag-uch-cfo-priolo-20201202-3qcnsgxncjgjfhucaq3b5lsqm-story.html>

Deville, T. "Greater Baltimore Medical Center Healthcare earns prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, one of five organizations honored nationwide." The Baltimore Sun. November 24, 2020.

Available from: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-county/towson/cng-co-to-gmbc-malcolm-baldrige-award-20201124-szqvlgygwkvci3igsp5lp6tx4d4-story.html>

Eichensehr, M. "Hope Health Systems seeks to build new children's hospital in Baltimore County." Baltimore Business Journal. November 24, 2020. Available from:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/news/2020/11/25/childrens-hospital-planned-for-woodlawn.html>

Staff. "Governor Hogan mobilizes medical staffing surge to fight COVID19, support public health infrastructure." Southern Maryland News Net. December 1, 2020. Available from:

<https://smnewsnet.com/archives/484313/governor-hogan-mobilizes-medical-staffing-surge-to-fight-covid-19-support-public-health-infrastructure/>

Spector, C. "Mid-shore hospital's COVID19 tents sit idle for lack of staff." MyEasternShoreMD. December 4, 2020. Available from: https://www.myeasternshoremd.com/emergency_notice/mid-shore-hospitals-covid-19-tents-sit-idle-for-lack-of-staff/article_86002256-2774-52f4-80cb-f26dce2ab9bb.html

Hospice Care and Nursing Homes

Blackwell, P. "LifeBridge Health administrator promoted to assistant vice president of hospice and palliative services." Carroll County Times. January 4, 2021. Available from:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/carroll/news/cc-bodnar-carroll-hospice-20210104-fhvaxeifkfgt3nexcxykdgge-story.html>

COVID-19 Vaccine

Broom, S. "No one wants to be a guinea pig- Vaccine hesitancy divides health care workers." ABC10. December 2, 2020. Available from: <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/vaccine-distribution-some-health-care-workers-hesitant-to-use/65-184201ca-0364-4968-badd-5993823a599b>

Office of Governor Larry Hogan. "Governor Hogan announces statewide actions to accelerate COVID-19 vaccinations in Maryland." Maryland.gov. January 6, 2021. Available from: <https://governor.maryland.gov/2021/01/05/governor-hogan-announces-statewide-actions-to-accelerate-covid-19-vaccinations-in-maryland/>

Price Transparency

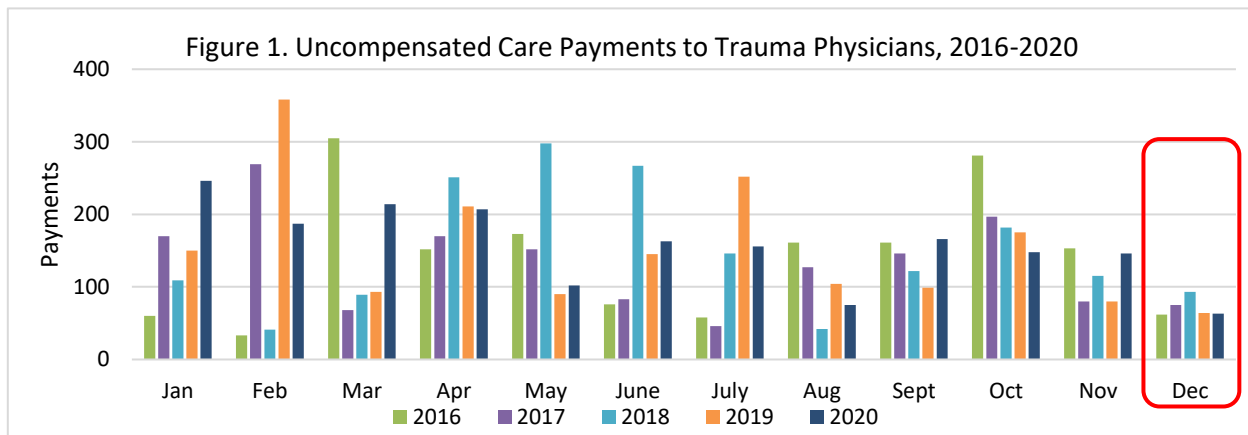
Fisher, C. "Americans can celebrate victory in the right to know health care costs." The Hill. January 4, 2021. Available from: <https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/532490-americans-can-celebrate-victory-in-the-right-to-know-health-care-costs>

Luhby, Tami. "Trump's hospital price transparency rule is now in effect. Here's what that means." CNN Politics. January 4, 2021. Available from: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/04/politics/hospital-price-transparency-trump-rule/index.html>

Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund – Richard Proctor

Uncompensated Care Processing

Trustmark Health Benefits, the third-party administrator (TPA) for the Trauma Fund, processed \$63,263.29 for uncompensated care claims through December 2020.



Internet Utilization – Contributors: Valerie Wooding, Sametria McCammon, Julie Deppe, and Mahlet ‘Mahi’ Nigatu

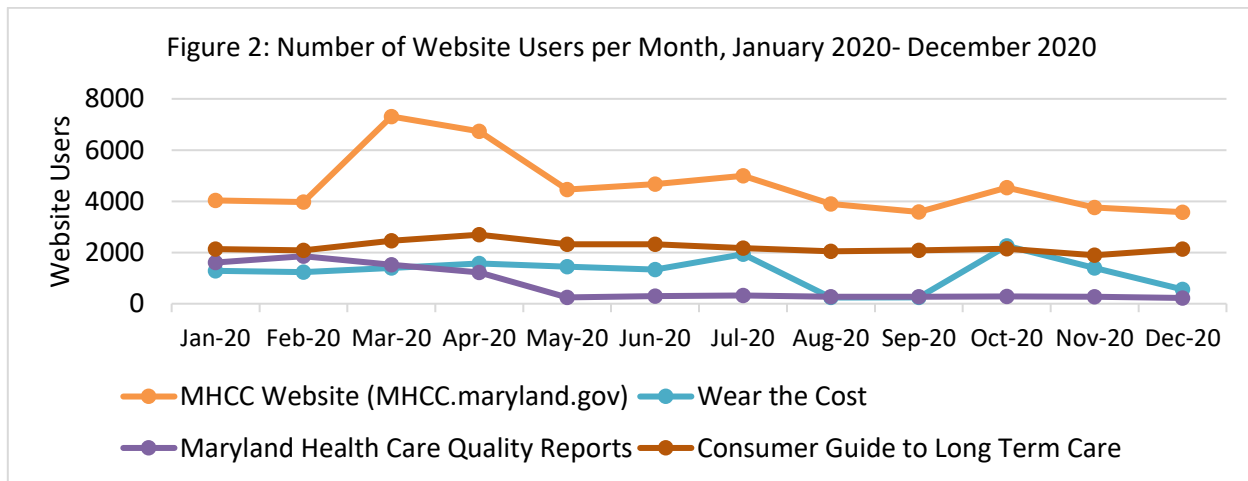


Figure 2 shows the number of website users over a 12 month period for each of the four websites maintained by Commission staff. Specific information about each website is below.

- **MHCC Website:** The MHCC website (<https://MHCC.maryland.gov>) had 3,575 users in December. There was a small decrease in numbers around the Christmas Holiday
- **Wear The Cost:** Price transparency website traffic for WearTheCost.org has dropped 50% during the holidays. A total of 554 users visited the site. Among which age group 55 and above made up 48% of the visitors. Women make up 60% of the overall visitors.
- **Maryland Health Care Quality Reports:** The Maryland Quality Reporting website had 225 users for the month of December. Maryland Health Care Quality Reports (MHCQR) website (<https://healthcarequality.mhcc.maryland.gov/>) overall traffic remained on trend with historic activity in the month of December. MHCQR website Year in Review: The first two quarters of 2020 saw higher than usual website traffic. Mid-year, traffic returned to normal levels. Increased traffic coincides with the onset of the pandemic.
- **Consumer Guide to Long Term Care:** For the month of December, the [Consumer Guide to Long Term Care](#) had 2,130 users access the site. The Consumer Guide to Long Term Care saw a 13% increase in users compared to November 2020. The primary pages visited were nursing home and assisted facility profile pages.

“Users” approximates the number of individuals that visit a website but contains some duplication of unique individuals visiting each website. For example, individuals are counted as separate "users" of a site when they use different devices (such as a work computer, a home computer, and a tablet), different browsers (such as chrome, safari, etc.), or clear cookies on a browser. Staff continue to monitor a broader set of metrics as they manage website projects and marketing.

CENTER FOR ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Cost and Quality Analysis– Shankar Mesta

MCDB Data Submission Status, Payor Compliance, and Technical Support

All payors submitted complete clean Q3 2020 data as of January 2021.

All payors have submitted clean Q3 2020 data that has passed all validation checks by SSS staff. They are in preparation to create Q3 2020 SAF files to send to HSCRC. SSS opened the portal during the first week of January for payors to request annual waivers that are due by 01/15/2021. One payor has submitted Q4 2020 data without any tier 1 and tier 2 errors. We expect all the payors to submit clean Q4 2020 by due date of 02/28/2021.

2021 MCDB Data Submission Manual Annual Payor Meeting

MHCC staff in association with SSS will be conducting all payor meeting/training for the 2021 MCDB Data Submission updates on January 14th, 2021. This training provides an opportunity for payor representatives to refresh their understanding regarding the importance of submitting clean data to MCDB and to seek clarification on new updates in the 2021 manual from MHCC staff.

Acute Exacerbation Asthma-related Urgent Care visits 2016-2019

The Maternal and child health bureau requested MHCC to help them understand the magnitude and trends for asthma-related urgent care visits from ages 2 -17 years old from 2016-2019. They requested this analysis broken down by gender and patients’ county of residence. Staff delivered the requested report to the bureau during the first week of January 2021.

Medical Excellence Zone (MD/DC/VA)

Connect with care staff requested MHCC to support their study about creating a “medical excellence zone” in MD/DC/VA area. Specifically, they were interested to see the service location distributions among Maryland residents in the MCDB during each quarter of 2019 and 2020. This would help them to understand how COVID 19 had impacted the service locations when telehealth services started to be in use more widely. Staff created a report to show the percentage of professional visits distribution among Maryland residents by service location during each quarter of 2019 and 2020.

APCD Public Reporting and Data Release – Mahlet ‘Mahi’ Nigatu

MCDB Data Release

Draft Regulation COMAR 10.25.05

Staff held two workgroup meetings to review the draft data release regulation COMAR 10.25.05. The workgroup will meet for a third time after staff incorporate the feedback from the last two meetings. Once the review is complete the draft data regulation will be open for an informal public comment followed by a formal public comment. Once the public comment period is over and the necessary changes are made to the draft COMAR to the Commission in early 2021.

Special Projects – Janet Ennis

PMO Contract Award

Project Management Consulting Services

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued to continue the services of a Project Management Officer (PMO) to assist the Center and ensure all major projects remain on task and are completed timely. Seven proposals were received, and an Evaluation Committee was organized to conduct the review/selection process. The Evaluation Committee selected Freedman Healthcare, LLC for this new 2-year PMO contract. Center staff awaits official approval from the Board of Public Works next month.

CENTER FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acute Care Policy and Planning – Eileen Fleck

Certificates of Ongoing Performance – Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) Services

Certificates of Ongoing Performance, valid for four years, were issued for the PCI services programs at the University of Maryland Saint Joseph Medical Center (Docket No. 19-03-CP023) and Sinai Hospital of Baltimore (Docket No. 19-24-CP020).

Staff continued work on reviewing applications for Certificates of Ongoing Performance for PCI services.

COMAR 10.24.07: State Health Plan Chapter for Acute Psychiatric Hospital Services

Staff posted draft regulations for informal public comment on December 17, 2020. Comments are due by January 15, 2021. Staff will use these comments to further revise draft regulations for consideration by the Commission in early 2021.

COMAR 10.24.11: State Health Plan Chapter for Surgical Services

Staff continued work in reviewing a draft update to the State Health Plan Chapter for Surgical Services (COMAR 10.24.11) and plans to post draft regulations for informal comment in January 2021.

Long Term Care Policy and Planning – Linda Cole

Minimum Data Set (MDS) and Long-Term Care Survey

During the past month, Division staff reviewed and approved contract deliverables from Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (Hilltop), MHCC’s contractor for work on the minimum data set and long-term care survey data.

The *Assessment of MDS 3.0 Items Needed to Complete Patient Driven Payment Model Calculations* was discussed in a meeting with Hilltop and MHCC staff. Further information needs to be obtained as to which data items are currently captured in the MDS Manager program and which items may be available from cost report data. In addition, staff is checking with the Office of Health Care Quality as to the availability of updated MDS data for processing.

Chronic Hospital Occupancy Reports FY 2020

Two annual reports on special hospital-chronic bed occupancy (“Use of Special Hospital Chronic Beds: Maryland, FY 2020” and “Average Annual Chronic Hospital Occupancy Rates by Jurisdiction and Facility: Maryland, Fiscal Years 2018 – 2020”) were published as public notices in the December 18, 2020 issue of the *Maryland Register*. Both reports have been posted on the Commission’s website at the following links: https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hcfs/hcfs_shp/documents/Chronic%20Care/chcf_chronic_hospital_use_beds_2020_20201218.pdf and https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hcfs/hcfs_shp/documents/Chronic%20Care/chcf_chronic_hospital_occupancy_2018_2020_20201218.pdf. Average annual bed occupancy rates at Maryland’s seven special hospital-chronic facilities, as in recent years, is quite low (37% overall in FY 2020) with the exception of Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital.

FY 2019 Home Health Survey

Data collection for the FY 2019 Home Health Survey closed on December 3, 2020. All agencies have submitted their surveys. Staff is currently working on data cleaning and review.

FY 2019 Long-Term Care Survey

Staff is currently working on the data cleaning and processing of the Long-Term Care Survey data and the Medicaid cost report data for FY 2019. Reports generated are being reviewed and changes are made based on analysis and data verification. Final data will also be shared with Hilltop for production of reports.

Certificate of Need (CON)– Kevin McDonald

Emergency CON’s approved – COVID-19 Response

Sinai Hospital of Baltimore – (Baltimore City) – Docket No. EM-H20-24-037

Add 24 “swing” beds in existing space. “Swing” beds can be used for medical/surgical beds or comprehensive care facility beds. The estimated cost is \$40,000.

University of Maryland Medical Center – (Baltimore City) – Docket No. EM-H20-24-038

Add 16 intensive care unit beds in two temporary modular buildings on the UMMC campus. The State is paying for the installation of these modular units and the decommissioning of the units when no longer needed

Change in Approved CON

Gilchrist Hospice Care, Inc. and Joseph Richey House – (Baltimore City) – Docket No. 17-24-2412

An increase in the approved cost of this project of \$3,487,152 (34%) bringing the approved project cost to \$13,886,102.

CON Letters of Intent

Avenues Recovery Center of Chesapeake Bay, LLC – (Dorchester County)

Establish a Track One alcoholism and drug abuse intermediate care facility with 50 beds to be located at 821 Fieldcrest Road in Cambridge.

Exemption from CON Requests Filed

- **First Use Approvals**

Anne Arundel Medical Center – (Anne Arundel County) – Docket No. 15-02-2360

Introduction of cardiac surgery services. The approved cost is \$2,500,381.

Determinations of Coverage

- **Ambulatory Surgery Centers**

USP Maryland, Inc. notified MHCC of a change in ownership for the following 13 physician outpatient surgical centers (POSCs). The change consists in the replacement of Surgical Center Development #3 LLC, the majority ownership entity in each center, with USP Maryland, Inc. This type of change in ownership of a POSC requires a new determination of coverage. In each case, the other owners, physicians practicing at the center, continue as owners but, in some cases, with adjusted ownership shares:

Glen Echo Surgery Center, LLC – (Montgomery County)

Hagerstown Surgery Center, LLC – (Washington County)

Leonardtwn Surgery Center, LLC – (St. Mary’s County)

Maple Lawn Surgery Center, LLC – (Howard County)

Monocacy Surgery Center, LLC – (Frederick County)

Piccard Surgery Center, LLC – (Montgomery County)

Point of Rocks Surgery Center, LLC – (Frederick County)

SurgCenter of Glen Burnie, LLC – (Anne Arundel County)

SurgCenter of Southern Maryland, LLC – (Prince George’s County)

SurgCenter of the Potomac, LLC – (Montgomery County)

SurgCenter of White Marsh, LLC – (Baltimore County)

Upper Bay Surgery Center, LLC – (Cecil County)

Westminster Surgery Center, LLC – (Carroll County)

The 33rd Street Surgery Center, LLC – (Baltimore City)

Change in ownership of a POSC. Post-transaction, ENT&C Holdings LLC will wholly own the POSC, acquiring all of the equity interest from Alan Shikani, M.D.

Metropolitan Vascular Institute – (Charles County)

Establish a POSC with three non-sterile procedure rooms to be located at 3015 Technology Place, Suite 110, in Waldorf.

Peninsula Endoscopy Center, LLC – (Wicomico County)

Change in ownership of a POSC. Post-transaction, Physicians Endoscopy, LLC, will have a 49% ownership interest in the POSC and Drs. Kota Chandrasekhara and Dr. Steven Turnamian, the current owners of the POSC, will each have a 25% ownership interest.

Annapolis Endoscopy Center, LLC – (Anne Arundel County)

Establish a POSC with one non-sterile procedure room to be located at 1419 Forest Drive, in Annapolis.

Licensure

- **De-licensure of Bed Capacity or a Health Care Facility**

Northwest Hospital Subacute Unit – (Baltimore County)

Approval of an extension of the temporary de-licensure status of 22 comprehensive care facility (CCF) beds through September 20, 2021.

- **“Waiver” Beds**

Copper Ridge – (Carroll County)

Addition of 6 CCF beds bringing the facility total to 72 beds.

Hyattsville Nursing & Rehabilitation Center – (Prince George’s County)

Addition of 10 CCF beds bringing the facility total to 170 beds.

CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATION & INNOVATIVE CARE DELIVERY

Health Information Technology Division – Nikki Majewski, Division Chief

Telehealth

Virtual Resource Center

A flyer highlighting key considerations for telehealth implementation and uses in home health care was finalized, which features user perspectives on the value of telehealth during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) and beyond. Development is underway for two additional flyers to help practices effectively use telehealth with underserved populations and enhance the use of telehealth for patients with language barriers.

Telehealth Policy Workgroup

The Telehealth Policy Workgroup (workgroup) met to discuss various telehealth policies temporarily implemented in response to the PHE. The workgroup completed an analysis of benefits, unintended consequences, permanency concerns, and primary themes for six key policies. The workgroup is expected to begin deliberations on draft general findings in early 2021.

Nurse Webinar

A final report was submitted to the Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) for *Using Telehealth in School Health Services: A Three-Part Webinar Series*. The webinar series amassed 721 YouTube participants over the last year. The MNA awarded continuing nursing education contact hours, available for 12-months, for participation in the webinar series. A new webinar spotlighting school nurse support for students and families virtually during the PHE was recorded and will be published on the Commission website.

Hospital Health Information Technology Assessment

Responses to the online 2020 acute care hospital (hospitals) health information technology (health IT) survey were received from 26 hospitals and follow up is underway with 18 hospitals. Hospital responses to the survey are due in December. Each year, hospitals are requested to complete a survey regarding health IT adoption and perceived value of the technology. This year’s survey includes questions on the use of telehealth in response to the PHE. A summary of findings is targeted for release in the spring.

Breaches

Drafting is in progress for a spotlight that overviews health care data breaches in 2020 affecting 500 or more individuals as reported to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights. The spotlight centers on Maryland in comparison to the nation as it relates to breach occurrences, estimated records

compromised, breach type, and entity type. Included in the spotlight are breach trends for Maryland and the nation. The spotlight is targeted for release in early 2021.

Blockchain

Planning activities are advancing for a blockchain virtual symposium (symposium). The symposium will overview potential use cases for the technology and summarize challenges, strategies, and diffusion best practices. The symposium will also highlight how blockchain can help ensure the security of electronic health records (EHRs) and increase data sharing. The symposium is planned for March of 2021.

Electronic Data Interchange

Drafting of the 2019 Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) information brief (brief) that highlights payer and provider use of electronic administrative transactions was completed. COMAR 10.25.09, *Requirements for Payers to Designate Electronic Health Networks* requires payers with a yearly premium of \$1 million or more to submit an annual EDI Progress Report by June 30th. The brief includes Medicare, Medicaid, and private payers with a combined share of electronic transactions originating in Maryland around 95 percent.

Innovative Care Delivery Division – Melanie Cavaliere, Division Chief

Telehealth

Diffusing Telehealth in Ambulatory Practices

State-Designated Management Service Organizations (MSOs) continued outreach to practices interested in adopting telehealth. Three MSOs were awarded a grant in April (2020) to help practices adopt telehealth that could benefit from technical assistance. Around 190 practices have expressed an interest in working with an MSO, 85 have implemented telehealth, and 63 have used the technology in care delivery.

Dental Health IT

Drafting of the 2019 Dental Health IT Adoption environmental scan information brief was finalized. The brief highlights findings related to the use of EHRs, health information exchange (HIE), and telehealth. Data collection continues for the 2020 Dental Health IT Adoption environmental scan. Staff presented an update on MHCC initiatives to the Howard County Dental Association and participated in a Maryland State Dental Association continuing education course on cybersecurity.

Maryland Primary Care Program Advisory Council

The Maryland Primary Care Program (MDPCP) Advisory Council (Council) completed development of a proposed Track 3 Policy Framework (framework). The Council convened nearly every week since mid-summer to deliberate on a framework that could affect the payment and delivery of primary care throughout Maryland. The Council believes the framework is consistent with the request from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to develop a framework that closely resembles the federal Primary Care First model. The MDPCP Program Management Office (PMO) submitted the framework to CMMI at the end of December. The Council expects to provide the PMO with input on critical program design elements during 2021.

Privacy and Security Regulations

Post & Schell, P.C. (contractor) proposed revisions to COMAR 10.25.18.03, *Health Information Exchanges: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information* (regulations), Rights of a Health Care Consumer Concerning Information Accessed, Used, or Disclosed Through an HIE. The contractor was selected in July to propose changes to modernize and align the regulations with existing federal HIE policies. A stakeholder workgroup will convene in early 2021 to provide feedback on the proposed changes.

Care Management

Drafting of a Care Management Program Development Guide (guide) is nearing completion that can help practices determine their readiness to engage in care management, define a care manager's role in a practice, and identify leading care manager responsibilities. The guide includes a practice self-assessment questionnaire and supporting references. Staff plans to seek feedback from select practices on the draft in January.

Patient and Family Advisory Council

Staff convened several virtual Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) focus group meetings. Participants were invited to discuss changes implemented to their PFACs because of the PHE. PFACs are used to effect meaningful process improvements in practices and engage patients and families in care delivery. Best practices identified from the PFAC focus groups will be used to update the PFAC Guide released in March 2019.

CENTER FOR QUALITY MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

The Maryland Health Care Quality Reports (MHCQR) website

MHCQR Website Redesign

Staff continue to work with Advanta Government Services (AGS) to redesign the Maryland Health Care Quality Reports (MHCQR) website's functionality, usability, and overall appeal. The first phase of the redesign effort focused on the full integration of our Long Term Care Guide and our Quick Compare features into a more uniform and comprehensive Quality Reports consumer site. Web page development for the hospital, health plan and outpatient surgery sections of the site is underway, and the Center continues to make good progress. Commissioners had the opportunity to review and provide feedback in mid-December. Comments and feedback are being incorporated and the site is on track to roll out in early 2021.

MHCQR website sees steady website traffic

Staff continues to monitor traffic to the site using Google Analytics software. Web traffic in December 2020 was similar to web traffic in November 2020. The most frequently viewed pages on the MHCQR site include hospital quality ratings and the nursing home search feature. Web traffic in early 2020 was higher than previous years due to surging interest during the initial months of the pandemic but use returned to normal activity patterns in later months. Traffic to the site is presented graphically under the Executive Direction section of this update.

Website Promotion: Approximately 70 social media posts initiated in December

Promotion of the MHCQR website is a Center priority. There were approximately 70 social media posts made in December. Topics included National Influenza Vaccination Week, enrollment, and general marketing posts for the MHCQR. 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 MHCQR website.

The staff met with representatives from Maryland Public Television (MPT) to discuss options for increasing public awareness of the MHCQR website. The MHCC procurement officer is working to facilitate an interagency agreement with MPT to support marketing and promotion of the website in early 2021.

Hospital Quality Initiatives – Courtney Carta

Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades

Leapfrog recently released the Fall 2020 Hospital Safety Grades. Maryland continues to see performance improvements. Maryland ranks 16th among states based on percentage of A grades compared to 38th just a year ago. Sixteen Maryland hospitals received an “A” grade compared to 12 in Spring 2020. Nine of the hospitals that received an “A” grade also received an “A” in the previous season. Fifteen hospitals showed improvement by at least one letter grade. There were no “F” grades. The table below shows the grade distributions for Fall 2020 and includes Spring 2020, Fall 2017 (initial grades), and national distributions for comparison. To view Maryland hospital performance, visit the Leapfrog website, <http://www.hospitalsafetygrade.org/>.

Grade	National Fall 2020	MD Fall 2020 (n= 42)	MD Spring 2020 (n=44)	MD Fall 2017 (n=44)
A	34%	16 (38%)	12(27%)	1 (1%)
B	24%	12 (29%)	15 (34%)	7 (16%)
C	35%	13 (31%)	14 (32%)	27 (61%)
D	7%	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	8 (18%)
F	<1%	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

Specialized Cardiac Services Data

All Maryland hospitals that provide PCI services are required to participate in the ACC NCDR CathPCI data registries and report quarterly data and detailed reports to the Commission in accordance with established timelines. Data collection for 2020Q3 CathPCI is underway. The cardiac data coordinators meet quarterly and the next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2021.

Long Term Care Quality Initiative—Stacy Howes

Inter-Center and Inter-Agency Projects

Health Services Cost Review Commission

Staff recently completed working on the committee awarding Long-Term Care Partnership grants. Using the HSCRC hospital rate-setting system as the funding mechanism, \$10 million was awarded to over 10 hospital systems working with over 50 nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Maryland. The goal of the grant is to assist hospital systems with the resources needed to help long-term care facilities increase infection control protocols in response to COVID-19.

Collaboration with the Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development

Yearly, staff create hospice usage tables based on the Hospice Survey. These tables depict the general usage rates, racial composition of hospice patients, most common ailments of hospice patients, non-death discharge rates, and rates of usage by region of Maryland. Tables are shared with the hospice industry and posted on the MHCC website. Tables for FY2019 are in the process of being created and will be complete by the end of the month.

Yearly, staff support the Center for Health Care Facilities Planning and Development in determining qualified candidates to submit CON applications to establish new Home Health Agencies. Performance requirements are based on the most current CMS Compare facility star ratings for home health agencies, hospitals, and nursing homes, compared to the Maryland average.

Nursing Home Family Experience of Care Survey

A letter was mailed on October 2, inviting loved ones to fill out the survey online, a new option available this year. Non-responders will receive a paper copy of the survey. Paper copies were mailed in mid-November, and a second paper copy will be mailed to non-responders in early December. Data collection will end at the end of December. Phone calls are being made to loved ones from nursing homes with traditionally lower response rates to encourage them to fill out the survey. So far, the response rate is 24%.

Health Plan Quality Initiative

All data were submitted to the contractor in mid-November. AGS, the website contractor, uploaded all plan data to the Quality Reports website at the end of November and are available to consumers.

Consumer Guide to Long Term Care

Data updates to the Consumer Guide have been suspended during the integration to the redesigned Quality Reports website. Staff continue to provide information and resources directly to consumers who contact the office with questions about long term care facilities and services.

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Influenza Vaccination Survey

National Influenza Vaccination Week was observed December 6-12, 2020. Promotional material from the Maryland Department of Health and the CDC was mailed to facilities with historically low staff vaccination rates. All nursing homes and assisted living facilities with 45 or more beds received email reminders that staff are required to be offered influenza vaccination by December 30.

Outpatient Quality Initiative—Mariama Gondo

Administering CY 2019 Ambulatory Surgical Facility (FASF) Annual Survey

The CY2019 survey opened on November 16, 2020. Staff will survey 326 ASFs for this reporting period. To date, 122 facilities have started working on their 2019 survey; with 65 of those facilities having submitted their data.