

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 40, Number 26

July 2, 2010

WHA Calendar:

WHA Region 2 Meeting Lander	7/8
WHA Board Meeting Lander	7/9
WHA PAC Golf Tournament Cheyenne	9/28
WHA Annual Meeting and Convention Cheyenne	9/29-9/30

Other Events

National Flex Conference Minneapolis, MN	7/12-7/14
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Health Coalition Considers Nebraska-Based HIE Solution

A coalition of healthcare leaders met in Cheyenne last week to consider a Health Information Exchange model that currently connects a number of hospitals and health systems in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Health Information Initiative (NeHII) is a statewide, web-based health information exchange that is sponsored by physicians, hospitals and health insurance companies.

Representatives of the Wyoming Hospital Association, the Wyoming Medical Society, BlueCross BlueShield of Wyoming, Wyoming Medical Center, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, and the Governor's E-Health Partnership met with NeHII officials via videoconference.

A non-profit that was formed in 2005, well before the inception of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the NeHII initiated a pilot phase with a core group of hospitals in February 2009. The successful pilot ended in June 2009 and the live rollout began in July of that year.

Nebraska's statewide HIE is HIPAA compliant and CCHIT certified. Elysium software developed by a company called Axlotl connects its member hospitals and health systems.

NeHII participants currently include Alegent Health, Methodist Health System, Nebraska Medical Center, BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska, and Creighton Medical Center, among others.

It was one of the first statewide HIEs in the country, and it remains one of the largest, including more than 1 million lives.

Deb Bass, President and CEO of Bass & Associates, Inc., and interim executive director of the NeHII, emphasized the importance of "standing up" a system quickly so that users and other stakeholders can see and use the system.

But that comes with some level of uncertainty. In fact, Bass likened NeHII's early approach to "building an airplane while you're flying it."

With the system up and running, however, NeHII is now being contacted proactively by providers who are increasingly interested in participating.

NeHII officials said that they are interested in offering

other states the ability to participate in their systems — but as separate entities, with their own governance structure and board.

Using their model, NeHII provides help desk services and management services through Bass & Associates, and technology services through Axlotl.

That approach could significantly reduce the upfront investment in infrastructure, vendor selection, and policy and procedure development that is necessary to get an HIE on its feet.

Furthermore, the NeHII approach would enable hospitals and physician practices to retain their current electronic medical records systems, if they wish, and connect to the

HIE using a "cloud computing" or shared services model.

"Whatever you have, we just want to enhance that," Bass said. "We are the interoperability piece."

The E-Health Partnership has been working on strategic and operational planning for a statewide HIE solution. In that process, members identified the NeHII as a model for which stakeholder interest is rapidly growing.





SVMC Wins Grant to Provide Digital Mammography

For Star Valley Medical Center (SVMC) in Afton, delivering excellent health-care has created even more opportunities to deliver excellent healthcare.

And this time, it comes in the form of a grant worth more than \$400,000.

SVMC recently received the grant from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to improve women's health in the western Wyoming community.

The grant will fund a new service: digital mammography, including the capital

equipment, staff training, room renovation, a three-year service contract, and marketing costs over three years.

SVMC will replace its analog mammography equipment with the new equipment, allowing for clearer images and earlier detection of abnormalities or cancer.

One of only four Wyoming hospitals to meet the criteria for the Trust's strategic plan, SVMC was contacted by the Trust for being an outstanding provider of

rural health services.

The Trust's Rural Healthcare Program began awarding grants in 2009. It funds programs that provide rural healthcare to patients in the upper Midwest. In the last two years, the Trust has awarded more than \$41 million in grants to nonprofits.

Established in 1999, the Trust supports a diverse range of organizations with a focus on health and medical research, human services, education, and conservation.

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

Hospitals of All Sizes, Types Experiencing RAC Activity

Results from the AHA's RACTrac survey indicate that Medicare's Recovery Audit Contractors (RAC) are operating in every region in the country.

The survey findings, collected in April from more than 650 hospitals, reveal insights for hospitals.

Among those results: more than two-thirds of responding hospitals are ex-

periencing RAC activity, including small and large hospitals, rural and urban, teaching and non-teaching hospitals.

Some \$2.47 million in denied claims were reported among the 437 hospital respondents experiencing RAC activity in the first quarter of 2010.

The next RACTrac data collection period began July

1 and ends on July 22. To learn more about submitting your data, visit www.aha.org/aha/issues/RAC/ractrac.html.



Wyoming Doctors Name Powell Physician as Top Doc

Nick Morris, M.D., of Powell, has been selected by the Wyoming Medical Society as the recipient of the 2010 Community Service Award.

The award is presented each year to Wyoming's top physician in recognition of their contributions to Wyoming communities, honoring the physician for time and personal sacrifice for the benefit of the community.

Dr. Morris is incredibly empathic and is truly the epitome of a small-town surgeon, Powell physician Dr. Michael Tracy wrote in support of Dr. Morris's nomination.

He has a deep commitment to his patients, and he responds with grace in all situations from trauma calls to being asked a question in the check-out line in the grocery store.

In addition to dedicating effort toward the care of Powell patients, Dr. Morris has committed countless hours to the citizens of the Powell area through his work with the Heart Mountain Volunteer Medical Clinic, a free clinic in Powell that will celebrate its 2nd anniversary in early July.

Dr. Morris has practiced medicine in Wyoming since 1991.

Wyoming Hospital Association

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