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Hospitals, clinics, and schools of health administration/public health operated by the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) play a vital role in our nation's health care, delivering care and providing access to essential health and social services for our military and veterans. As in the civilian sector, federal health care is undergoing major changes, primarily in response to the closure of some medical facilities, budget constraints and changes to health benefits. Military and VA health leaders have said that there will be increased emphasis on wellness to address chronic conditions and changes in the delivery of care emphasizing teamwork and accountability for producing value and reducing costs. AHA supports the unique role of these health care organizations and works for federal hospital leaders through collaboration and partnerships, leader engagement and involvement, and providing key resources and tools.

Outlined below are a few specific examples of how AHA is:

- Working for federal hospitals;
- Engaging federal hospital leaders; and
- Providing key resources.

Working for Federal Hospitals

The primary mission of AHA is to support the nation's hospitals and health systems on issues that impact their organizations, patients and communities. AHA ensures that members' perspectives and needs are heard and addressed by national health care leaders, with the press, consumers and in the communities they serve. Examples of how AHA has worked for federal hospitals are outlined below.

- **Strengthening Hospitals' Ability to Serve Communities.** AHA works across party lines – with Congress, regulatory agencies and the courts – to protect funding for hospital services from arbitrary cuts and to decrease regulatory burdens that draw much needed resources away from patient care. This promotes the ability of hospitals and health care systems to better partner with federal clinics and

hospitals as communities explore new ways to optimize local resources.

- **Facilitated Improved Health Care Access for Veterans.** The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) allows qualifying veterans to elect to receive hospital care and medical services from the VA and non-VA entities and providers. AHA worked with Congress and the VA to further improve the VCP and veterans' access to health care services.
- **Meeting the Needs of Our Returning Military.** AHA partnered with the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) to help raise awareness of the medical, social and emotional challenges that the military face as they return home to their daily lives. The primary goal of this partnership was to ensure that returning service members find the support and resources they need.

Engaging Federal Hospital Leaders

Federal hospital leaders have a voice in AHA through their active involvement in several forums.

- **A Role in AHA Governance and Policy-making.** AHA offers federal hospital leaders many opportunities to take an active role in shaping AHA policies and setting the direction for the association. They can play a formal role in association governance and policy formation by serving on AHA's Board of Trustees, Regional Policy Boards, Governing Councils and committees, including the Committee on Research and Committee on Performance Improvement. In addition, the association creates short-term advisory and work groups where members weigh in on more focused, time-sensitive policy issues.
- **Federal Hospital Executive Roundtable.** A small group of federal hospital leaders are invited annually to meet with AHA's

president and executive team in Washington to provide their guidance on specific and time-sensitive health care issues and to discuss strategies to strengthen federal and civilian health care partnerships.

- **Committee for Clinical Leadership (CCL).** The CCL provides clinical input to AHA advocacy and public policy process, serves as a clinical resource on policy issues, and guides the ongoing work of AHA's Physician Leadership Forum (PLF). The CCL also is concerned with issues relating to standards and requirements for clinical education programs and activities and includes representatives from the medical, nursing and pharmacy fields.
- **Member Outreach.** Several times throughout the year, AHA's federal hospital leaders are individually contacted by AHA and/or are invited to participate in small group conference calls to discuss key AHA initiatives.

Providing Key Resources for Federal Hospitals

AHA offers federal hospital leaders myriad tools and resources to support their efforts and improve the health care delivery system.

- **Equity of Care.** Addressing disparities is essential for performance excellence and improved community health. AHA issued goals and milestones from the National Call to Action, launched in 2011 to end health care disparities and promote diversity, and encourages hospitals to take the #123forEquity Pledge to eliminate health care disparities. For more, visit www.equityofcare.org.
- **Cybersecurity Resources.** AHA offers cybersecurity resources for hospitals, including cybersecurity alerts, links to tools to assist with risk assessment and gap analysis, and connections to opportunities for information sharing. For more, visit www.aha.org/cybersecurity.
- **Telehealth Resource.** AHA offers a web resource with comprehensive information on telehealth. The site includes information on federal and state telehealth initiatives, research documenting telehealth value, AHA-member case studies showing telehealth in action and AHA TrendWatch reports on telehealth benefits to patients. For more, visit www.aha.org/telehealth.
- **Telling the Hospital Story.** As the national voice for hospitals, AHA uses a wide range of strategies to tell the hospital story in national and local news, traditional and social media, and print, television and radio advertising. AHA also equips members with tools and strategies to help respond to media inquiries on difficult and challenging issues.
- **Physician Leadership Forum (PLF).** AHA's PLF seeks to foster strong collaborative relationships between hospitals and physicians through education, quality and patient safety, leadership development, and advocacy and public policy. Through webinars, seminars and reports, PLF has focused on team-based care, physician competency development and physician practice management.
- **AHA Committee on Research (COR).** The COR develops the AHA research agenda, studies topics in depth and reports out to the AHA Board and the field. A broad array of health care leaders participate on the committee and it is chaired by the AHA Board Chair-elect.
- **AHA Committee on Performance Improvement (CPI).** The CPI provides guidance on AHA's strategy to support performance improvement. The Committee's 2015 report, undertaken in conjunction with AHA's COR, examined the changing health care landscape and the role trustees and community leaders can play to help guide hospitals during this time of change.

- **Care and Payment Models to Achieve the Triple Aim.** This 2016 report, produced by AHA's Committee on Research and Committee on Performance Improvement identified seven key principles for creating a care delivery system and reviewed new payment models as the health care field moves to a value-based care system.
- **Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence (HPOE) Guides and Reports.** AHA's HPOE is a platform that shares action guides and reports on care delivery, operational excellence, safety and quality and population health to help accelerate performance improvement.
- **Veterans Hiring Resource.** *Hospital Careers: An Opportunity to Hire Veterans* is a toolkit for hospitals with guidance on recruiting veterans into hospital careers. The resource aims to assist hospitals in hiring veterans with clinical experience, as well as talent and leadership skills beyond their medical credentials.
- **Resources to Promote the Role of Hospitals.** AHA initiated a digital campaign to help patients and consumers better understand the evolving role of the nation's hospitals. The Advancing Health in America website features a video and other resources showing how hospitals are creating partnerships and programs that reach beyond their walls to improve community health and access to care. For more, visit www.AdvancingHealthinAmerica.org.
- **Reports and Analyses.** AHA research reports include the TrendWatch series, a periodic AHA publication that reports on the latest trends affecting hospitals and the health care system as well as other AHA-sponsored studies and Chartbook, a compendium of the latest trends impacting hospitals. Recent topics include the promise of telehealth for hospitals, health systems and their communities, and rethinking the hospital readmissions reduction program.
- **AHA Resource Center.** In AHA's Resource Center, highly trained information specialists assist members in accessing timely and relevant health services articles and data.
- **Fellowship Programs.** The AHA-National Patient Safety Foundation Comprehensive Patient Safety Leadership Fellowship is a year-long, intensive learning experience that develops leadership competencies and promotes a transformational model for patient safety and quality improvement. HRET developed the AHA Health Care System Transformation Fellowship for C-suite executives. The six-month program provides a roadmap of how to design and plan for new care delivery models.

