

# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 39, Number 19

May 15, 2009

## WHA Calendar:

RAC Presentation 5/18  
Teleconference

Governor's Sum- 5/28  
mit on Workforce  
Solutions  
Jackson

Hospital Advisory 6/17  
Group Meeting  
Cheyenne

## Other Events:

Western Regional 6/10  
Flex Conference  
Lake Tahoe, NV

Wyoming Medical 6/11  
Society Meeting,  
Sheridan

AHA Regional 6/25  
Policy Board  
Meeting  
Idaho

## Orlikoff Delivers Day-Long Session to Hospital Trustees, CEOs

More than 60 hospital trustees and CEOs explored best practices in hospital governance during the Wyoming Hospital Association's Trustee Education program in Lander on May 8.

The day-long event featured the insights and experience of James Orlikoff, the nation's foremost expert in healthcare governance issues.

Before delving into governance, Orlikoff provided a sobering overview of the state of healthcare in the United States. In the past, he said, healthcare insiders have thought of the healthcare industry as recession-proof.

People will always get sick, and they will always go to hospitals and doctors for treatment — or so the argument has always gone.

Those dynamics are changing, though, as people forego care for lack of insurance and increasing costs. The single most expensive raw material in American cars, he said, is healthcare. By contrast, the most expensive raw material in Japanese cars is steel. That imbalance will ultimately put American businesses at a competitive disadvantage, he said.

Additionally, consumers have begun to conduct more of their own research, making them more informed healthcare consumers when

they do visit healthcare professionals.

And the numbers back up Orlikoff's assertions. Hospital volumes are down, revenues are down, and hospitals that were once thought to be insulated have begun to lay off employees.

And that, Orlikoff said, was the good news for the hospital trustees in the room.

The challenge for trustees, he said, is recognizing that these changes in the industry will drive fundamental changes in the way that hospitals operate, and it will be up to trustees to make the tough decisions that move hospitals forward.

Like the industry itself, Orlikoff said, hospital governance is changing too. The quality of governance that was sufficient to get hospitals where they are today will be insufficient to get them where they need to be to effectively deliver high-quality healthcare in the future, he said.

Orlikoff urged trustees to focus relentlessly on the mis-

sions of their hospitals, and to use those prioritized mission statements to guide all decision making by the board. Failure to do so leads to scattered, unpredictable decision making.

Orlikoff concluded his session with a discussion of the board's role in quality and patient safety, walking trustees through the history of quality theories and initiatives and ultimately reminding them that despite the most expensive healthcare system in the world, the quality of healthcare delivered in the U.S. lags behind that of other industrialized countries.

A culture of quality with zero, or very near zero medical errors is possible, Orlikoff said. But achieving that goal requires strength and leadership from hospital trustees.

Orlikoff, president of Orlikoff & Associates, Inc., has been involved in healthcare leadership, quality and strategy for more than 29 years. He has worked with hospital and system governing boards to strengthen their overall effectiveness.

He currently serves as a member of the Virginia Mason Health System Board in Seattle, Wash., and is chair of their Governance Committee, and he sits on the board of Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif.



**Jamie Orlikoff**



## Concierge Offers Balance to IMH Employees

Working families know the drill: there is too much to do, and too little time to get it all done.

At times, that means some of the basics just don't get done, and life swings out of balance.

Not so for employees at Ivins Memorial Hospital (IMH) in Laramie. As part of the hospital's Work, Life, Balance program, IMH now offers Concierge services to its employees.

For a small fee, the IMH Concierge takes care of a number of the errands that take time and cause stress.

Among other services, the Concierge can pick up employees' dry cleaning or prescriptions, drop off and pick up postal packages, make dinner reservations, or secure tickets for concerts and sporting events.

Taking the service commitment even one step further, the IMH Concierge will even research travel arrangements and flight options to assist with employees' vacation planning.

IMH employees access the Concierge program from a link on the IMH intranet site.



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## Donor Re-launch Reunites Liver Recipient, Snowplow Drivers

An event to re-launch the Wyoming Donor Registry was also a reunion of unlikely partners.

Chuck Forbes' story captivated much of Wyoming earlier this year when Wyoming Department of Transportation snowplow drivers cleared the way for Forbes to make it through a blizzard to the University of Colorado Hospital for his transplant.

Forbes returned to Wyoming for the first time since

his April 5 transplant for the April 20 event and was reunited with the snowplow drivers who literally cleared the way for his operation.

Also joining Forbes at the Capitol for the re-launch were Gov. Dave Freudenthal, officials from Donor Alliance, Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank, the American Transplant Foundation, and the Department of Health.

With the re-launch, Wyoming initiated a campaign to

increase the donor registration rate to 65 percent over the next 24 months. In 2008, Wyoming's donor designation rate ranked fourth nationally with 58 percent of people who obtained or renewed a driver's license choosing to be donors.

Wyoming residents can register their decision to be a donor, and can learn more about the program, by visiting [www.donatelifewyoming.org](http://www.donatelifewyoming.org).

## Dartmouth Institute Describes Drivers of Healthcare Overuse

Current incentives and methods of practicing medicine are driving significant overuse of the American healthcare system and more healthcare is not necessarily better for us.

That is the conclusion of representatives from the Dartmouth Institute who presented to a group of healthcare and community

leaders and legislators at Wyoming Medical Center in Casper on May 9.

Overuse of the system is being driven by a few key factors, including the redefinition of disease and direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising, the application of treatments for seriously ill people to those who are less seriously ill, and the ten-

dency to look harder for disease and find it earlier.

Shared decision making between physicians and patients can help curb overuse of the system, as can more effective collection and use of data, and clinical models that seek to treat the whole person rather than a discrete set of symptoms.

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