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Medical Marijuana Movement

The Assembly and state Senate have both modified their medical-marijuana bills with the hopes of getting a same-as bill passed this legislative session. Sen. Diane Savino introduced an amended version of her bill last week; Assemblyman Richard Gottfried said yesterday he would amend the Assembly bill, which previously passed by a vote of 99 to 41. The new version of the bill lists specific medical conditions for which medical marijuana will be acceptable—including cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS, epilepsy and post-traumatic stress disorder—and creates an advisory group. "Even though the number of patients eligible has been restricted considerably" by listing particular medical conditions, "if new science emerges, the advisory group can go petition the government," said Gabriel Sayegh, New York state director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which advocates for marijuana legalization. The bill also prohibits edible forms of marijuana, marketing to children, and smoking by patients under 21, and imposes a 7% excise tax. The tax revenue would be largely split between the state and the counties where the marijuana would be produced and dispensed; small portions would go to the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and to local law enforcement. Ms. Savino yesterday expressed confidence the bill would reach the Senate floor.

The \$3.5 Million CEO

GNYPHA President Ken Raske was the third-highest paid head of a health care association in 2012. He took home \$3.5 million, 14% more than the year before. Modern Healthcare's annual ranking of health care association leaders placed Scott Serota, president and CEO of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, at the top of the pay ranking list for the second year in a row, with \$5.2 million in compensation, down 5% from 2011. Joseph Parker, the now-retired chief executive of the Georgia Hospital Association, ranked No. 2, receiving nearly \$4 million in 2012. Mr. Raske got a 41% bump in bonus pay in 2012, to \$1.9 million. Of that bonus, \$778,483 was a partial award for a long-term incentive plan. A GNYHA spokesman said the trade group is "an extraordinarily unique hospital association, with a for-profit business arm that serves tens of thousands of customers nationwide and is involved in billions of dollars in commerce."

NS-LIJ New Board Chair

Mark Claster, president of Carl Marks & Co., was named the new chair of the North Shore-LIJ Health System's board of trustees, succeeding Richard Goldstein. Mr. Claster has been a trustee for more than 20 years and knows his way around the many changes at the health system. For example, when NS-LIJ wanted to improve the system's patient experience, it brought in consultants from some unlikely places: Nordstrom's and the Ritz-Carlton. They focused on streamlining family visits, because "the hospital experience is also the family's experience," Mr. Claster said. "Most patients themselves don't even know they've had a bad experience in how they've been serviced—a lot of patients are out of it, in some degree." Another part of the system's success is its ability to achieve back-office efficiency, by consolidating supply purchases and reducing redundant services among hospitals close to each other, Mr. Claster said.

NYMC Affiliation Deal

Saint Michael's Medical Center in Newark will be the academic affiliate of New York Medical College in July 2015. The deal gives the Valhalla, N.Y., school a new residency option for clinical rotations for its students. NYMC is replacing the New Jersey hospital's current affiliate, Seton Hall University School of Graduate Medical Education. Saint Michael's has been negotiating a sale to Prime Health Services, a for-profit operator, for years, but the deal is getting a long look from regulators.

Grants for NYC primary care

The most recent health care grants from the New York Community Trust, announced yesterday, focus on bolstering the city's primary care system.

Expansion of primary care is essential to meeting the goals of managing New York's Medicaid costs. The government program "is almost half the health care dollars in New York state, and becoming a bigger share with Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act," said Len McNally, program director for health and people with special needs at the trust.

The Institute for Family Health, which has been slowly introducing team-based care at two of its centers, received \$100,000 to expand that model to two more. The IFH aims to completely phase out separate treatment plans created by individual doctors and replace them with a combined plan that will be incorporated into a patient's electronic health record.

The Center for Urban Community Services last year started providing primary care to people living in supportive housing who were formerly homeless and mentally ill; it will expand the program to two more sites with a \$100,000 grant.

The Primary Care Development Corp. will test new team-based models of primary care, working with 20 community health centers, with the help of a \$110,000 grant. The Community Health Care Association of New York State received \$110,000 to strengthen community health centers.

The grants are part of the trust's multipronged strategy, Mr. McNally said. Funding groups like PCDC or CUCS can help the entire sector.

The trust also gave several grants to large providers, such as the Child Center of New York. The Child Center, which runs five mental health clinics in Queens, received \$140,000 over two years that it will use to transition to managed care. While adults on Medicaid who receive behavioral health services already are in managed care, children make that transition by 2016.

"We want to help providers who care for New York's vulnerable population to continue to provide care," said the trust's Mr. McNally. "Their whole business model is being radically transformed in a short period of time."

At A Glance

WHO'S NEWS: Dr. John Bookvar is the new director of the Brain Tumor Center for Lenox Hill Hospital and Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, both part of the North Shore-LIJ health system. He also will be the director of the Pituitary/Neuroendocrine Center and the acoustic neuroma program at the health system's New York Head and Neck Institute. Dr. Bookvar was previously co-director of the Brain and Spinal Tumor Program at the Weill Cornell Brain and Spine Center.

EXTRA: The latest edition of the compensation series arrives by email at 11 a.m.

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but I live in a shelter.”**

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