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Boomer Women Take Charge at End

Getting New Yorkers to name health care proxies or fill out living wills is an uphill task, says Joseph Fins, medical ethicist at Weill Cornell College of Medicine. In trying to reach the right target audience to get people to do that, Dr. Fins says, market researchers have zeroed in on the most important demographic group: middle-aged women. "These women tend to be the caregivers and the decision-makers," he says, "That's the group the research shows we need to get our message to." That could be done via either paid advertising or stories about these "advance directives" in appropriate media. So far, he says, only about 25% of adult New Yorkers have filled out the forms.

Cancer Center Opens at Monte

Montefiore Medical Center yesterday opened a new cancer treatment center: a \$1.1 million, 8,200-square-foot facility that replaced a former suite of doctors' offices. It is called the Jarrett Place Outpatient Center of the Montefiore-Einstein Cancer Center. Patients will get care from multidisciplinary, disease-specific teams made up of medical, radiation and surgical oncologists and other subspecialists. Combining services in one place is meant to make care more efficient as well as comfortable and convenient for patients.

Health \$\$ for Nassau

IPro received a state HEAL grant for \$5.3 million to improve coordination of care for diabetics. The money will go to Nassau-based IPro affiliates the NuHealth System and Queens-Long Island Medical Group. NuHealth is the new name for the Nassau Health Care Corp., a nonprofit that manages Nassau Medical Center and other related facilities, including a network of family health centers.

At a Glance

The Heart Institute of Staten Island has dropped its borough's name and will now be known more elegantly as The Heart Institute. Apparently, there were no hard feelings from local officials. The announcement of the change will be made formally in the Staten Island Borough President's office Oct. 14, along with the big reveal of the center's new Web site, www.TheHeartInstituteNY.com.

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HHS inspector general fires warning shots

In a familiar seasonal rite, the Health and Human Services Administration's Office of the Inspector General has released its annual work plan for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1. The report is a 150-page detailed document. It is meant to alert providers and state Medicaid regulators where the providers must take care to avoid breaking always-changing rules on how they may spend federal Medicare and Medicaid monies. The fiscal 2010 report has several brand-new areas of concern.

Analyzing it, New York Medicaid Inspector General James Sheehan sees much to admire.

"It gives hospitals a road map for internal compliance," he says. For instance, HHS has vowed to focus on whether hospitals are acknowledging that Medicare will no longer pay for the care of patients who have "hospital-acquired conditions" due to lapses in care. "That means that states better come up with codes for that, so Medicaid can deny payment," he says.

Another new focus will be stepped-up monitoring of nursing home care. For the first time, hospitals must identify patients admitted from nursing homes who come in with bedsores. That will allow Medicare and Medicaid to track quality of care at nursing homes, says Mr. Sheehan "The fact that this is on their work plan is a way of saying, 'Look out, it's coming,'" he says. Public reporting of which homes are giving poor care is not required—yet. He also sees HHS indicating it will expect better disclosure of who owns corporate entities that do business with nursing homes, as a way to detect improper business relationships.

Other new areas of scrutiny will be federal stimulus money for conversion to electronic health records and how temporary Medicaid rate enhancements such as New York's FMAP funding got spent.

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