

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

WHA Calendar:

WHA Region 2 Meeting
Casper, WY 12/8

Hospital Advisory Group Meeting
Cheyenne 12/12

Christmas Holiday
WHA Office Closed 12/25

Other Events:

Department of Health Budget Hearing
Cheyenne 12/10

Department of Health Construction Rules Conference Call 12/17

2009 General Session of the Legislature Begins
Cheyenne 1/13

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Labor Committee Approves Smoking Ban, Reform Bills

The Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee (LHSS) approved a bill that would ban smoking in public places, as well as two healthcare reform bills, during its two-day meeting in Cheyenne last week.

The committee, which hears many of the bills of most interest to the Wyoming Hospital Association, also spent significant time debating three workers' compensation reform bills, and heard an update from the Wyoming Healthcare Commission regarding its proposed Patient Safety Organization.

A statewide smoking ban was introduced and failed during the 2008 Budget Session. This year's bill is off to a somewhat stronger start because of the committee's broad support. Typically, legislators are more receptive to committee-sponsored bills than to bills offered by individual sponsors.

Only three members of the committee voted against the bill: Rep. Tom Lubnau, R-Campbell County, Rep. Jeb Steward, R-Carbon County, and Rep. Jack Landon, R-Sheridan County.

The bill passed the committee with no major alterations. A proposed amendment failed that would have effectively limited the ban to bars.

The WHA supports the statewide smoking ban, and has offered its financial and lobbying support to Smoke-free Wyoming, a coalition of organizations that supports the bill.

Much of the second day of hearings was consumed by discussion of two healthcare reform bills, one of which is a modified version of a bill offered during the 2008 session.



Presented by Sen. Charlie Scott, R-Natrona County, and Wendy Curran, the Governor's health policy advisor, the lengthier of the two reform bills would launch a demonstration project aimed at covering working people who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but whose employers do not offer insurance.

The primary goals of the pilot program, which would begin with 500 participants, are to improve access, control costs, and promote personal responsibility in the consumption of healthcare.

A second reform proposal,

offered by the Wyoming Healthcare Commission, would seek input on the ultimate design of an access demonstration project.

The committee endorsed both bills unanimously, and both will therefore be introduced at the 2009 session as committee bills.

In addition to working these bills, the committee also heard an update from the Wyoming Healthcare Commission regarding its proposed Patient Safety Organization (PSO). In addition to its update, the Commission is seeking \$300,000 from the Legislature to fund the start-up of the PSO.

The committee did not take on the PSO as a committee bill, nor did members commit to helping secure the start-up funding.

The committee also heard testimony regarding the Department of Health's efforts to conduct regular reviews of Medicaid reimbursement rates. A bill that would have required such reviews failed during the 2008 session.

The 2009 General Session of the Legislature convenes on January 13. The WHA Legislative Committee currently plans to meet once more before the session begins to solidify the WHA legislative agenda.



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

Mayo Grad to Practice Radiography at NBHH

Challenges with recruiting and retaining top-notch talent are squeezing health-care facilities across Wyoming.

So when a graduate of a top-tier program decides to pursue her career in a small Wyoming town, that's news.

After graduating from the Mayo Clinic's Radiography Program, Kellee Morgan has accepted a position at NBHH, where she will practice radiography and mam-



mography.

She graduated from the program on August 8 in Rochester, Minn., with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. She had previously

completed her studies at the University of Sioux Falls with a Bachelor of Science degree in Radiological Technology.

Morgan has successfully

completed the 24-month program, which is approved by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology, and she has passed the American Registry Examination.

In addition to her academic success, Morgan was one of six students nationwide who was chosen by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists to attend the Annual House of Delegates of Radiology in New Mexico in June 2008.

Wyoming Ranks as Nation's 14th Healthiest State



Wyoming is the 14th healthiest state in the nation, according to a report produced by the United Health Foundation, the American Public Health Association, and Partnership for Prevention.

That ranking rates Wyoming residents as generally healthier than residents of Colorado, but generally less healthy than the people of

Nebraska and North Dakota.

According to the report, "America's Health Rankings: A Call to Action for Individuals and Their Communities," Vermont is the healthiest state, and Louisiana is the least healthy state.

Wyoming performed well in the categories of per capita health spending, low infant mortality rate, and a low rate of infectious dis-

ease. The state performed poorly with regard to low immunization rates and high tobacco use.

The goal of the report is to highlight the nation's health successes and challenges. Overall, according to the report, the United States' general health has not improved in the last four years.

Featured Speakers Confirmed for Trustee Symposium

Key presenters who specialize in organizational development, safety and quality, and governance have been confirmed to speak at the 13th annual Trustee Symposium.

The symposium is scheduled for June 10-12 at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque, NM.

Featured speakers include Joseph Bujak, MD,

FACP, vice president of medical affairs at Kootenai Medical Center in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and governance experts Mac McCrary and Keith Pryor.

Dr. Bujak is a frequently requested speaker on issues related to clinical quality and patient safety, and leading and managing transformational change.

The Trustee Symposium

is sponsored by nine state hospital associations, including the WHA. Developed by trustees for trustees, the program is committed to providing relevant topics, quality speakers, networking, and affordability.

For more information, visit www.trustee-symposium.org.

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