



**Reporters**  
**Barbara Benson** - (718) 855-3304, [bbenson@crainsnewyork.com](mailto:bbenson@crainsnewyork.com)  
**Gale Scott** - (646) 201-9194, [gscott@crainsnewyork.com](mailto:gscott@crainsnewyork.com)  
*Crain's Health Pulse* is available Monday through Friday by 6 a.m.  
**Reproduction, forwarding or reuse in any form is prohibited.**  
 Customer service, call (888) 909-9111.  
 Reprints and permission, contact Lauren Melesio at 212-210-0707.

**Today's News** Monday, August 29, 2011

## Group Objects to Rate Hikes

Health Care for All New York filed objections to 10 rate hikes sought by insurers and sent protest letters last week to key legislative leaders and state officials. The coalition urged lawmakers to "independently investigate the actuarial soundness of these proposed rate increases and the reasons that they substantially outpace the rate of medical and general inflation" in New York. Most of the proposed hikes, which are listed on the state Insurance Department website, are in the 20% to 30% range, although Aetna is seeking increases of up to 53.6% for one of its high-deductible plans. HCANY noted that with the national rate of inflation at 3.6% and the New York medical cost trend at about 9%, "it is difficult to find a rationale for proposed rate increases requested by the carriers [that] simply allege medical trends without any supporting evidence or documentation. Details, including information on rate hikes already approved and when they take affect, are at <http://www.ins.state.ny.us>.

## Soundview Pushes Ahead

After getting a reprieve from the state Department of Health's decision barring it from participating in Medicaid, Soundview Health Center said it is working on a compliance plan to correct deficiencies in its operations. Formulating an acceptable plan is one of two mandates given to the clinic network by a Bronx judge as conditions of remaining in business prior to a Sept. 19 court hearing. The second condition requires Soundview to assure the court and the state DOH that Pedro Espada and his son, Pedro G. Espada, have no role in running Soundview. "We are absolutely confident that we can run Soundview [without the Espadas]," a spokeswoman said. She added that health plans whose patients use Soundview have rescinded their directives ordering patients to find a new place for care. "They tell us they are in the process of sending out letters to patients," she said.

## Healthy Volumes for FAIR Health Site

Since it went live in early August, consumers have been flocking to the website for FAIR Health, the independent nonprofit created to replace Ingenix as the source for determining typical costs of medical procedures. "We've had more than 35,000 page views in three and half weeks," said President Robin Gelburd. The consumer-friendly site allows comparisons by ZIP code of out-of-network charges for both medical and dental procedures. It provides averages for what consumers should expect to pay out-of-pocket when they leave their plan's network for care. The site, [www.fairhealthconsumer.org](http://www.fairhealthconsumer.org), was created as part of a settlement of a lawsuit that alleged Ingenix's data was inaccurate. Next up will be information on "bundled scenarios," said Ms. Gelburd. FAIR Health will give consumers information on the separate charges involved in a procedure like a hip replacement, such as surgery, anesthesia and physical therapy.

## Westchester doctors become hospital employees

White Plains Hospital in Westchester is making a careful entry into the world of physician practice acquisitions. It recently brought on nine doctors as employees, part of a new strategy to align local physicians with the hospital.

In April, White Plains Surgical Specialists became the first practice to join White Plains Hospital Physician Associates, a newly formed division of the hospital. The unit took over three practices in all: the surgeons' group, a two-doctor obstetrics practice and a three-surgeon orthopedics group. The WPSS surgeons who are now hospital employees are Carl, Philip and Kaare Weber and Kimberly Yee.

White Plains Hospital is a nonteaching community facility whose doctors traditionally are not on staff as employees.

"The hospital wanted to develop an infrastructure for an employment model structured in a way so it is not competitive with our other doctors," said Susan Fox, senior vice president of administration, who is focused on physician practice development. "Our intention is to work with all doctors treating patients in the community." Some doctors may not want to become employees but might want to "look at their length of stay or readmissions, because they know their reimbursement under health reform will change," she added.

Ms. Fox said the hospital doesn't have a specific target number for doctor hires. "We have our door open, but we really are trying to understand how many of our physicians can benefit," she said.

## At A Glance

**ACO:** Montefiore's ACO, the Bronx Accountable Healthcare Network, is the second-largest of 13 accountable care organizations surveyed by *Crain's* sister publication *Modern Healthcare* in its first survey of ACOs. The story is at [www.modernhealthcare.com](http://www.modernhealthcare.com). A policy paper on Montefiore's ACO is available for a fee at [www.modernhealthcare.com](http://www.modernhealthcare.com).

**CANCELED:** The Medicaid Redesign Team's Payment Reform and Quality Measurement Work Group meeting that had been scheduled for Aug. 30, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Manhattan has been canceled because of Hurricane Irene. The meeting will be rescheduled.

ADVERTISEMENT

**CRAIN'S  
HEALTH**

**pulse**

**CRAIN'S HEALTH PULSE**  
reaches the tri-state area's  
top health care decision makers.

Position your brand in this environment as an effective  
and direct way to target these influential readers.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT TRISH HENRY AT 212.210.0711**