



# HASC Briefs

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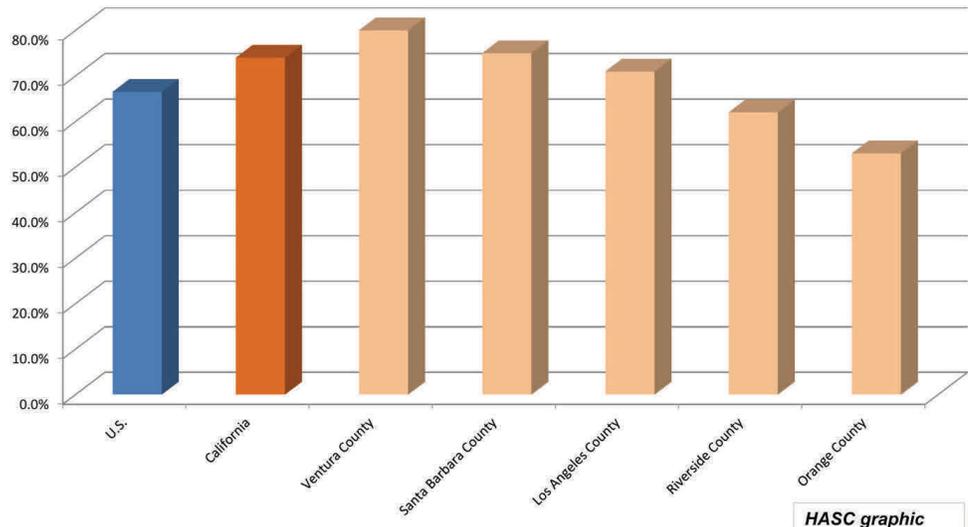
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## State Outpaces U.S. in Palliative Care



Just over 68 percent of hospitals in HASC’s member area operate palliative care programs, a recent survey finds. Nationally, 66.5 percent of hospitals do. (Data courtesy of Dr. R. Sean Morrison, The Lilian and Benjamin Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute, Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.)

**S**outhern California hospitals are embracing palliative care at a higher rate than they did five years ago, with some variance observed in HASC’s member area.

The results were assembled for “The Growth of Palliative Care in U.S. Hospitals, A Status Report,” by a team led by Dr. R. Sean Morrison of the Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

Palliative care emerged in the 1990s as an approach that emphasizes quality of life for patients and families confronting severe illnesses. Longtime advocate Dr. Tarek Mahdi noted that palliative care is now much more widely embraced than it was just a decade ago.

“It’s become a hot topic,” Mahdi told

HASC Briefs. “People are realizing that patients are suffering too much. When we started (at Riverside Community Hospital and Parkview Community Hospital) around 2003, there was little interest.”

Mahdi, of Riverside’s Parkview Community Hospital, is chair of the Inland Empire Palliative Care Coalition.

The recent study also finds that California’s statewide participation rate in palliative programs is 74 percent, higher than the nationwide average of 66.5 percent. Rates, however, vary significantly in HASC’s member area. Ventura County hospitals had the highest participation, with 80 percent of its hospitals reporting programs. Neighboring Santa Barbara County followed with 75 percent. Los Angeles and Riverside Counties reported 71

## Discharge Training is Reset for Nov. 13

The homeless patient discharge training session originally scheduled for mid-October has been reset for Friday, Nov. 13 at HASC's offices in downtown Los Angeles.

The training runs from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at 515 South Figueroa Street. The session fee is \$70 per participant. Pre-registration is required.

Conducted in partnership with Homeless Health Care Los Angeles, the training is appropriate for new South-

ern California hospital workers and others who are interested in a refresher course. It is designed for hospital staff that serve homeless patients, including case managers, discharge planners, social service staff and emergency department personnel.

Program goals include an understanding of regulatory requirements, a working knowledge of community resources and social services, and an ability to assess needs and plan for dis-

charge from the time an individual is admitted.

The session is limited to 45 participants. The class fee includes a box lunch.

To register, visit <http://events.SignUp4.com/HASC-homeless-healthcare>.

Members can email questions or information requests to Nayra Guillermo.

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## Cyber Attacks' Cost Might Top \$300 Billion

An industry report released last week estimates that 25 million patients could experience theft of personal information from cyber attacks over the next five years if breaches continue at the current rate. Theft of personal information thefts could cost U.S. health care entities as much as \$305 billion in cumulative lifetime revenue from the affected patients.

While information is not broken down by region, the report states that in 2015, close to 50 hacker-caused breaches affecting U.S. hospitals and other health care providers have already taken place. At this rate, the breaches will affect as many as one in 13 patients across the country, the report estimates.

The report, issued by technology consulting firm Ac-

centure with data provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, also references medical identity theft numbers assembled by the Ponemon Institute — an information security think tank.

Cyber security and health care have been a hot topic long before this month's report made headlines. Early this year, HASC and its partners assembled the CyberEdge® coverage and protection plan designed for hospitals and other health care providers. The plan brings together insurance coverage and protective services in a single package designed for health care entities.

For more information about HASC and CyberEdge, contact Dave Weller of Am-

WINS Insurance Brokerage of California at (213) 254-2245 or [dave.weller@amwins.com](mailto:dave.weller@amwins.com).

This week, the association's Security and Safety Committee will review steps hospitals can take to prevent cyber theft at a meeting from 9 a.m. to noon on Friday, Oct. 23.

The meeting will convene at St. Jude Medical Center, 101 East Valencia Mesa Drive in Fullerton.

Members who want to learn more about cyber security are invited to attend.

The scheduled speaker is Shauna Day, HASC's director of association services.

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## Robots 1, Bacteria 0

Robots wielding ultraviolet light tackled a stubborn hospital bacteria and emerged victorious where chemical disinfectants fell short, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania report.



*Clostridium difficile*.

Called ultraviolet germicidal irradiation robots, the devices swept the rooms of cancer patients with beams of light. When researchers measured their performance against traditional cleaning alone, the robot-cleansed rooms experienced lower infection rates.

Patients in robot-treated rooms saw a 25-percent reduction in *C. difficile* cases during the study period.

Using the procedure saved \$150,000 in annual direct medical costs, the researchers estimated.

## 2015 HQI Conference is Approaching



Attendees who register for the 2015 Hospital Quality Institute Conference will have the option of touring Sacramento's Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day, Wednesday, Nov 11.

What do Tejal Gandhi, Gary Kaplan, Thornton Kirby and Robert Wachter have in common?

They are all nationally-renowned drivers of quality and patient safety in health care, and they are all featured speakers at California's second annual Hospital Quality Institute (HQI) Conference taking place Nov. 11 – 13 in Sacramento.

In addition to the keynote speakers, the conference includes a selection of

breakout sessions that can help quality and patient safety leaders break through barriers to accomplish their objectives.

The event pre-conference on Wednesday, Nov. 11 will feature a session on creating a safety culture that will equip attendees with actionable methods and tools.

After the pre-conference, attendees can spend the evening of Veterans Day touring the Capitol gardens and war memorials, hosted

by William J. Emmerson, DDS, a former state senator and current senior vice president, state relations and advocacy for the California Hospital Association.

To learn more, and to register, visit [www.hqinstitute.org/hqi2015](http://www.hqinstitute.org/hqi2015).

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### HASC Annual Meeting is Set for April

Mark your calendar for the association's annual meeting, this April 13-15 at the St. Regis Monarch Beach resort at Dana Point. The theme is "Uber-Bold: Moving Health Care Beyond Incremental Change." Learn more at [www.hasc.org/2016-hasc-annual-meeting](http://www.hasc.org/2016-hasc-annual-meeting).

## Alegis is an Endorsed Business Partner

Alegis Revenue Group, a third-party receivables company, is an HASC Endorsed Business Partner.

Alegis specializes in revenue recovery on accounts



that require heightened expertise, labor and capital — including third-party eligibility, third-party liability and account resolution and appeals.

The Texas-based company manages more than \$3 billion in charges for more than 240 hospitals nationwide. It has helped clients meet their cash goals by making additional revenue materialize. Through these efforts, Alegis can maximize revenue for hospitals.

To learn more about the services Alegis provides, contact CEO Scott Willey at (832) 622-2997 or send a message to

[SWilley@alegisrevenue.com](mailto:SWilley@alegisrevenue.com).

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## Palliative (continued from Page 1)

percent and 62 percent participation, respectively. Orange County hospitals have been slower to embrace the trend, with 53 percent of its facilities operating palliative care programs.

The study showed that other factors also play a role in

hospitals' offering of palliative care. For example, large urban hospitals are much more likely to operate programs than rural ones.

Obstacles remain in universal implementation of such programs. Primarily, palliative care can consume significant resources, HASC Vice President for Quality and Patient Safety Julia Slininger explained.

"The greatest obstruction (to launching a program) is the fact that it takes time for a palliative care team to have a discussion with the patient and the patient's family," Slininger said.

"And at least until recently, that time has not been reimbursed by Medicare or any other medical intervention code. That's been a barrier."

While new billing codes

*"We have yet to determine how helpful this (new federal) reimbursement will be."*

—Julia Slininger, HASC Vice President, Quality and Patient Safety

have been approved for advance planning discussions, questions remain regarding whether reimbursements will cover the entire cost.

"We have yet to determine how helpful this reimbursement will be," Slininger said. "Nevertheless, multiple hospitals have palliative care and advance care planning programs in place because it's the right thing to do — it's patient-centered care."

Another complication is the fact that hospitals have different interpretations of what constitutes a pro-

gram. Dr. Mahdi believes that a broad definition of the term "palliative program" may result in overstating the actual number of participating hospitals. For example, some facilities

with limited staff may report programs.

"They're just programs on paper," Mahdi said. "To really have a palliative care program you need a dedicated team, with a program director, physicians, nurses, a chaplain and social workers."

Morrison's team published the results on the Journal of Palliative Medicine's website on Sept. 29.

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## On the Calendar



### Security and Safety Committee Meeting

9 a.m. to noon on Friday, Oct. 23 at St. Jude Medical Center in Fullerton, Calif.

### HASC Board Meeting

9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, Nov. 11 in the HASC Board Room, 515 South Figueroa St., Suite 1300 Los Angeles, Calif.

### Los Angeles Hospitals Leadership Group Meeting

8:30-10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 18 in the HASC Board Room, 515 South Figueroa St., Suite 1300 Los Angeles, Calif.

Learn more about these and other HASC events at [www.hasc.org/calendar](http://www.hasc.org/calendar)

## Employee Competency Workshop is Open

Space remains open for the Thursday, Nov. 5 HASC workshop titled "Developing, Measuring & Documenting Employee Competency."

The intensive 1-day session is open to HASC members and runs from 9

a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Moseley-Salvatori Conference Center at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles.

The workshop is designed for nurses or ancillary managers or directors — or anyone responsible for meet-

ing The Joint Commission competency requirements.

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