RHODE ISLAND – MASSACHUSETTS SYSTEMS TO MERGE

On Monday night, November 16, 2015, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island held their 83rd annual meeting. Dennis Keefe, president and CEO, Care New England Health System (CNE), Providence, was recognized as the outgoing board chair. Paul Camara, principal, Alan Goldberg, principal, and Tom Souliotis, vice president, attended. Earlier that day, the four-hospital Rhode Island CNE system signed a letter of intent to merge with Southcoast Health Services (SHS), a Massachusetts three acute care hospital system which also has a behavioral health hospital. Keith Hovan has been SHS president and CEO for five years, and Dennis Keefe has been president and CEO at CNE four years.

Rhode Island has long been a pioneer for the future of health care. There is currently only one independent hospital in the state, South County Hospital. Other hospitals in Rhode Island are part of systems, including a Connecticut-based not-for-profit system L+M and for-profit firms Prime and Prospect Medical Holdings. Even the Rhode Island Hospital system Lifespan Corporation used to have a Massachusetts hospital in the fold. Tufts Medical Center, Boston, was part of Lifespan from 1997 to 2002.

SHS has acute care hospitals in Fall River, New Bedford, and Wareham. According to the 2010 census, Fall River is the tenth largest city in the state, and New Bedford is the sixth. SHS performs open heart surgeries and has an exclusive regional cancer affiliation with MD Anderson Physicians Network from Texas. Fall River is also home to St. Anne’s Hospital, a leading member of the 10-hospital Steward Health Care System, one of the largest in the state.

This initiative began last winter when CNE invited a few organizations to meet with them. CNE and SHS are currently not direct competitors. If implemented, the single entity organization would be $2 billion plus and have hospitals and facilities all over a contiguous service area. Another noteworthy combination of contiguous systems is the 2011 Massachusetts Lahey Clinic, Burlington, and Northeast Health Systems, Beverly Hospital and Addison Gilbert Hospital, Gloucester, joining together to form a system. In 2013 Winchester Hospital joined, joining together to form a system. This is a model that can work.

This will probably not be the last deal for SHS or CNE as even a $2+ billion system may not be big enough to succeed in the future healthcare environment.
**ONE DAY PROJECT MANAGEMENT SEMINAR SPONSORED BY MHA**

On January 15, 2016, AMS vice president and **Northeastern University** adjunct instructor Shari Robbins will present “Project Management for Healthcare”. This one day seminar will be held at **Massachusetts Hospital Association** Conference Center in Burlington, MA. Shari has been teaching a graduate course on **Organizational Behavior, Workflow Analysis, and Change Management** for 3 years in the College of Bouve Health Science and Computer and Information Sciences. She has been with AMS for 15 years.

The seminar on Project Management will address both the qualitative and quantitative steps involved during project planning and execution. The trick is to plan, organize, and control as many of the steps as possible to mitigate unnecessary consequences. Whether it’s starting with the project plan or building the right team for the task, Shari presents key strategies in time management, effective communication, and maintaining motivation.

To see the eleven program objectives and the complete brochure, visit [MHALINK.org](http://MHALINK.org). The seminar is open to all, and attendance is limited.

**THIS IS NOT AN ICD-10 STORY**

Although AMS assisted multiple clients with the transition to ICD-10, we have been reticent to talk about it. It was a well-planned non-event. The actual transition on the October 1, 2015 date was very similar to the implementation of Y2K on January 1, 2000. The real effort over the last few months has been on the “punch list” and the reconciliation of a myriad of IT issues. With most clients, we planned that this would take the October – December 2015 calendar quarter to reconcile, but the “new normal” for many institutions will take this activity into January – March next year to complete. Anticipated lower staff coding productivity has occurred, but it’s getting back to normal.

**BOSTON VS. NEW YORK: AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN**

We always thought New York City hospitals purchasing full-page ads in the **Boston Globe** newspaper was a little odd (no, not out-of-the-box thinking). These ads have a list price of $24,000. On November 12, 2015, **NYU Langone Medical Center** ran an ad in purple on page 11.

The bold ad said “ranked #1 again and again and again,” and “UHC has recognized us with the Bernard A. Birnbaum, MD, Quality Leadership Award, three years in a row.” While that sounds impressive, neither UHC nor Dr. Birnbaum are recognizable names to the public. The ad further says “the award is given to hospitals that go above and beyond in delivering safe, high quality, efficient, patient-centered, and equitable care.”

Although AMS is not familiar with the award criteria, the UHC website says the award is given to **member academic centers**. UHC has 117 academic medical centers. The ad also does not list a NYU Langone Medical Center website, phone number, address or contact information. Maybe that is the point as we are talking about the ad “again and again and again”.
Applied Management Systems, Inc.’s Strategic Management Assistance Program is designed to provide partnering organizations access to all of AMS’ expertise while saving them time and money. By entering into a multi-year contract, our partners save management time, shorten the elapsed calendar timeframe to initiate projects and receive a reduced consulting rate.

Highlights of the program:

Ready access to AMS expertise. Projects can be initiated quickly based on approved workplans. No need for individual project proposals and service agreements.

Predictable cash flow through uniform monthly billing, with annual rate adjustments that have averaged well below 5%. The initial program has a two-year commitment.

Ability to conduct projects as required, when required. Strategic Management Assistance partners can use AMS time in advance. Participants can borrow ahead on AMS consulting time up to six months without any adjustment to the monthly payment schedule.

There is a 10-15%-an-hour discount on consulting rates that AMS already considers “a value”. The level of the discount is based on the amount of services purchased.

AMS senior management can participate upon request in any partner senior team meeting or retreat. This can be related to specific projects or general healthcare industry topics.

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