

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

WCAHN Quality Training Day
Riverton **8/14**

WHA PAC Golf Tournament
Sheridan **9/29**

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

Other Events:

HIDI Partner Meeting
Kansas City, MO **9/2**

Joint Labor Health & Social Services Committee
Sheridan **9/10**

HFMA Fall Meeting
Cheyenne **10/22-10/23**

Senate Deadlines Approaching for Reform Package

Negotiations on a major healthcare reform bill continue in the Senate Finance Committee, but expectations that the committee would produce a bill before the Senate broke this week for its summer recess have long since passed.

Instead, committee leaders have set deadlines for development of a reform package. And Democrat leaders in the Senate have set a final deadline for creation of a bill before they begin to consider other legislative options.

In the Senate Finance Committee, Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., told members that he wants the committee to produce a bill by September 15. Despite the August recess, which begins today for Senators, Sen. Baucus has indicated the committee will continue to work via conference call to get a bill completed.

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, the ranking Republican on the committee has said the panel is 95 percent of the way to a reform package that can be taken to the full Senate.

But Wyoming Republican Mike Enzi has said the committee is nowhere near a deal. Sen. Enzi has said the pace of the process needs to slow down so Senators can

develop an effective reform package.

Sen. Enzi will be in Wyoming during the August recess and has a number of events planned, including hospital visits and at least one town hall meeting focused on healthcare reform.

If the Senate is unable to develop a bill by October 15, Senate leaders, including Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-NY, have indicated that they will consider using any tools available to get a reform bill passed.

Sen. Schumer has said the window of opportunity is too narrow and too important not to get reform done during this legislative session.

Among the tools available to Senate leaders is the reconciliation process, a budget maneuver that would enable Democrats to pass healthcare reform in the Senate with only 51 votes, rather than the filibuster-proof 60-vote majority.

Democrats currently hold 60 seats in the Senate, and reconciliation is considered a last resort. But it may become necessary, given some Democrats' resistance to some of the reform ideas that have been developed.

Nevertheless, the AHA believes there are many areas of consensus emerging. Among them are the effort

to expand coverage to 95% to 97% of all Americans, to expand Medicaid, to provide federal subsidies to assist in the purchase of coverage, and the creation of insurance exchanges.

Healthcare reform is expected to be the central theme of Congressional delegates' townhall meetings and other events during the recess. The Wyoming Hospital Association is working with Wyoming's delegation to arrange meetings and other opportunities for hospital CEOs to discuss healthcare reform.

Healthcare Reform Packages: General Areas of Consensus

- Coverage expansion to 95% to 97% of all Americans
- Medicaid expansion
- Federal subsidies to purchase coverage
- Creation of insurance exchanges
- Insurance reform
- Incentives for quality care
- Delivery system reforms
- Expanding health professional education
- Restrictions on physician self-referral
- Medicare/Medicaid provider cuts
- New revenues (new taxes)

*Source: AHA Federal Update



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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

Books at the Bedside Promotes Literacy, Better Health

One in four children in the U.S. grows up illiterate, and that has a dramatic impact on their health choices.

Enter Wyoming Medical Center's (WMC) Books at the Bedside program, a book drive aimed at providing books for the 12,000 children who are patients at WMC each year.

Low literacy is associated with poor understanding of written or spoken medical advice and poor health decisions, said Shauna VanderLinden, WMC public relations and marketing representative.

"If they can't read what's on the bottle, now can they take it properly?" VanderLinden said.

Books at the Bedside will ultimately ensure that any child up to age 18 who receives care at the hospital has a book to read. The books, which the children will take home as their own, will come from community donations.

VanderLinden is looking for new or like-new books with no writing in them or tears

so the children who receive the books can take ownership. And a Casper Wal-Mart store kicked off the book drive with a \$100 donation that turned into 30 new books.

A collection box at the Casper Recreation Center generated another 100 books for the program.

"Only 11,900 more to go," VanderLinden said.



Awards Recognize Innovation, Leadership in Hospital Quality

Hospital innovations in quality, patient safety and leadership will be honored at the 64th Wyoming Hospital Association Annual Meeting and Convention.



The Hospital Quality Awards, created by the Mountain-Pacific Quality Healthcare Foundation, will be presented during the quality awards luncheon on October 1 at the Holiday Inn in Sheridan.

The 2009 awards reflect

the transformational changes being made in healthcare, and they recognize hospitals' performance on the four national quality projects: heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical infection prevention.

Additionally, the awards will recognize other patient safety initiatives and hospitals' leadership qualities, which are characteristics of successful organizations. This year's awards are particularly relevant as health-

care reform efforts seek to transition from rewarding quantity of care to rewarding the quality of care delivered.

The Mountain-Pacific Wyoming awards committee will determine the award of Quality Achievement or Commitment to Quality that hospitals will receive. Award winners will be chosen based on a review of the performance data submitted to the QIO Clinical Warehouse.

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Failed Business May Aid Wyoming's Hospitals

A failed Cheyenne-based business may still be able to contribute to Wyoming's hospitals.

Jonah Bank of Wyoming has acquired more than 40 pieces of laundry, water system, and other miscellaneous equipment as a result of a customer going out of

business, and the bank is now looking to sell the equipment.

And that could mean good deals for Wyoming hospitals. The list of available equipment includes washers, dryers, boilers, scales and other equipment.

Cindy Mabie, Vice

President of Jonah Bank, said purchase offers will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. For a complete listing of the equipment, pricing information, and pictures of the equipment, contact Cindy Mabie at (307)773-7785, or via email at cmabie@jonahbank.com.