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DCHA Hosts Meetings on New MAA Nursing Home and Rx Preauthorization Policies

On Thursday, September 4th, Senior Deputy Director for Medical Assistance Administration **Robert Maruca** and Senior Chief for Medical Assistance Administration **Robert Cosby, Ph.D.** presented the proposed new policies that govern the release of hospital patients to DC and out-of-state nursing homes. In January 2007, an 18 month temporary suspension of the nursing facility prior authorization process for out of state placement was put in place to allow Northwest Health Center, which was closing, to smoothly transition its patients into other facilities. This suspension was set to terminate effective September 1st. DCHA worked with the hospitals and MAA to obtain a 30 day temporary moratorium on the reinstatement of the original policy until it could be further reviewed.

The original policy required hospital discharge planners to contact all of the District's 18 nursing homes to ensure that there are no beds available before initiating out of state placement procedures. Yesterday, following consultations with DCHA President **Robert A. Malson**, Mr. Maruca and Dr. Cosby presented a new revised proposed policy that would require hospital discharge planners to contact **a minimum of two** nursing facilities before reaching out to nursing homes in other states. This revised policy met with the unanimous approval of the hospitals represented. Dr. Cosby promised to issue the proposed policy in final form within a few days.

In a second scheduled meeting yesterday, Mr. Maruca and his staff provided physicians, pharmacists and hospital representatives with a presentation on the policies regarding emergency/urgent expedited preauthorization of Category II drugs for Medicaid fee-for-service patients. The policies are designed to balance the concern that no patient goes without any needed medications with the need to ensure that Category II drugs are dispensed in a proper manner. As part of the emergency/urgent expedited preauthorization process, a dispensing pharmacist may contact the Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Board to verbally request a one-time preauthorization for a prescribed Schedule II narcotic. Pharmacists can also call the Pharmacy Call Center to dispense a 72 hour supply of non-narcotic, maintenance medications if the prescribing physician cannot be reached. Further discussions will be held.

DCHA Hosts Delegation Breakfast at the Democratic National Convention in Denver

On Monday, August 25th, DCHA hosted a breakfast and reception for the members of the District of Columbia delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Denver. At the breakfast, DCHA President **Robert A. Malson** expressed DCHA's appreciation to our Congressional Delegate, the Mayor and the Council for their support of the District's hospitals' legislative agenda. Attendees included Delegate **Eleanor Holmes Norton**, City Council Chairman **Vincent Gray** and Councilmembers **Kwame Brown**, **Marion Barry**, **Muriel Bowser**, **Jack Evans**, **Yvette Alexander**, and **Harry Thomas, Jr.**

Washington Post Opposes Re-election of Councilmember Carol Schwartz

The September 3rd editorial of *The Washington Post* recognized Councilmember **Carol Schwartz's** (R-At Large) decades of service to the District, calling her a "fierce advocate for good government." However, the editorial cited Ms. Schwartz's opposition to the mayoral takeover of the schools and other popular reforms as reasons to support **Patrick D. Mara** in the upcoming September 9th primary. (Ms. Schwartz was the primary sponsor of the Accrued Sick & Safe Leave Act of 2008, a bill strongly opposed by DCHA and the business community that would have placed extraordinary administrative burdens on the city's employers. All amendments proposed by DCHA were adopted prior to final passage.)

Providence Hospital Partners with Psychiatric Institute of Washington

Two mental health providers in DC teamed up to expand mental health services for the community. **Providence Hospital** and the **Psychiatric Institute of Washington** will now accept patients at Seton House Behavioral Health Services at Providence Hospital. **Sidney Brooks**, a psychiatrist at the 41-year-old institute, will lead the program. Providence Hospital, a member of the Ascension Health, offers treatment programs for substance abuse, emotional, behavioral, and psychiatric disorders. Department Chair **Harwant Gill** provides the medical leadership for Seton House Behavioral Health Services.

DCHA 30th Annual Banquet Sponsorship Opportunities Extended

Please join DCHA in celebrating its 30th Annual Banquet. This year's banquet will be held on **Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hilton Washington, 1919 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.** Sponsorship provides numerous opportunities to showcase your company. DCHA offers three sponsorship levels: Platinum (\$10,000), Chairman's Circle (\$5,000) and Patron (\$2,500). Sponsorship forms can be found on the DCHA website at www.dcha.org.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Malin".

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