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Crain's Health Pulse

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Medicaid Waiver Comments Sought

The public comment period is open for the state Department of Health's proposed demonstration plan known as People First. Medicaid Director Jason Helgeson submitted the waiver application to CMS in October. It seeks to overhaul the state's current system for providing services to some 97,000 developmentally disabled New Yorkers enrolled in Medicaid, a number that includes those who are also eligible for Medicare. At a CMS website the agency calls CMS Idea Factory, the official comment period opened April 27 and will continue through May 27, when CMS will decide whether to grant New York a waiver. The full 76-page waiver request document is also on the site, along with similar proposals from other states seeking Medicaid waivers. To comment or for more information, go to <http://cmsideas.uservoice.com>.

Health Center Grants

The feds are giving New York state \$42 million appropriated as a result of the health care reform law for community health centers to expand services to 36,295 new patients. The awards announced this week give \$629 million to 171 existing health centers nationally for longer-term projects to expand their facilities, improve existing services and see more patients. The second set of awards, worth \$99 million to 227 health centers nationally, is for more immediate facility and equipment needs. In New York City, the largest awards went to Sunset Park Health Council (\$5 million), William F. Ryan Community Health Center (\$4.7 million), Charles B. Wang Community Health Center (\$3 million), Community Health Center of Richmond (\$2.8 million) and Covenant House (\$2.5 million).

Sentencing for Aquino, Rosen

Former Parkway Hospital Chief Executive Robert Aquino was sentenced on Tuesday to four months in prison for bribing former state Sen. Carl Kruger. In January, he pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery. Former MediSys CEO David Rosen, who was found guilty in the scandal, is scheduled to be sentenced on May 7.

Training the administrators who run city hospitals

Doctors can train by simulating what it's like to treat patients, so why can't hospital administrators follow a similar path? A new program from Columbia University is geared toward providing local health care executives with hands-on learning.

The Mailman School of Public Health is rolling out HealthSquare, a program for students and professionals that teaches them how to make administrative and management decisions in hospitals.

In the program, several five- to seven-member teams compete against each other over two days to create the best virtual community hospital. They make decisions about service-line mix, patient capacity and investments, said Tom Ference, a clinical professor of health policy management at Mailman and one of HealthSquare's founders. He added that each simulation leads to a different result, based on the cumulative effect of each team's decisions.

The simulation takes participants through many phases of hospital operations. By the end of the exercise, the teams will have virtually managed their hospitals for the equivalent of six years. Each mock hospital starts in the same financial position and contains four lines of service: acute care,

emergency room, ambulatory care and outpatient oncology.

“We are teaching people how to manage a hospital,” Mr. Ference said. “We are teaching team-buildin and team-management systems, and people are telling us that they went through the program, and now they are doing their job better.”

Some 300 people have participated in the program so far, including students at Mailman as well as hospital executives at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, N.J. Mailman is currently in negotiations to bring the program to Newark Beth Israel.

The simulation program costs at least \$40,000, depending on the needs of the organization, and is administered by members of a Mailman team.

At A Glance

WHO'S NEWS: Dr. Pierre Saldinger started a new post this week as chairman, Department of Surgery and surgeon in chief at New York Hospital Queens. He was formerly Danbury Hospital's chairman of surgery and program director of its surgical residency program.**PENINSULA:** The state Department of Health hearing on Peninsula Hospital is set for May 10, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Knights of Columbus, 333 Beach 90th St., Rockaway Beach. The time slot has irked some Rockaway, Queens, residents, who posted on Facebook that many people don't arrive home from work until 7 p.m.