Arkansas Hospitals Receive Quality Awards

Thirty-five Arkansas hospitals, some winning awards in multiple categories, were among the recipients of 95 Quality Improvement Awards handed out May 31 during the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care’s (AFMC) 14th Quality Conference, which was held at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock. AFMC presented its Quality Achievement Awards to recognize improvement in one or more of its hospital quality improvement areas.

Northwest Medical Center of Bentonville and St. Mary’s Hospital-Rogers were recognized for Best Achievement Awards as Medicare prospective payment system (PPS) hospitals. Mercy Hospital/TURNER Memorial (Ozark) and St. Anthony’s Medical Center (Morrilton) received Best Achievement Awards in the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) category.

Most Improved Achievement Awards were presented to Northwest Medical Center of Bentonville and Saint Mary’s Regional Medical Center (Russellville) in the PPS hospital category, while St. Anthony’s Medical Center and CrossRidge Community Hospital (Wynne) were named winners among the state’s CAHs. Validation Awards went to Medical Center of South Arkansas (El Dorado, PPS), St. Bernards Medical Center (Jonesboro, PPS), CrossRidge Community Hospital (Wynne, CAH), Lawrence Memorial Hospital (Walnut Ridge, CAH), Ozark Health Medical Center (Clinton, CAH), and Piggott Community Hospital (CAH).

In addition, the following hospitals received Innovator Awards:

| Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, Paragould | National Park Medical Center, Hot Springs |
| Baptist Health Med. Center, Heber Springs | NEA Medical Center, Jonesboro |
| Baptist Health Med. Center, Little Rock | Ozark Health Medical Center, Clinton |
| Baptist Health Med. Center, North Little Rock | St. Anthony’s Medical Center, Morrilton |
| Baxter Regional Med. Center, Mountain Home | St. Bernards Medical Center, Jonesboro |
| Conway Regional Health System | St. Edward Mercy Medical Center, Fort Smith |
| CrossRidge Community Hospital, Wynne | St. Joseph’s Mercy Health Center, Hot Springs |
| Jefferson Regional Medical Center, Pine Bluff | St. Vincent Infirmary Med. Center, Little Rock |
| Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Walnut Ridge | Stuttgart Regional Medical Center |
| Magnolia Hospital | Summit Medical Center, Van Buren |
| Medical Center of South Arkansas, El Dorado | Washington Regional Med. Center, Fayetteville |
| Medical Park Hospital, Hope | White County Medical Center, Searcy |
| Mercy Hospital/TURNER Memorial, Ozark | White River Medical Center, Batesville |

Hospital-based services recognized for their quality included:

- Baptist Home Health Network (Innovator)
- Bradley County Medical Center Home Health Agency (Warren, Innovator)
- Crittenden Regional Hospital Homecare (West Memphis, Innovator)
- Ouachita County Medical Center Doctors Home Care (Camden, Innovator, Best Achievement)
- National Park Medical Center Home Touch Healthcare (Innovator)
- Communities Home Health of Northwest Medical Center, Springdale (Innovator)
In addition, St. Bernards Senior Health Clinic took home a Best Achievement Award in the Physician Office category, while Lawrence Hall Nursing Center was awarded Best Achievement and St. Joseph's Mercy Health Center Transitional Care Unit received an Innovator Award for Nursing Home Care.

The 2007 Atlantic hurricane season officially began June 1 and scientists with the U.S. Hurricane Forecast Team at Colorado State University believe it will be an active one. Seventeen named storms are predicted to develop in the Atlantic basin between now and November 30. Nine of the storms are expected to become hurricanes and, of those nine, five should develop into major hurricanes with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or better.

Arkansas hospitals should be aware that if a major hurricane that could have an effect on Arkansas hospitals should occur this year, the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) will activate the daily phone conferences which it conducted with the state’s NDMS facilities in the fall of 2005 following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. At the time, the calls were very helpful in keeping everyone posted and up-to-date on disaster preparations, NDMS activation, procedures, patient flow, etc. The procedure for those daily calls, unless otherwise directed, will be as follows:

- The calls will be activated by the state’s VA Medical Director (Michael Winn) when it becomes apparent that central Arkansas is in line to receive patients, but hospitals have not been activated by NDMS. The first call will act as a “heads up” that evacuees may be coming and that medical care will be needed, and that there exists the possibility of NDMS activation.
- The same conference call number and participant code (800-244-2500; Participant code: 6109980#) will be used for each call. The Arkansas Hospital Association will absorb the cost of the calls.
- Calls will happen each day (including weekends if necessary) at 3 p.m. Participation is not mandatory, but each NDMS facility should be represented on each call.
- The VA Medical Director’s department will take charge of the call, along with the NDMS emergency manager, Rex Oxner.
- The VA Medical Director’s department will take minutes of each call and forward them to all participants within 24 hours of the conclusion of each call. That way, everyone will be kept completely up-to-date.
- The calls will end when it becomes apparent that the emergency is over.

If you have questions, please contact Beth Ingram at (501) 224-7878 or you may e-mail her at bingram@arkhospitals.org.

The Arkansas Hospital Association (AHA) recently was named a winner in two categories of a national competition sponsored by the Healthcare Marketing Report, a national newspaper for healthcare marketing. The AHA received a certificate as a Silver Winner for a poster developed in conjunction with its Smoke Free Campus campaign and a Bronze Winner certificate for the AHA image campaign featuring hospital testimonials along with signs indicating various hospital services. The association worked with Exit Marketing of Little Rock to develop the ads.
AFMC Named Community Leader

The Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC), the Medicare-designated Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Arkansas, was named a Community Leader for Value-Driven Health Care in April. Only three other QIOs in the nation have been named Community Leaders — those in Virginia, New York and Alabama. The Value-Driven Health Care Initiative is a nationwide, voluntary program launched in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to improve quality and lower costs of healthcare.

Based on the principles of health information technology, quality reporting, price reporting and quality-driven incentives, the initiative calls on communities to develop stakeholder incentives, and to promote public availability of information on health quality and costs with the goal of improving healthcare in the region.

AFMC received the Community Leader designation in recognition of its role in convening stakeholders in the Regional Quality Improvement (RQI) Initiative in Arkansas, a partnership between AFMC and the Arkansas Medicaid program. RQI was launched in 2006 by the Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. (CHCS), a national, nonprofit organization, which chose three regions — Arkansas, Rhode Island and Rochester, New York — through a national selection process to receive grant funding and participate in the initiative. Participants are exploring the use of shared data between Medicaid and other health plans, providers and purchasers as a way to coordinate quality improvement strategies to help improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs.

For a complete list of stakeholders participating with AFMC in the initiative, visit http://www.afmc.org/HTML/programs/quality_improve/rqi/measure.aspx.

Aerosol Hand-Rub Dispensers Okayed

The International Fire Code (IFC) has been revised to allow aerosol alcohol-based hand rubs in hospital corridors. Up to 18 ounces of Level 1 aerosol per dispenser and 10 gallons of liquid or aerosol hand rub per area are allowed under the change, approved May 25 by the International Code Council (ICC). The IFC revision is consistent with other fire code and regulatory changes since 2002 to allow hand rubs in hospital corridors, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to facilitate effective hand hygiene and reduce infection.

The American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE), an American Hospital Association personal membership group, worked closely with the ICC, National Fire Protection Association, Joint Commission, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and others to promote the various code and regulatory changes.

For more on the IFC revision, see the ASHE member advisory at http://www.ashe.org/ashe/codes/handrub/pdfs/ABHRIFCrevjbdse.pdf.

NPI Roundtable Discussion

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will host a National Roundtable June 14 to discuss its plans for sharing National Provider Identifier (NPI) data with healthcare providers and others who need it to process claims for payment. The dissemination plan was published in a notice included in the May 30 Federal Register which can be viewed at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/Downloads/DataDisseminationNPI.pdf.

CMS plans to post the initial NPI data on the Internet June 30. In order to receive the call-in information for the Roundtable, you must first register. It is important to note that if you are planning to sit in with a group, only one person needs to register to receive the call-in data.
This registration is solely to reserve a phone line, NOT to allow participation. If you cannot attend the call, replay information is available below. Registration will close at 1:00 p.m. CST on June 13, 2007, or when available space has been filled. No exceptions will be made, so please be sure to register prior to this time. For details, click on http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/downloads/RegistrationInfoNPI614.pdf.

Trustees face a broad array of complex challenges in their quest to meet the healthcare needs of their communities. Too often trustees become so consumed with the overwhelming issues of long-term survival that they lose sight of the critical need to consistently connect in meaningful ways with their communities. The sixth in a series of governance online education programs, “The Community-Centered Board: Building Connections, Strengthening Value,” will be offered at 12 noon on Tuesday, June 26. Larry Walker, president of The Walker Company, will be the presenter. This one-hour Webinar will explore ways in which trustees can redefine what stewardship and accountable leadership means, and how they can best carry out their governance roles and responsibilities in a community-centered, community health improvement-focused manner.

The program includes information concerning what community stewardship and accountability means, and why it’s important to the hospital and the board; key factors in successfully engaging the community, and how to create a plan for involving the community in helping to design the future of the organization; how to build vibrant and effective community connections, and community understanding about the forces for change in healthcare today and their impacts on your hospital’s future; and how to be change agents and transformational leaders who can create new pathways to improve community and organizational health.

Please click on https://www.eventbuilder.com/event_desc.asp?p_event=x1u8w47p for program and registration information, or contact Beth Ingram at bingram@arkhospitals.org.

Eugene Zuber has been named administrator of Advanced Care Hospital of White County in Searcy. The 27-bed long-term acute care hospital, scheduled to open this summer, will be located at White County Medical Center. Zuber was administrator of the former Newport Hospital, which closed in 2005 and was purchased by Harris Hospital in Newport. Zuber is a former chairman of the Arkansas Hospital Association’s board of directors and was named the A. Allen Weintraub Memorial Award recipient in 1996.