

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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August 21, 2009

WHA Calendar:

WHA PAC Golf 9/29
Tournament
Sheridan

WHA Annual 9/30-
Meeting & 10/1
Convention
Sheridan

Other Events:

HIDI Partner 9/2
Meeting
Kansas City, MO

Joint Labor Health 9/10
& Social Services
Committee
Sheridan

NRHA Critical 10/7
Access Meeting
Portland, OR

HFMA Fall 10/22-
Meeting 10/23
Cheyenne

Reform Landscape Continues to Shift During August Recess

The nature of the health-care reform debate continues to change almost daily, even as Representatives and Senators hear from constituents in their home states during the August recess.

Among the most significant developments is the apparent suggestion by the White House and members of President Obama's cabinet that they may accept a reform bill that does not include the so-called public option.

The centerpiece of most healthcare reform debate, the public option would create a public plan that would compete against private insurers and offer a free or low-cost option to expand coverage to the nation's uninsured.

The American Hospital Association supports the expansion of coverage, but has

expressed concern about the creation of a public plan that would tie reimbursement to Medicare rates.

In recent days, the Obama administration has appeared to pull back on its demand for a public option as part of any viable health reform package.

Insiders suggest, however, that this may only be a tactic to generate fervor among Democrat activists that matches the energy displayed by opponents at town hall meetings in recent weeks.

Dropping the public option may create a backlash among Democrats, however, as some House Democrats have said they will vote against any reform bill that does not include the public option.

As Democrat leaders plan

their options for getting a bill passed this year, the New York Times reported this week that Democrats are now seriously considering the reconciliation process. Reconciliation is a legislative budget maneuver that would allow a bill to pass the Senate with only 51 votes, rather than the filibuster-proof 60 votes.

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-NY, has previously indicated that Democrats would use whatever tools were necessary to pass reform this year.

But after weeks of bipartisan negotiations in the Senate Finance Committee, Democrats have indicated that they don't expect Republican support for any bill they produce, and they therefore must consider forcing the bill through without Republican support.

NOSORH Focuses on Workforce Development Issues

Representatives from state offices of rural health met in Laramie last week to discuss issues and solutions regarding healthcare workforce development.

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health brought together state representatives from eight states, as well as national representatives.

Presentations discussed

the key role community colleges play in rural workforce development and the need for providers to build stronger relationships with those colleges.

A presentation by Dr. Dave Schmitz, M.D., and Dr. Ed Baker, Ph.D., demonstrated a tool they have developed that is proven to predict a community's ability to successfully recruit and

retain physicians.

Steve Bahmer, Vice President of the Wyoming Hospital Association, and Jan Felton, adjunct faculty member at Laramie County Community College, presented the WHA's Nurse Leadership Training Program, which kicked off in the fall of 2008 and provides management training to newly promoted nurse leaders around Wyoming.



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

Wyoming Hospital Association

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Sheridan Memorial Hospital Starts Wellness Program

This past July, Sheridan Memorial Hospital initiated "Healthy Choices," a new, extensive wellness program which has been developed through the hard work of a group of hospital employees, the Wellness Strategic Planning Team (WSPT).

The mission of WSPT is to "work to establish and provide opportunities for employees to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles by supporting the adoption of habits, attitudes, and a culture that facilitates a posi-

tive well-being."

Before getting off the ground and running with specific "Healthy Choices" programs, pre-assessments are completed by each participant.

Physical assessments as well as an online survey of personal health risks and perceived stress provide a foundation of present health status for the individual employee and an aggregate report that will be used to track overall hospital staff health status.

The official "Healthy Choices" Wellness Program kicked off with over 30 hospital employee volunteers from various departments. It incorporated booth displays representing seven important aspects of wellness: insurance wellness Benefits, medical self-care, nutrition, physical activity, sleep quality, stress management, and weight management.

Physician Relationships Highlighted at Convention

Dr. Gene Ogrod, Chief Medical Officer at Wyoming Medical Center in Casper will be presenting two programs at the WHA Annual Meeting and Convention in Sheridan.

"Aligning Our Physicians," will describe keys to aligning with physicians, beginning with a deeper understanding of the drivers behind healthcare reform,

examining shared models for quality, and including discussions about employed physicians and the medical staff.

"Building Positive Physician Relationships," will examine how physicians and hospitals depend on one another to provide high-quality healthcare for Wyoming communities.

In this session, Dr. Ogrod

will offer suggestions for establishing common ground for change, dealing with the challenges of clinical and non-clinical relationships, and building shared goals.

To learn about other programs being presented during the meeting, or for more information on the WHA Annual Meeting & Convention, visit our website at www.wyohospitals.com.

Interim Administrator Named for State Hospital

The Wyoming Department of Health announced that Bob Stahl has once again been named as interim administrator of the Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston.

"I am thankful that Bob is once again willing to accept this important leadership position," said Dr. Brent Sherard, Wyoming Department of Health director and state health officer. "The Wyoming State Hospi-

tal plays an absolutely critical role for our state in providing needed quality treatment for a variety of mental disorders."

The Wyoming State Hospital has been providing mental health services in Evanston for Wyoming residents since 1887. The hospital is one of five Wyoming Department of Health healthcare facilities.

Stahl, who has been working as the residential

and outpatient administrator at the hospital, takes over for Ted Brewer, who started in the top position in February.

Stahl previously served as interim administrator from November 2007 through February 2009 following the retirement of longtime superintendent Pablo Hernandez.

