

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 41, Number 46

December 23, 2011

WHA Calendar:

WHA Board Meeting
Cheyenne 1/13

Other Events:

Wyoming Legislature Begins 2/13/12

Supreme Court Sets Schedule to Hear Healthcare Case

Supreme Court arguments over President Barack Obama's healthcare overhaul will stretch over three days, beginning March 26, the court said last week.

A typical case is allotted an hour for argument, but the court scheduled five and a half hours for the healthcare case, reflecting how novel some of the questions are and the importance of a dispute that could define the limits of federal power for decades to come.

The main part will take place on Tuesday, March 27, with a two-hour argument over the minimum-coverage provision, which starting in 2014 will require most Americans to carry health insurance or pay a penalty.

Challengers argue that Congress lacks the power to impose such a requirement, while the Obama administration maintains that it does under its constitutional authority to regulate interstate commerce, levy taxes and enact any "necessary and proper" laws.

At the March 28 morning session, the court will hear a 90-minute morning argument over which portions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act can survive if the individual-

insurance mandate is struck down.

The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta—the only one of four federal appeals courts to find any portion of the Affordable Care Act unconstitutional—held that the balance of the law can stand.



The government, however, argues that if the individual mandate falls, so too must the requirement that insurance companies take all comers and the ban on surcharges for pre-existing conditions.

Those two provisions, the government says, are only feasible if the insurance pool is expanded to include younger, healthier people whose premiums will balance the costs.

The challengers, including 26 Republican-controlled states, contend that if the individual mandate goes, the entire Affordable Care Act must also be thrown out.

A one-hour session is scheduled for the afternoon of March 28 to hear those

states' claim that provisions expanding the Medicaid program are unconstitutional.

The states say Congress can't force them to spend more on Medicaid. The Atlanta court rejected that argument, holding that states knew that Washington could change the terms of the Medicaid program when they joined it and remain free to withdraw from Medicaid entirely if they prefer.

A less-discussed issue is to be argued first, for one hour on March 26. The question is whether the entire case needs to be shelved because of a federal law requiring taxpayers to pay their assessments before challenging a levy's legality.

One federal appeals court, in Richmond, Va., found this law applies to the Affordable Care Act.

That court found that the penalty for noncompliance, which is to be collected by the Internal Revenue Service along with individual tax returns, was similar enough to a tax to fall under the provision.

Both the Obama administration and the challengers disagree, but the Supreme Court was sufficiently interested in the question to schedule a hearing anyway and hire an attorney to present the argument.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



New State Hospital CEO Looks Toward the Future

The Wyoming State Hospital is an Evanston landmark, contributing to the history, landscape and culture of Evanston and Uinta County.

Seeped in history, myth and mystery, the hospital has cared for large numbers of vulnerable Wyoming citizens and has employed large numbers of Uinta County residents.

The Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston is looking forward to caring for its clients and maintaining good relationships with its community and across the state under the direction of new

administrator, Bill Sexton.

Mr. Sexton took over at the State Hospital after the retirement of Bob Stahl, who had spent 20 years at the facility.

Mr. Sexton's experiences at facilities throughout the nation give him a broad perspective on directing the State Hospital.

His first priority, he said in a recent interview with the Uinta County Herald, is to ensure that the hospital is a good citizen in Evanston, both through the clients they serve and the staff they employ.

The state's focus has

been to help integrate patients back into their lives, and the State Hospital provides many resources to assist with that process.

His second focus is on the people who make the hospital run. Mr. Sexton places a great deal of importance on knowing his staff, and he has met with groups of staffers in an effort to connect with everyone.

"I want to focus on making this a great place for people to work," he said.

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

Crook County Hospital Names New CEO

The Crook County Medical Services District in Sundance has announced that Jannette Van Beek has been selected as the hospital's new CEO.

Ms. Van Beek assumed her new duties earlier this month.

She has more than 15 years of experience in healthcare, including in hospitals, rural health clinics,

and long-term care.

Most recently, she served as the CEO of Five Counties Hospital and Nursing Home in Lemmon, S.D.

Ms. Van Beek earned her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Mary, in Bismarck, N.D., and an MBA from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, S.D.

"We welcome Ms. Van Beek to Crook County Medical Services District," said

Bruce Brown, chairman of the CCMUSD board.

"With her skills and background, we're confident she'll contribute greatly to the Sundance community."

CCMUSD includes a 16-bed critical access hospital, a 32-bed skilled nursing facility, home health services, and three clinics. It is managed by Regional Health Network, based in Rapid City, S.D.

AHA Supports Colorado Governor's CRNA Decision

The American Hospital Association filed a friend-of-the-court brief last week supporting the Colorado governor's decision to opt out of Medicare's physician supervision requirement for certified registered nurse anesthetists to improve access to care for rural residents.

The brief urges the state Court of Appeals to uphold the governor's decision that exercising the opt-out was in the best interest of Colorado's citizens and consistent with Colorado law.

The brief notes that Colorado is one of 16 states to opt out of the physician supervision requirement with-

out reporting any adverse consequences.

According to the brief, "The passage of time has only reinforced the federal government's assessment from 2001 that removing the physician supervision requirement would not affect quality of care or patient outcomes."

Wyoming Hospital Association

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