Greetings!

As we begin the fall season, we also are reminded that this is also the start of the new federal fiscal year starting October 1. With the start of the new fiscal year, there are several opportunities for patients, consumers, and providers to have their voice heard by providing input to the new Health and Human Services (HHS) Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center Request for Information (RFI).

At Project Patient Care, we are experiencing an increasing number of patients and providers that are sharing their stories and experiences all for the purpose of advancing health care. Whether it is patients sharing how best to empower other patients or families or a provider integrating a Patient and Family Advisory Council into their practice or facility, the voice of the patient and family is being heard.

There are also several recently released publications and on-line information sources that may be of great assistance to patients, families, and providers, including:
- Updates to the Quality Payment Program for clinicians
- NEW Medicare ID Cards

“Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning.” Maya Angelou

“When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.” Malala Yousafzai

Opportunities to Submit Comments on HHS and CMS Strategic Directions

HHS Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2022 ---- Comments Due October 27
On September 26, HHS released their Draft Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 with comments due by October 27, 2017. The Plan outlines 5 overall strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1: Reform, Strengthen, and Modernize the Nation's Health Care System
Strategic Goal 2: Protect the Health of Americans Where They Live, Learn, Work, Play
Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen the Economic and Social Well-Being of Americans across the Lifespan
Strategic Goal 4: Foster Sound, Sustained Advances in the Sciences
Strategic Goal 5: Promote Effective and Efficient Management and Stewardship

View HHS Strategic Plan and submit comments.

**CMS Issues RFI on Innovation Center New Direction – Comments Due November 20**

On September 20, CMS issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking input from patients, consumers, providers, and organizations on new directions for the CMS Innovation Center. The emphasis on Value-Based care will continue with a focus on improving health and healthcare outcomes while reducing costs to CMS and beneficiaries.

Key principles include:
1) Choice and competition in the market – Promote competition based on quality, outcomes, and costs.
2) Provider Choice and Incentives – Focus on voluntary models, with defined and reasonable control groups or comparison populations, to the extent possible, and reduce burdensome requirements and unnecessary regulations to allow physicians and other providers to focus on providing high-quality healthcare to their patients. Give beneficiaries and healthcare providers the tools and information they need to make decisions that work best for them.
3) Patient-centered care – Empower beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to take ownership of their health and ensure that they have the flexibility and information to make choices as they seek care across the care continuum.
4) Benefit design and price transparency – Use data-driven insights to ensure cost-effective care that also leads to improvements in beneficiary outcomes.
5) Transparent model design and evaluation – Draw on partnerships and collaborations with public stakeholders and harness ideas from a broad range of organizations and individuals across the country.
6) Small Scale Testing – Test smaller scale models that may be scaled if they meet the requirements for expansion under 1115 A(c) of the Affordable Care Act (the Act). Focus on key payment interventions rather than on specific devices or equipment.

The Innovation Center is interested in testing models in the following eight focus areas:
1. Increased participation in Advanced Alternative Payment Models (APMs);
2. Consumer-Directed Care & Market-Based Innovation Models;
3. Physician Specialty Models;
4. Prescription Drug Models;
5. Medicare Advantage (MA) Innovation Models;
6. State-Based and Local Innovation, including Medicaid-focused Models;
7. Mental and Behavioral Health Models; and
8. Program Integrity.

View RFI and submit comments.
provides national and state information on the 626 health systems which represent approximately 70% of non-federal generate acute care hospitals.

AHRQ utilized information from the American Hospital Association Annual Survey Database, QuintilesIMS Healthcare Organization Services, and the SK&A Healthcare Databases. AHRQ researchers found that the industry contained a total of 626 health systems in 2016.

The Compendium includes tabular, graphic, and map information at a national and state level and can be accessed here https://www.ahrq.gov/chsp/compendium/index.html

NEW Medicare ID Cards
Starting April 1, 2018, CMS will be issuing new Medicare ID Cards for beneficiaries – to see new design - https://www.cms.gov/medicare/new-medicare-card/nmc-home.html. The new cards will be issued to all Medicare beneficiaries by April 2019 and are important in protecting beneficiary identification as the Social Security number will be removed and replaced with a Medicare issued identification number.

It is important for providers to be able to accept the new Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) to replace the existing Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN). Providers will be able to use the MBI or HICN for a 21-month transition period for billing purposes. For more information, providers should access CMS resources

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY

Over 800 Healthcare Quality and Safety Professionals met in-person for the National Association for Healthcare Quality Annual NEXT Conference from September 18-20 in Cincinnati. Another 800 quality and safety professionals joined the conference virtually. The professionals included quality and safety experts working in hospitals, physician practices, nursing homes, and home health.

On September 19, Pat Merryweather from Project Patient Care served on a Panel discussion on “Insights into the Future of Healthcare Quality.” The session was moderated by Lenard Parisi, RN MA CPHQ FNAHQ; Stephanie Mercado, CAE; Deirdre McCaughey, PhD MBA; Maria Shirey, PhD MBA RN NEA-BC ANEF FACHE FAAN; Jeffrey DiLisi, MD MBA; Jodi Eisenberg, MHA CHSA.

NAHQ has expanded its HQ Essentials to include LEAN, ROI, and other key improvement initiatives to prepare quality and safety professionals to address the growing trend to Value Based Care.

NEED TO CONTACT US?
On September 30, Patients, Patient Advocates, and Clinicians joined with NBC News Anchor, Rob Stafford, and Jeanine Thomas, MRSA Survivor Network Founder, to learn and share experience with MRSA, C-Diff, and Sepsis. Many attendees were surprised that sepsis is a severe condition needing immediate treatment and develops when the chemicals the immune system releases into the bloodstream to fight an infection cause inflammation throughout the entire body instead.

Joe Merryweather, MS, PA-C, discusses the symptoms, signs, and risks of MRSA, C-Diff, and Sepsis at World MRSA Day event.

World MRSA Day Presenters including NBC News Anchor Rob Stafford; Kewaunee, Wisconsin Livestock Acquired MRSA activists; C-Diff Patient Advocate Wendy Hayum-Gross; and Project Patient Care's Pat Merryweather