

CEO News & Views

an update from Bruce Schroffel



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This *CEO News & Views*, as you no doubt have noticed by now, is in a new, e-newsletter format. We hope to keep this a pithy bi-weekly look at our hospital and its environs, but we'll now relieve you of the need to click through to a pdf document. We hope you'll enjoy it.

Kudos...

and a happy holiday to all

A week from today, we'll be hosting our hospital-wide holiday party. At it, suits like me and my colleagues in leadership will be serving our different shifts of employees breakfast and dinner. Given the economic climate, many organizations have chosen to forego their traditional holiday celebrations, but quite honestly, I can't think of a better investment than saying thank you to each of you. I do hope you will join us for either breakfast or dinner.

We serve you not only to wish you the very best of holidays, but as a way to thank you again for all you do for patients, each other and the hundreds of strangers in the community so many of you volunteer to help on

A health care summit

Last week Sen. Ken Salazar convened a day-long "health care summit" to discuss the need and prospects for meaningful health care reform.

"Need" for reform, in truth, was a given. People in and outside the system - myself included - have been well aware of this for decades. What seems to be different this time is the sense of urgency - a sense that it has to happen now. Reform was a major focus of both candidates' presidential campaigns. Despite a wealth of urgent and expensive crises on his plate, President-elect Obama has continued casting health care reform as a leading priority. And I don't use the term "crisis" lightly. I noted that Senator Salazar opened his remarks by saying that the "health care system is in crisis." Former Sen. Tom Daschle, the still-unofficial nominee for secretary of Health and Human Services, was at the summit to reiterate that, this time, we've got to make something change.



None too soon

His vision - and, according to what I read and hear, that of a surprisingly broad ideological spectrum of senior lawmakers, hospital, business, labor union and insurance companies - seems to be moving toward something that would combine the current employer-based system with "unprecedented" government intervention that would insure some level of universal care.

"Political forces now are in alignment." Jacob Hacker, a political scientist at UC Berkeley who authored a book about the failed Clinton effort to reform health care 15 years ago, wrote recently.

None of this change can happen too soon. We see around us hundreds of thousands of people losing their jobs every month now, and, often, whatever health insurance they might have had. Our choice as a nation has been to allow them to get sick or sicker as they tighten their belts and defer needed care, or to help raise our all fellow citizens to a level of health that reflects a very special place to live.

But will it happen?



your own time.

Proud. I'm intent on highlighting the many good works so many of you do for our community. This is the season of giving, often distorted by crass commercialism and consumption. But I couldn't be more proud of both the hospital's and your individual efforts to reach out and help others now and throughout the year.

If we don't have a chance to speak personally in the near future, I wish you a warm, happy holiday and a healthy new year.



I am hopeful that the 47 million uninsured people in this country - as well as the millions more who are under-insured - can get what they need.

However, I remain skeptical that we will see the level of reform necessary. There are just so many conflicting interests involved: pharmaceutical companies, health insurers, physicians and hospitals, to name a few. Perhaps all will be able to get together this one time to do what we should all be doing: meeting the needs of our patients.

Sincerely,

Bruce

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