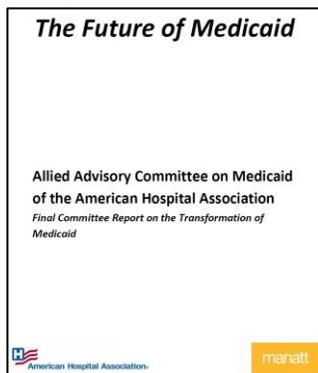


The governing council of the AHA Section for Metropolitan hospitals met March 3-4, 2014 in Chicago, IL. Agenda items for the meeting included policy discussions on hospitals redefining themselves, the future of Medicaid, price transparency, and quality measures. In addition, members were briefed on the current Washington political, legislative, and regulatory policy environment. A **roster of the Section's governing council** is available on our Web site.



**Washington Update:** Congress raised the debt limit, completed work on a bipartisan budget for 2014 and extended payment to physicians under the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) through March 31, 2014. However, advocacy continues for a permanent SGR fix that does not put hospital payments at risk. Members examined the political environment, the federal budget, funding of fiscal years 2014 and 2015, and the risk of future hospital payment cuts. Members reviewed and [discussed key regulatory challenges](#) including inpatient admission and review criteria including the two-midnight rule, packaging of outpatient prospective payment bundles, recovery audit contractors, and emergency preparedness. Members endorsed the importance of the **AHAPAC** and the work of the **Coalition to Protect America's Health Care** to communicate our message to the public.



**The Future of Medicaid:** In 2013, the AHA initiated a special project to assess the trends shaping the future of the Medicaid program and its interaction with the public and private exchanges, and to help develop approaches for state hospital associations and the AHA to take in shaping this future. As part of this process, the AHA engaged Manatt Health Solutions to develop “taxonomy” of state approaches to Medicaid as a manageable framework from which to identify important Medicaid reform issues for hospitals, predict future reform efforts, and identify opportunities for hospital input and leadership. Members reviewed and commented on taxonomy in a report from the AHA Allied Advisory Committee on Medicaid whom guides the project.

**Redefining the “H:” The Long Term Challenge for Hospitals:** The continuing transformation of the healthcare system means that every hospital must decide how it will redefine itself for the future, and will require a new understanding of the term “hospital.” Members discussed how hospitals and health systems are “redefining” themselves and identified themes that can help form the AHA governance and policy development agendas while feeding into the development of the 2015-2017 AHA strategic plan.



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**Price Transparency:** While the public focus on price transparency is not new, trends in the health care marketplace are heightening its importance. The [Healthcare Financial Management Association's Price Transparency Task Force](#), of which AHA is a member, is designed to create specific guidelines that healthcare organizations can use to improve their performance and transparency as well as make pricing systems more rational. AHA has a position on [Hospital Price Transparency](#) and the AHA and its members stand ready to work with policymakers on innovative ways to build on efforts already occurring at the state level, and share information that helps consumers make better choices about their health care. Using the information gleaned from local surveys, members shared the challenges of patients trying to access hospital price information and they advised the AHA on how to move the health care field, as a whole, forward in making meaningful price transparency.

**Quality Measures:** Last fall, AHA governance members and their quality teams were asked to help prioritize the six categories of the [National Quality Strategy](#) and identify a small set of important metrics that the public and private sector could use to assess a hospital's quality and safety and hospitals could use to improve performance. Members were updated on the outcome of that feedback and asked to make further recommendations on a narrower specific list of quality measures that should be included in public reporting and pay for performance programs.



**For more information** about the topics covered in these highlights or on [the AHA Section for Metropolitan Hospitals](#), contact John T. Supplitt, senior director, at 312-422-3306 or [jsupplitt@aha.org](mailto:jsupplitt@aha.org).



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