In Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, the state’s 30 acute care hospitals reported 12,134 uninsured hospitalizations with total associated charges of over $239 million. An “uninsured hospitalization” is one for which no third party payer is responsible for payment, and which often results in financial burdens for patients and their families along with hospitals. This brief will provide a retrospective analysis of uninsured hospitalizations from FY 2006-2008.

As shown in Figure 1, over the past three years, uninsured hospitalizations decreased by 6.6%, from 12,988 in FY 2006 to 12,134 in FY 2008. While the number of uninsured hospitalizations fell during this period, associated charges to treat these uninsured patients rose by 14% from FY 2006 levels. Figure 2 illustrates that uninsured hospitalizations did not consistently decline over the three years. In FY 2007, uninsured hospitalizations were reported at 13,241, a 1.9% increase from FY 2006. They declined 8.4% between FY 2007 and FY 2008. During the three-year period, Medicaid and Medicare hospitalizations increased by 6.1% and 2.5%, respectively.

Between FY 2006 and FY 2008, the number of Emergency Department (ED) visits by uninsured patients increased by 2.3% (+3,939 visits), signaling that the decrease in the number of uninsured hospitalizations was not indicative of uninsured ED utilization. The percentage of uninsured ED visits remained at 11% of total ED visits across each of the three years. In FY 2008, of 1.6 million ED visits statewide, 173,009 visits were made by patients without insurance.

In FY 2008, 66% of the uninsured who were hospitalized were admitted through the ED, up from 62% three years earlier. The percentage of uninsured patients under age 40 decreased over the past three years, while the share of uninsured hospitalizations for individuals above 40 years old rose from 45% to 50%. Although the state experienced demographic changes with regard to uninsured hospital discharges, the total number of uninsured hospitalizations remained at fewer than 3% of all Connecticut hospitalizations. This figure ranks the state favorably compared to the U.S. average for uninsured hospitalizations (5.7% in 2006).

DECREASE IN UNINSURED HOSPITALIZATIONS, FYS 06-08

The overall decline of uninsured hospitalizations (-6.6%) was fueled by decreased admissions in the following uninsured categories:

- Children, < age 18 (-23 %),
- Adults, ages 19-39 (-11 %),
- Races other than White, Black, or Hispanic, (-33 %), and
- Referral Admissions (-10 %).
In FY 2008, several hospitals saw a significant drop in uninsured hospitalizations when compared to FY 2006 levels. Middlesex Hospital (-374 discharges), Norwalk Hospital (-353 discharges) and St. Mary’s Hospital (-177 discharges) had the highest decreases in uninsured hospitalizations. Although the overall number of uninsured hospitalizations decreased from three years ago, certain hospitals saw an increase in uninsured hospitalizations, the largest being Lawrence and Memorial Hospital (+152 discharges), Windham Community Memorial Hospital (+91 discharges) and the Hospital of Saint Raphael (+84 discharges). Cumulatively, Connecticut hospitals experienced a net decrease of 854 uninsured discharges when compared to FY 2006.

**OHCA’s next issue brief will focus on the subject of uncompensated care.**

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**Notes**

1. For the purposes of this issue brief, uninsured patients are defined as persons whose primary payer was self-pay, other, or no charge as defined in OHCA’s hospital inpatient discharge database regulations.
2. Connecticut Hospital Association Chime, Inc. Emergency Department Database (excludes Sharon Hospital)

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