



HASC Briefs

In This Issue:

Community Celebrates MLK Hospital Dedication

- Treatment Options Identified for L.A. County Offenders **2**
- Area Board Room Moves Are Noted **2**
- Golf Tournament Deadline Nears **2**
- Strategies to Avoid CMS Penalties Are Current Hot Topic **3**
- Bellflower Hospital Reopens Doors **3**
- HASC Welcomes Associate Members **3**



Hundreds of stakeholders attended Aug. 7's dedication ceremony at Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, including (from left) L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Aris Ridley-Thomas (wife of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas) and California Attorney General Kamala Harris. (HASC photo)

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Community members, staff and local officials dedicated a gleaming new Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital on Aug. 7.

Raising funds to open the hospital wasn't easy, but planners found a solution in a unique public, private and academic partnership, said Manuel Abascal, chairman of the hospital board.

"It hadn't been done before, but we did it, and it works," he said at the ceremony.

The facility is managed by an independent, nonprofit governing authority. Los Angeles County is the hospital's prime financial backer, and has invested \$284 million for its construction. UCLA is the third partner—and contributes medical staff.

The facility offers 131 beds—making it

about a third the size of the old King/Drew hospital that closed in 2007. MLK offers an expanded range of services on the 42-acre campus, however—including a mental health urgent-care unit, outpatient clinic and public health center.

Its overall concept emphasizes prevention and education in an effort to keep emergency room traffic down.

A recuperative care center for homeless patients is scheduled to open by the end of the year.

Close to 14,000 applications were received for 650 hospital positions, CEO Dr. Elaine Batchlor noted.

Making the hospital a reality required a supreme cooperative effort as it sits in a part of Los Angeles "that has few material resources," Batchlor said.

Association Welcomes New CEOs

The association welcomes the following CEOs, who are recently-appointed to positions at Southern California hospitals.

John Bishop

John Bishop is CEO at Long Beach Memorial, Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach and Community Hospital Long Beach. He has been part of MemorialCare Health System since 2004.



William L. Gilbert

William Gilbert is hospital director at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) in Colton (San Bernardino County). Prior to his tenure at ARMC, Gilbert served in the top position at Foundation Surgical Hospital in San Antonio, Texas.



Michael Rembis

Michael Rembis is CEO at Avanti Hospitals. He served previously at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center and Riverside Community Hospital, among others.



By the Numbers

•15,700—Number of positions U.S. hospitals added in July. The increase was more than double June's figures, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

•27,000—Number of jobs in health care nationwide added in July. The total was down by more than a third from June's tally, however.

•17 percent—Amount the Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates hospital employment will grow over the next decade.

-compiled by
Modern Healthcare

Los Angeles County Releases Jail Diversion Plan

County District Attorney Jackie Lacey last week unveiled a plan that would divert non-violent mentally-ill offenders from the Los Angeles County Jail to mental health and substance-abuse treatment facilities.

HASC Regional Vice President Jaime Garcia, who represents the Los Angeles County area, attended the Aug. 4 board of supervisors session.

"HASC believes that a well-funded, robust outpatient treatment program that includes housing is required in order to effectively address

the issue of homelessness," Garcia said.

To reduce unnecessary incarcerations, the plan offers 10 recommendations that will require long-term investments. One component is de-escalation training for county sheriff's deputies and other law-enforcement officers. Other recommendations include sobering centers, expanded residential drug treatment and timely referral to mental health treatment.

While the county already intended to establish three new urgent care centers with state grant dollars, plans for a fourth

mental-health urgent care center in the Long Beach area were unveiled at the meeting. The other three sites include Antelope Valley, South Bay region and San Gabriel Valley.

The plan acknowledges that significant investments in supportive housing programs for mentally ill individuals must be made.

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Golf Tournament Signup Deadline Approaches

The deadline to register for the 2015 HASC Charity Golf Classic is Monday, Sept. 21.

The tournament tees off at 10 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 5

with play at Oakmont Country Club in Glendale.

More information, including a registration form, can be had by visiting www.hasc.org/special-event/2015-hasc-charity

-golf-classic.

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Hospitals Move to Limit Readmissions

Hospitals are reexamining their best practices in the wake of last week's release of penalty data from the CMS Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program.

Of more than 300 California hospitals, approximately 65 percent were sanctioned. Overall, Southern California facilities' penalty rate was down slightly over last year. While the HRRP allows a maximum penalty of 3 percent of a hospital's annual reimbursement, no Southern California hospitals got socked for the full amount.

Since the penalty system debuted in 2012, hospitals have established procedures to limit readmissions. Practices that have borne fruit have been picked up by other facilities. Some of the procedures include more detailed post-discharge planning for patients, including help obtaining medications and guidelines for homecare workers

and families on specific patient needs.

While the penalty rate is subsiding, many hospital administrators maintain that factors outside of their control prompt some patients to reappear within the one-month window monitored by the program. Specifically, patients from lower-income households have higher rates of readmission, they note.

Patients from less-affluent communities also face bigger hurdles in obtaining prescriptions and making it to their next appointment, they add. The result is that hospitals located in these communities are unfairly penalized by the system, industry advocates point out.

Marty Gallegos, HASC's chief policy expert, has been following the issue.

"The current methodologies that are used don't recognize factors that are outside of the hospital's control," he

said last week.

To correct that imbalance, HASC and the California Hospital Association are supporting H.R. 1343, federal legislation that would add socioeconomic factors to the system. Hospitals across the country fall under the existing system.

Other strategies hospitals are implementing include coordinating with nursing-home staff, educating family members about patients' needs and involving community-based organizations in care plans.

Often, simply arranging prescription-refill deliveries can help discharged patients recover without returning to the hospital, many have learned.

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Behavioral-health Unit Opens Bellflower Hospital

Los Angeles Community Hospital at Bellflower recently opened a 32-bed inpatient behavioral-health unit—the first step towards restoring full operations to the facility. Now owned by Prospect Medical Holdings, Inc., the facility replaces the former Bellflower Medical Center, which closed in 2013.

The revamped hospital features new nursing stations and a new patio for patients. The facility employs close to 60 clinical staff and about 20 non-clinical employees. It opened its doors on July 23.

With its dedicated mental-health unit, the hospital is addressing a need that is underserved across Southern California, HASC spokesperson Jennifer Bayer said following the reopening.

"There's a critical need for these units in the region," Bayer said.

Families will likely welcome the behavioral-health unit in a community that has no similar facilities, Prospect Medical Holdings said in a statement.

"Residents who have a friend or loved one in the hos-

pital will no longer have to fight the traffic... to visit," the statement said.

Other services, including urgent care and surgical inpatient services, may be added in the future. A community needs assessment will help planners decide which services to add, the company said.

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HASC Welcomes New Members

Adaptive Business Leaders Santa Ana, Calif.

www.abl.org

Mimi Grant, President

Adaptive Business Leaders connects healthcare CEOs and other executives with a broad spectrum of providers, payers and suppliers in monthly confidential roundtables.

Availity

Jacksonville, Fla.

www.availity.com

Russ Thomas, Chief Executive Officer

Availity is an intermediary for information exchange between health plans and providers.

Nelson Hardiman, LLP Los Angeles, Calif.

www.nelsonhardiman.com

Harry Nelson, Managing Partner

Nelson Hardiman, LLP is a health care law firm providing services relating to licensing, operations and reimbursement requirements.

Strategy Advantage Manhattan Beach, Calif.

www.strategyadvantage.com

Kim Athmann King, President/CEO

Strategy Advantage is a boutique strategic planning consulting firm working with hospitals and hospital systems along the West Coast.