

Hospital Community Benefit Program

The Hilltop Institute



analysis to advance the health of vulnerable populations

Community Benefit Briefing

May 2011

Through news updates, state research and policy analysis, and policy questions, this newsletter is meant to assist state and local policymakers to understand and monitor hospital community benefit activities. The Community Benefit Briefing will report, discuss, and analyze various aspects of hospital community benefits, including the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

News

Catholic Health Association Publishes Discussion Draft of New Guide

The Catholic Health Association (CHA) has developed a new guide for nonprofit hospitals to use when conducting assessments of community health needs and for community benefit planning. In March 2011, CHA published [Assessing and Addressing Community Health Needs](#) as a discussion draft, in collaboration with VHA (a nonprofit hospital network) and the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI). HCI is a private for-profit organization that markets web-based population health data to hospitals and public health agencies to facilitate community health needs assessments.

Hilltop's Hospital Community Benefit Program posed the following questions about the new guide to CHA's Senior Director for Community Benefit/Continuing Care, Julie Trocchio:

Why are you issuing a new guide now?

Community benefit leaders are asking for guidance as they embark on conducting community health needs assessments and develop implementation strategies. While the Treasury/IRS have not yet issued their guidance on the Affordable Care Act Provisions, we are releasing the book as a discussion draft to offer our ideas on assessing and addressing community need. When federal guidance is released, we will publish the book with up-to-date information.

How does this guide differ from previous versions?

This book is devoted to community health needs assessment and community benefit planning. Our earlier guides address the overall community benefit process. Also, this book was developed with considerable assistance and guidance from public health experts, including health departments, schools of public health, and community advocates. HCI contributed much of the content.

Who is your primary audience and how do you hope they will use the guide?

This book is primarily for hospital staff responsible for conducting or overseeing community health needs assessments and planning community benefit programs. Others who may find it of interest include hospital administrators, clinicians, strategic planners, policymakers, consumer advocates, public officials, and community groups.

How can state and local policymakers make effective use of this document?

State and local policymakers will gain an understanding of both the mission and legal basis of hospitals' community health needs assessments and implementation strategies. They will learn who in the health care organization will be involved in the process and how the organization will plan and partner to accomplish these functions. Policymakers can identify local hospitals as partners in addressing communities' most pressing health care needs.

Oregon HB 2392: Community Benefits for Support of Public Health Infrastructure

House Bill [2392](#), introduced in the 2011 Oregon legislative session, would condition licensure renewal on dedication of at least 10 percent of a hospital's yearly community benefit expenditures to "public health infrastructure" (a term the bill directs the Oregon Health Policy Board to define).

In an interview with the bill's sponsor—published in the April 15, 2011, [Lund Report](#)—Representative Tina Kotek indicated that the bill was intended to address funding limitations faced by Oregon's public health infrastructure. The bill was opposed by the Oregon Association of Hospitals. Moreover, it raised concerns in the public health community about the appropriateness of reliance on private funding to support health department functions that are inherently public responsibilities.

Because no committee hearing has been scheduled, a vote on the bill this year is extremely unlikely. Simply as a result of its introduction and public hearing, however, the stage has been set for an important conversation among state policymakers and stakeholders. That discussion can be expected to focus on strategies for developing an adequately funded and sustainable public health infrastructure for Oregon.

Hilltop to Co-Sponsor AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting Preconference

On June 11, 2011, Hilltop and the Department of Health Management and Policy at Saint Louis University will host [Community Benefit: Moving Forward with Evidence-Based Policy and Practice](#). This preconference will facilitate collaboration between health care delivery systems—particularly hospital community benefit programs—and the communities they serve. This event, to be held in Seattle, Washington, is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation MATCH Program.

HCBP Issue Briefs

Issue Brief 2 – Hospital Community Benefits after the ACA: Building on State Experience

On April 28, 2011, the Hospital Community Benefit Program published its [second issue brief](#), which considers the new federal community benefit framework against a backdrop of federal and state experience and practice. The brief also provides diverse examples of state policy and practice that may be helpful for informing the interpretation and implementation of §9007 of the ACA.

Issue Brief 3 – What Can States Learn from Schedule H (Form 990)

The Hospital Community Benefit Program will publish its third issue brief later this summer to discuss what states can learn from Schedule H of IRS Form 990. The brief will consider the modifications of Schedule H as a result of the ACA, the effects of these changes, potential state uses of Schedule H, limitations of the form, and options for aligning state reporting with Schedule H.

The Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) is a nationally recognized policy and research center dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations. Hilltop conducts research, analysis, and evaluations on behalf of government agencies, foundations, and nonprofit organizations at the national, state, and local levels.

***Hilltop's Hospital Community Benefit Program** is the central resource created specifically for state and local policymakers who seek to assure that tax-exempt hospital community benefit activities are more responsive to pressing community health needs. The program provides tools to state and local health departments, hospital regulators, legislators, revenue collection and budgeting agencies, and hospitals, as these stakeholders develop approaches that will best suit their communities and work toward a more accessible, coordinated, and effective community health system. The program is funded for three years through the generous sponsorship of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org) and the Kresge Foundation (www.kresge.org).*

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