

**Reporters**

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Out-of-Network Showdown

The Health Plan Association has long opposed a bill (S.5068A/A.7489B) that would require insurers to calculate their out-of-network reimbursement rates at 80% of those detailed in the FAIR Health database (Pulse, Jan. 16). This week, the business community also weighed in on the bill, urging lawmakers to oppose the measure. In letters to Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, a coalition that includes the Business Council of New York State said the bill would raise premiums and be a disincentive for doctors to stay in-network. The bill is heavily supported by the Medical Society of the State of New York, and many specialists—such as plastic surgeons—who often do not take insurance. MSSNY urged doctors to write to their local politicians to support the bill. But it cast the bill as legislation that would require insurers to "disclose to our patients how their 'lowball' reimbursement policies relate to the actual costs of care." MSSNY's legislative position is outlined here.

Health and the NYC Budget

Health care and social services are expected to add an average 14,100 New York City jobs annually from 2012 through 2016, according to an analysis released yesterday by the city's Independent Budget Office. It estimated that higher-than-expected medical inflation will push health care and other fringe benefits \$69 million above the Bloomberg administration's projections for 2013. The IBO also noted that while Medicaid spending has leveled off—annual increases average 0.6%—it remains an expense that the office projects will grow to \$6.6 billion in 2016 from \$6.4 billion in 2012. The analysis is online here.

Detecting Depressed Diabetics

Earlier this year, New York-Presbyterian Hospital received a grant of \$9.5 million from the state's HEAL NY program to help improve information technology for patients with diabetes and depression. One of the hospital's initiatives includes a plan to help it more quickly detect depression in patients with diabetes. Depressed diabetic patients are less likely to take their medication, and therefore become sicker. "The population is hard to manage because they are not adherent to medicine," said J. David Liss, NYP's vice president of government relations and strategic initiatives. Through the program, which is scheduled to launch within the next 12 months, diabetic patients will be given a two-question test. If they appear to be at risk for depression, they will be given a second, nine-question test. Right now, the hospital is building the system's interface, and has begun using it on local patients.

Mount Sinai's Brooklyn outpatient outpost

Mount Sinai Medical Center's new outpost in downtown Brooklyn (Pulse, April 17) was developed with Westmed Practice Partners, a consulting organization that helps hospitals operate freestanding outpatient facilities.

This project is the first out of the pipeline for WPP, an affiliate of Westmed Medical Group, a Westchester multispecialty group practice. Mount Sinai owns the facility and staffs it with its own doctors, while WPP will provide back-office functions and manage the facility.

"These are ACOs in a box because of all the coordination of services, and relationships that are center-based," said Dr. Simeon Schwartz, Westmed's chief executive. "It is exactly the model for a medical home and value-based health care."

The new Brooklyn facility will be a 75,000-square-foot outpatient medical office on the 17th and 18th floors of 1 Pierrepont Plaza, which is part of the MetroTech Center complex. The scheduled opening date is January 2013.

The Mount Sinai Brooklyn Heights Medical Group will offer primary and specialty care, diagnostic services and urgent care. Specialties include cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, general surgery, hematology/oncology, nephrology, neurology, OB/GYN, ophthalmology, orthopedics, pediatrics, plastic surgery, podiatry, rheumatology and vascular surgery. An onsite urgent care center will have walk-in extended hours daily.

Dr. Schwartz said the center will be staffed by Mount Sinai physicians who will have privileges at nearby hospitals. Only tertiary-care services will be referred to Mount Sinai.

At A Glance

HOSPITALIST: The United Hospital Fund published a new online guide, "What Is a Hospitalist? A Guide for Family Caregivers." It is online here.

EXTRA: The compensation series continues.

DEBT: A Columbia Graduate School of Journalism website, The New York World, published a story yesterday on how a 1980s bailout of hospitals in the state has left taxpayers on the hook for up to half a billion dollars. The story is online here.

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