



To: Members, AHA's Section for Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Services

From: Rebecca B. Chickey, Director, AHA's SPASAS

**Subject: Update on Key Issues in the Behavioral Health Care Field: September 2012**

### **Proposed Medicare Coverage for Psych Tele-Health**

AHA recently sent the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) a comment letter on its CY 2013 proposed rule for the Medicare physician fee schedule. While we are deeply concerned about the projected 27% cut in physician payments on January 1; we support a number of the proposed rule's provisions, including Medicare coverage for several new preventive services to the list of approved Medicare tele-health services on a Category 1 basis, including screening for depression in adults and intensive behavioral therapy for cardiovascular disease.

### **Required Psychiatric Quality Measures for Medicare**

As reported last month, CMS issued its fiscal year (FY) 2013 final rule for the hospital inpatient and long-term care prospective payment systems (PPS) on Aug. 1. The final rule, which takes effect on Oct. 1, details six quality measures, (see pages 1563-1630 and 1970-1973) which are the National Quality Forum-endorsed Hospital-Based Inpatient Psychiatric Services (HBIPS) measures as developed by The Joint Commission. If a psychiatric hospital or unit paid under IPF PPS fails to report these quality measures as required, their Medicare reimbursement rate will be reduced by 2%. Our regulatory advisory highlights the major provisions of the rule, -- see page 39 for details on the 6 quality measures.

### **Medicaid Expansion and the Affordable Care Act**

Last month the AHA sent Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius questions with respect to the Medicaid expansion as it relates to the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Among other issues, AHA asks whether states can expand Medicaid coverage to certain populations or phase in coverage over several years; and how the expansion option will affect Disproportionate Share Hospital payment reductions. Further information will be forthcoming.

### **Resources from the AHA**

The AHA has launched the **AHA Workforce Center**, [www.healthcareworkforce.org](http://www.healthcareworkforce.org), a new online hub to help members of the association and its affiliates sustain, grow and enhance the health care workforce. A collaborative effort of the AHA's American Organization of Nurse Executives, American Society of Healthcare Human Resources Administration and other affiliates, the Center brings together resources and tools to support workforce recruitment, engagement, retention, succession planning, diversity, culture and models for the future. Check it out.

Applications for the 2013 **AHA-McKesson Quest for Quality prize** are being accepted until October 14, 2012. All U.S. hospitals are eligible to apply. View award criteria information, or apply online. View past nominees in their quest for quality care.

The 2012 edition of AHA's **Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence: A Compendium of Action Guides** is now available. This year's edition includes reports on population health, caring for vulnerable populations, health care disparities, perinatal safety and more.

**Equity of Care** is the national collaborative effort of the American College of Healthcare Executives, AHA, Association of American Medical Colleges, Catholic Health Association of the United States, and National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems. Through this platform we have issued a call to action to eliminate health care disparities. As part of our effort to provide resources and keep members apprised of the many issues affecting equity of care, we have a monthly Equity of Care Newsletter.

Check out the attached September Behavioral Health Update, which includes information the AHA comment letter on proposed partial hospital rates for CY13; President Obama's Executive Order to improve mental health access for veterans; October's National Depression Screening day and more.

Finally, your voice is also needed in Washington this fall as Congress grapples with year-end decisions that will affect hospitals. Please plan on attending one of our upcoming **AHA Advocacy Days**: Tuesday, Sept. 11; Thursday, Nov. 29; and Tuesday, Dec. 11. See the invitation with details about how to register.

Rebecca B. Chickey,  
Director, Section for Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Services, 615-354-0507; [rchickey@aha.org](mailto:rchickey@aha.org)

P.S. – Sharing another great resource from the Partnership for Workplace Mental Health -- A literature review of the compelling business case for effective treatment of mental health & substance use disorders. Check it out.