

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 38, Number 21

May 16, 2008

WHA Calendar:

- Western Regional Trustee Symposium
Boise, ID **6/4**
- Western Regional Flex Conference
Albuquerque, NM **6/5**
- Consensus Meeting, Cody **6/21**

Other Events:

- Wyoming Society of Association Executives **5/19**
- Legislative Labor Committee Meeting **6/2**
- Wyoming Healthcare Commission **6/2**
- DOH Association Planning Meeting **6/3**
- Wyoming Medical Society Annual Meeting **6/12**

State Rural Health Plan Moves Closer to Completion

Healthcare leaders from Wyoming's critical access hospitals and the state Department of Health moved one step closer on Thursday to the development of a state rural healthcare plan.

The plan is required by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy and is an element of the 2008 Flex Program grant. When complete, the plan is intended to be a living document that is reviewed and updated annually, and that will shape the state's approach to rural

healthcare delivery.

Dr. Keith Mueller, Director of the Rural Policy Research Institute Center for

Rural Health Plan Focus Areas:

- Recruitment/retention
- Quality/Performance improvement
- Benchmarking
- Community benefit
- Information management

Rural Health Policy Analysis, once again facilitated the discussion.

Participants at the meeting in Casper worked to refine five broad topic areas that affect all hospitals into measurable one-year goals that will be built into the final plan.

The plan will address recruitment and retention, quality and performance improvement, benchmarking, community benefit, and information management. A draft will be available for review by late summer.

Hospital Improvement Grant Deadline Rapidly Approaching

Hospitals that are planning to seek up to \$50,000 in small hospital improvement grants and up to \$250,000 for magnet designation should act quickly ó applications are due June 2.

Applications for the Wyoming Hospital Improvement Grant Program were emailed to hospital CEOs on May 9. The Wyoming Hospital Association can provide additional copies of the applications as necessary.

Wyoming Hospital Improvement grants are intended to help three hospitals achieve magnet hospital cer-

tification, and to help hospitals with fewer than 100 beds promote quality nursing practices, quality nursing working environments, increased retention of nursing staff, and improved patient outcomes.

Grant applications will be reviewed by a panel of healthcare providers, and the

Wyoming Department of Health will announce the grant recipients by June 9.

Recipients of magnet grants will be required to match 40% of the award with in-kind services or in-cash funds. Recipients of small hospital improvement grants will be required to match 20% of the award with in-kind services or in-cash funds.

Questions about the program should be directed to Sharla Allen, Office of Rural Health, 307-777-7293, or via email at

sharla.allen@health.wyo.gov.





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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

Practical Approach Detects Aortic Aneurysms Early

Sometimes in Wyoming's smaller hospitals, improved patient care comes from making the best possible use of the tools that are available. For an example, look no further than Niobrara Health & Life Center (NHLC) in Lusk.

The critical access hospital on the eastern edge of central Wyoming re-opened its doors in May 2005 after having been closed for five years.

Nearly three years after its grand re-opening, the hospital provides acute care, long-term swing beds, and 24-hour emergency room services.

Throughout that rebuilding process, NHLC has maintained good equipment and excellent providers. And recently, those two combined to apply existing technology to improve patient outcomes.

Recognizing that the hospital's ultrasound equipment could be put to additional uses in the emergency room, Dr. Tom Hoskins upgraded the equipment and began using it to diagnose aortic aneurysms—a safe, non-invasive, highly accurate approach. He diagnosed three abdominal aortic aneurysms in the first week alone.

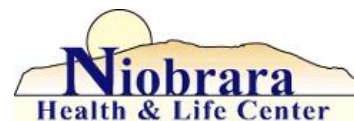
“We’ve had good tech-

nology,” said Loren Heth, chief financial officer at NHLC.

“We just didn’t have the providers to use it.”

Heth said these results exemplify NHLC’s efforts to improve healthcare in Niobrara County.

“The administration and board are taking great strides to provide the best possible home town care by delivering high-quality care and recruiting only the most highly qualified personnel,” he said.



Recall Re-Issued After Contaminated Products Found

Despite widely distributed product recall instructions, contaminated heparin products have been found in medical facilities in one state since the recall announcement, triggering the FDA to issue another bulletin about the affected products.

The FDA and CMS are asking health professionals

and medical facilities to review and examine all drug/device storage areas, including emergency kits, dialysis units and automated drug storage cabinets to ensure that all of the recalled heparin products have been removed.

Additionally, the FDA has posted an update to its web site regarding other types of medical devices that contain, or are coated with,

heparin. That update, as well as instructions for reporting problems to the FDA, are located at: <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety/heparin-healthcare-update.html>.

Injectable heparin products and heparin flush solutions were recalled because they may have been contaminated with oversulfated chondroitin sulfate (OSCS).



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EMS Week Honors State's EMS Volunteers, Professionals

In Wyoming, where nearly 80 percent of EMS providers are volunteers, some 1,346 lives were saved through EMS interventions in 2006.

It is further estimated that

1,820 permanent disabilities were avoided in the same year thanks to the efforts of EMS personnel.

Dr. Brent Sherard, director of the Wyoming Department of Health, saluted

EMS providers to kick off Emergency Medical Services week, May 18-24.

“EMS team members provide a vital public health service that should never be taken for granted,” he said.