

January 27, 2012

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HHS LAUNCHES HEALTH IT CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE CARE TRANSITIONS FOR HOSPITAL-DISCHARGE PATIENTS

January 26, 2012

On Thursday, the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology announced a Discharge Follow-Up Appointment care transitions challenge – the second as part of the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) Investing in Innovation (i2) Initiative. With the support of Health 2.0 and Partnership for Patients, ONC launched the Discharge Follow-Up Appointment challenge in support of ONC’s Investing in Innovation (i2) program.

The i2 Initiative aims to broaden innovations in health IT. The program utilizes prizes and challenges to facilitate innovation and obtain solutions to intractable health IT problems. Aligned with the Obama administration’s innovation agenda, i2 is the first federal program to operate under the authority of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010.

The care transitions challenge aims to stimulate the use of simple, information technology-enabled processes and tools to make transitions easier and safer for patients, caregivers and providers, particularly when a patient is discharged from a hospital. The first health IT challenge, [Ensuring Safe Transitions from Hospital to Home](#), called upon developers to create a web-based application that could empower patients and caregivers to better navigate and manage a transition from a hospital.

More information about ONC or the i2 program is available [here](#).

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Department of Health and Human Services

HHS/CMS Region I & II Listening Session: “The Initiative to Align the Medicare and Medicaid Programs Alignment Opportunity: Home Health”

The Regions I & II Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) invite you to participate in a Listening Session co-hosted by HHS Regional Directors Christie Hager and Dr. Jaime Torres, CMS Regions I and II, and the CMS Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office.

The Alignment Initiative is CMS’s effort to more effectively integrate benefits between the Medicare and Medicaid programs for the millions of Americans eligible for both (Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries). The purpose of this listening session is to discuss solutions for better aligning Medicare, Medicaid, provider, and other stakeholder incentives around coverage of and payment for home health services. This focused listening session is among a series of Alignment Initiative efforts to engage stakeholders in an open and transparent discussion to make the programs better for dual eligible beneficiaries. The Alignment Initiative works to build partnerships to improve care for dual eligibles and lower costs for States, and was published in the [Federal Register](#) as a Notice for Public Comment.

The listening session will be held Thursday, February 16, 2012 from 1:00 – 4:00pm ET.

Participation by telephone is not limited, and is encouraged for those not able to join in person. NO RSVP is needed to participate by phone.

The call-in number is: 1-877-267-1577. The meeting ID is: 8069.

Alignment Initiative documents can be found [here](#).

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

States Announced for CMS Medicaid and CHIP Learning Collaborative

Leading states were chosen to participate in the first two of five *Medicaid & CHIP Learning Collaboratives*, a new initiative established by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This unique federal/ state partnership will bring CMS and states together to pursue innovations in Medicaid program design and operations.

The first two collaboratives are “[Expanding coverage under the Affordable Care Act Learning Collaborative](#)” and “[Early Innovators in Information Technology Infrastructure](#)”

Collaborative.” The Affordable Care Act Learning Collaborative will include California, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia. These states will work closely with CMS to design and implement new Medicaid eligibility and enrollment policies to ensure that eligible individuals have access to high-quality coverage. In particular, the states will focus on strategies for streamlined implementation of the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

The Information Technology Infrastructure Collaborative includes Maryland, New York, Oregon, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. These states have received grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to design and implement the information technology infrastructure needed to operate health insurance exchanges. These Early Innovator states will partner with CMS to rapidly establish insurance exchanges on an accelerated timeframe while sharing what they have learned with other states.

These collaboratives represent two of five Medicaid and CHIP Learning Collaboratives designed to bring together state and federal partners to address key issues that are critical to establishing a solid state health insurance infrastructure. The other three will address: (1) Data Analytics; (2) Promoting Efficient and Effective IT Practices; and (3) Value-Based Purchasing. States participating in these initiatives will be announced in the next month. Each collaborative will meet regularly in 2012 and best practices will be shared nationally to inform all states. The collaboratives are coordinated by Mathematica Policy Research, the Center for Health Care Strategies, and Manatt Health Solutions.

More information on the Medicaid and CHIP Learning Collaboratives can be found [here](#).

Administration on Aging

Webinar: Transitions and Long-Term Care: A Look at the Minimum Data Set 3.0 Section Q and Money Follows the Person

The Administration on Aging (AoA) will host a webinar focusing on the Minimum Data Set (or MDS) 3.0 Section Q and the Money Follows the Person demonstration as part of a series on the Affordable Care Act's impact on aging services. This webinar will include both policy and programmatic updates from federal agencies working on these programs, and a practical look at how these programs work - and interact - in the field.

The webinar will be held Monday, January 30, 2012 from 3:00-4:30 PM ET. Registration is available [here](#). The webinar will be recorded and posted to the [AoA website](#) after it is complete.

Office of Inspector General

OIG Conducts Survey of Long-Term Care Provider Administrators

The Affordable Care Act requires the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to submit a report to Congress evaluating the law's Nationwide Program for National and State Background Checks on Direct Patient Access Employees of Long Term-Care Facilities within six months of the program's completion. To establish a baseline for this future report, OIG recently conducted a survey of long-term care provider administrators, and asked them about current practices regarding background checks on potential employees, and the effects of such programs on the ltc workforce.

The survey was sent to administrators in the ten states that were awarded funding under the program as of March 2011. According to OIG, "Nearly all administrators conduct background checks on prospective employees and current background check procedures do not appear to greatly reduce the available workforce."

The report is available [here](#).

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

2012 State of the Union Address

On Tuesday night, President Obama delivered his third State of the Union address. To view the address or read the transcript, please follow this link:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/01/25/2012-state-union-address-enhanced-version>

President to Release FY13 on February 13

President Obama plans to release his budget for FY13 on Monday, February 13. Though few details about the content of his budget request are available, preliminary reports do indicate that it may contain a plan to replace the sequester that was triggered by the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to recommend, and Congress to enact, at least \$1.2 trillion in savings over ten years. Currently, the sequester is set to begin in January of 2013.

Obama Administration Officials, Health Care Leaders Join Together at Innovation Summit

January 26, 2012

Obama Administration officials and a breadth of representatives from across the health care system met in Washington on Thursday for a day-long meeting to explore how they can collaborate and improve the quality of health care while at the same time lowering costs.

The Care Innovations Summit was hosted jointly by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the West Wireless Health Institute, and the journal *Health Affairs*. Over 1,000 medical professionals, health care policymakers, academics and investors discussed innovative

ways to make health care both affordable and effective. New initiatives were announced, including a challenge to advance the field of Alzheimer's prevention and treatment.

The Obama Administration also released a new report highlighting the success of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. Created by the Affordable Care Act, the Innovation Center has already worked to test and support innovative new health care models that can reduce costs and strengthen the quality of health care.

For more information on the summit, visit <http://www.innovation.cms.gov/summit/>.

President Obama to Host Virtual Town Hall Meeting

Next Monday, following Tuesday's State of the Union address, President Obama will hold the first-ever completely virtual town hall from the White House. He will answer questions from the public, and chat online with a few people. You can ask a question, or vote on questions to be asked [here](#). The deadline to submit a question is midnight on Saturday, January 28.

The town hall will begin at 5:30 pm ET on Monday, January 30, 2012. It can be accessed [here](#).

FROM CONGRESS

Sen. Sanders Introduces OAA Reauthorization Legislation

On January 26, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) introduced a bill (S. 2037) to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA). In so doing, he highlighted several provisions in the legislation, including those intended to strengthen the congregate and home delivered meal programs and promote economic security among older adults. As Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, the Senate panel with jurisdiction over the OAA, Sen. Sanders' bill is expected to become the legislative vehicle that will serve as the Senate's final OAA reauthorization package. To date, Senators Casey (D-Penn.), Kohl (D-Wis.), Franken (D-Minn.), and Klobuchar (D-Minn.) have also introduced OAA reauthorization bills, and lawmakers are expected to work together to craft a bill reflecting their priorities in the coming months.

Sen. Sanders bill is available [here](#).

For more on the Senator's legislation to reauthorize the OAA, please click [here](#).

Doc Fix Negotiations Continue

With the short-term extension measure (PL 112-78) scheduled to lapse at the end of February, the bipartisan, bicameral 20-person conference panel that is charged with finding a deal on the doc fix, extensions to jobless benefits, and a payroll tax break met for the first time on Tuesday. The conferees are using as the basis for their negotiations a year-long extension bill passed by the House (HR 3630), as the Senate has no comparable measure. After their first

meeting, lawmakers appear to remain at odds on how to pay for the legislation, which is expected to cost at least \$160 billion. Democrats want the cost of the extension package to be partially offset by a tax increase to higher-income earners or corporations, a non-starter with Republicans, who have said that tax increases should not be used to pay for the deal. The panel is scheduled to meet again on February 1, where they will likely continue to consider offset options and the length of any extensions.

FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute

PCORI Releases Draft Research Agenda

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), created by the Affordable Care Act, has released its draft research agenda and national priorities. By conducting and distributing research that will give patients a better understanding of the prevention, treatment and care options available to them, as well as the science that supports those options, PCORI is intended to help patients and their health care providers make more informed decisions. The drafts will be open for public comment until March 15, and are available [here](#).

National Council on Disability

National Council on Disability Effective Communication Pre-Solicitation Notice: Effective Communication Before, During, and After Emergencies

The National Council on Disability (NCD) is evaluating effective communication for Americans with disabilities before, during, and after emergencies. NCD will document successful practices and identify facilitators and barriers to providing effective emergency-related communication. A key piece of this research will include a thorough examination of the current state of affairs concerning the accessibility of emergency-related communication. This analysis must address all phases of emergency management and be cross-disability and demonstrate sensitivity to diversity matters/ issues that can impact outreach and response. The research must include what is occurring in this area on both the national and state level. The estimated contract period is 10 months.

NCD will distribute its Effective Communication study Notice of Funding Opportunity to interested parties on February 8, 2012. NCD will expect interested parties to submit their responses by March 7, 2012. Copies of the Notice of Funding Opportunity will be available on grants.gov and ncd.gov and may be requested by mail or picked up at NCD on or after the issue date of February 8, 2012.

For more information, contact Robyn Powell, rpowell@ncd.gov, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 850, Washington, D.C. 20004; 202 272-2004 or 202-272-2074 TTY.

More information can be found [here](#).

American Society on Aging

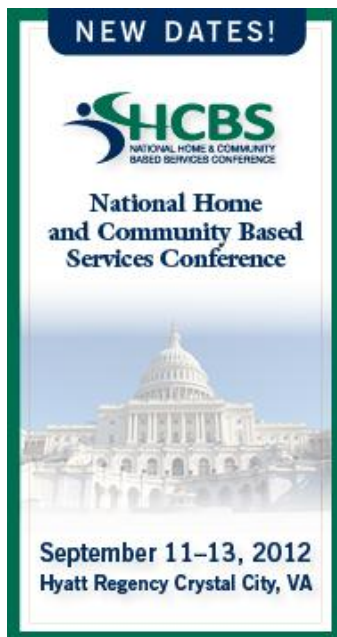
Aging in America 2012 Conference

Aging in America, the 2012 annual conference of the American Society on Aging is the largest multidisciplinary aging conference in the country. It is recognized as the leading platform for sharing knowledge, perspectives, best practices and replicable models that help participants enhance their skills and be more effective in their work with older adults. There's no better professional development opportunity for the people and organizations whose missions support quality of life and care for elders. The deadline to register at the early rate is February 13, so register today! Use discount code NASUAD25 to save \$25 on your registration.

The conference will be held March 28-April 1, 2012 in Washington, DC.

More information is available [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS



NOTICE THE DATE CHANGE: 2012 National Home and Community Based Services Conference –Tuesday, September 11-Thursday, September 13th, Washington, DC.

Archived Friday Updates are available on NASUAD's website here.