

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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January 30, 2009

WHA Calendar:

WHA Board Meeting
Casper 3/27

WCAHN— Maximizing Revenue/Reimbursement Opportunity
Casper 4/15

WHA Trustee Educational Meeting
Lander 5/8

Other Events:

AHA Annual Meeting
Washington DC 4/26

HFMA Spring Meeting
Casper 4/30

Uncompensated Care Bill Passes House Committee

A bill intended to help close the uncompensated care gap in Wyoming passed its first legislative hurdle last week.

House Bill 168, sponsored by Rep. Tim Stubson, R-Casper, would increase minimum auto liability limits as a mechanism to help offset the medical costs associated with auto accidents.

The bill passed the House Corporations Committee and will now go to the entire House of Representatives.

Representatives of Wyoming Medical Center and Cheyenne Regional Medical Center explained to the committee the uncompensated care burden their facilities experience, and the potential impact that burden can have on the delivery of trauma care.

Both indicated that more than 80% of the trauma care their facilities provide is related to auto accidents.

The Wyoming Hospital Association provided the committee with a broader

view of uncompensated care across Wyoming, a figure that climbed from about \$60 million in 2002 to more than \$125 million in 2007.

The WHA also explained to the committee that although HB168 will clearly not resolve the issue of uncompensated care, it is a step in the right direction.

A related bill that would raise the gasoline tax by one penny to fund unreimbursed trauma care is expected to be heard in the House Revenue Committee next week.

In other legislative action, House Bill 31, the proposed statewide ban on smoking in public places, survived its first floor debate in the House of Representatives.

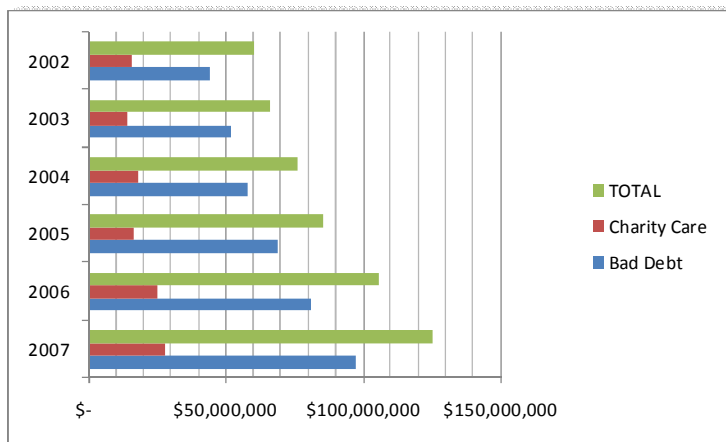
The bill passed with a three-vote margin after lengthy and sometimes vigor-

ous debate. It must pass two more votes in the House before following the same path through the Senate.

Also last week, the House Appropriations Committee approved a change to a bill that enables Wyoming's county and special district hospitals to participate in the state retirement program.

The current law required hospitals to indicate their intent to participate in the program by January 2009. The change approved last week removes any time limit from the law, allowing hospitals to fully investigate the program before deciding whether to participate.

The Senate Labor Committee approved a bill that would expand eligibility for Kid Care, the state children's health insurance program, and that measure has been referred to the Appropriations Committee.



Uncompensated Care in Wyoming—2007



Don't forget to send us a story about your hospital so we can feature you in our Member Spotlight section!

Community Hospital Offers Special Touch Support

The death of a loved one or the diagnosis of a terminal illness are traumas that people in Goshen County do not have to endure alone, thanks to a program at Community Hospital that offers assistance through support groups, guest speakers, tapes and literature, or just a shoulder to cry on.

In the Special Touch rooms, hospital staff care for

patients who have been declared terminally ill. The rooms form a suite with a shower, microwave and refrigerator, a and hide-a-bed sofa, to provide family members sufficient space in a comfortable and convenient environment while staying with their ill family member.

The Special Touch patients suffer from many dif-

ferent types of ailments. In 2008, 15 patients from all over Wyoming and parts of western Nebraska stayed in the rooms.

The Special Touch Program has 12 volunteers who provide terminally ill patients and their families with non-skilled nursing care.

Iverson Hospital Lights Lincoln Monument



The Lincoln Monument between Cheyenne and Laramie joined more than 1000 monuments and buildings worldwide that were lighted in blue on November 14, 2008, in recognition of World Diabetes Day.

The Iverson Memorial Hospital Diabetes Advisory Committee in Laramie hosted a Diabetes Expo that was highlighted by the lighting of the monument. The

group didn't let a little thing like 8 inches of snow on the summit stop them from reaching their goal.

The Diabetes Expo featured many vendors with equipment and information for community members with diabetes or who have a family member living with the disease. Three presentations were given on topics including diabetic retinopathy, roadblocks to good con-

trol and healthy habits, good carbs, better carbs. The expo was offered free of charge to those who attended and also included several free screenings.

The Diabetes Advisory Committee consists of representatives from Iverson, Wyoming Area Health Education Center and the Center for Rural Health Research and Education.

HFMA Offers Free Webcast Event on Medicare Rules

The HFMA Wyoming Chapter is offering a free webcast event on February 17 from 10 am. to Noon.

New Medicare regulations to be discussed include new provider-based rules for necessary provider CAHs, new relocation guidelines, PPRB appeal procedures, revised definition of moun-

tainous or secondary roads, new RHC guidelines, and other new policies.

The class is intended to update hospital management on the new regulations and how they impact hospitals.

This web event is free, but you must register at <http://www.hfma.org/site/emeetreg/main/MtgInfo.cfm?.mtgcode=0978WY1>.

Wyoming Hospital Association

**2005 Warren Ave.
Cheyenne, WY
82003**

www.wyohospitals.com

307.632.9344

