

**WHA Calendar:**

WHA PAC Golf 9/29  
Tournament  
Sheridan

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

**Other Events:**

NRHA Critical 10/7  
Access Meeting  
Portland, OR

HFMA Fall 10/22-  
Meeting 10/23  
Cheyenne



## Montana Sen. Baucus Releases Finance Committee Bill

After months of negotiations, and under mounting pressure to produce a bill, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., released the American Healthy Future Act of 2009 last week.

Sen. Baucus' bill, the last to emerge from the Congressional committees with jurisdiction over healthcare reform matters, came out of the Senate Finance Committee with no Republican support.

The Finance Committee is home to the so-called "Gang of Six" — three Republicans and three Democrats who have been working toward a bipartisan reform package. Wyoming Sen. Mike Enzi is a member of that group.

In a statement released last week, Sen. Enzi said he was disappointed that a deadline for producing a bill was apparently more important than working to achieve agreement among the six senators.

Unfortunately, there are fundamental issues that we were not able to resolve by the deadline that was set for us," Sen. Enzi said in his statement. "The proposal released today still spends too much, and it does too little to cut health care costs for those with health insurance.

At a time when our nation

faces a \$9 trillion deficit in the coming decade, we should target assistance to those in the greatest need without creating unsustainable new entitlement programs."

Early analysis of the bill indicates that it would expand coverage, introduce delivery system reforms, reduce Medicare and Medicaid payments, and include provisions negotiated by the American Hospital Association, among others, earlier this year.

Of particular interest to hospitals are provisions that would:

- Expand coverage to 94% of people residing in the United States through Medicaid expansions and an individual mandate to buy insurance.
- Reduce market basket updates for inpatient and outpatient hospitals by 0.25% in the first two years; market basket updates would be cut by an annual productivity adjustment plus an annual reduction of 0.2% in subsequent years.
- Penalize hospitals with high readmission rates, cutting payments 20% if a patient is re-hospitalized within seven days of the original hospitalization, or

10% for patients re-hospitalized within 15 days.

- Penalize hospitals with high rates of hospital-acquired conditions.
- Establish voluntary pilot projects to test payment bundling.
- Create a new Medicare commission to submit proposals to Congress to extend the solvency of Medicare and slow its cost growth.
- Extend the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program to Medicare Part C and D and to Medicaid.
- Require acute care hospitals to make average charges available to the public for each DRG and the range of charges across all commercial payers and for self-pay patients for each DRG; civil monetary penalties would apply for non-compliance.

Reports from Washington indicate that the Chairman will struggle to garner Republican support, and Democrats may oppose the bill because, among other things, it does not include a public option.

WHA will continue to monitor the bill as it is marked up in the Senate Finance Committee in the coming days.



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

**Live Music!**  
**Midlife Crisis, featuring WHA's own Steve Bahmer, will perform after the Convention at the Sheridan Holiday Inn on Thursday, October 1, 2009 8:00—11:00 p.m.**  
**Stick around and sing along**

**Wyoming Hospital Association**  
 2005 Warren Ave.  
 Cheyenne, WY 82003  
[www.wyohospitals.com](http://www.wyohospitals.com)  
 307.632.9344

### WMC Stages Ambulances for Quick Response

The Wyoming Medical Center ambulance crew began testing a strategic staging plan about a year ago in which ambulances hide out in certain locations to reduce response time.

The hospital became concerned about the growth of Casper and the distance new construction was from the center of town.

Usually one of three ambulances is stationed farther

west, one is centrally located near the hospital and one on the east side of town.

Since the hospital began staging an ambulance on the west side of town a year ago, it has reduced response time by about three or four minutes. If a kid is choking you are talking six to seven minutes and the brain

starting to die minutes matter, according to Evenson.

Robert Evenson, a paramedic, said the project is still a work in progress and the paramedics will continue to look at data to see where the most strategic locations for the ambulances should be.



### Educational Programs At the WHA Convention

**Guidelines for Plan Review:** Bill Bonn, licensed architect, special deputy fire marshal in Utah, and health-care facility plan reviewer for the state of Utah since 1994, will discuss the regulatory process and mentality, and how to work with regulators to make project approval as smooth as possible.

**Employment Law Update:** Lawyers Fran Cadez and Tom Lubnau will provide a legal update that clarifies and illuminates recent changes in employment law and benefits: changes that are in place now, as well as other that are on the way.

**Volunteer Care & Share:** Successful volunteer programs from around Wyoming will gather to discuss hot items, shared issues, and best practices for developing and maintaining a strong volunteer organization.

### Scholarships Available for SANE Training

The Wyoming Office of the Attorney General Division of Victim Services has sent our invitations to participate in the 2009 Adult/Adolescent and 2010 Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examine (SANE) Training.

The Wyoming Division of Victim Services is the recipient of the Violence Against Women Rural Grant to enhance and improve Wyoming's response to sexual assault victims.

The Grant will provide funding and technical assis-

tance opportunities to community based programs to establish SANE programs.

The grant will provide:

- Funding for registered nurses throughout the state of Wyoming to obtain SANE training
- Technical assistance to community based SANE programs
- Full and partial scholarships will be awarded up to a maximum of \$5,000. Funds are available for lodging, meals, airfare, gas, reg-

istration fees, rental cars and airport parking

- Scholarships are awarded for RNs just beginning SANE training or RNs who have completed partial training who need classroom and/or clinical training

The scholarship deadline is Wednesday, October 7.

Call the Division of Victim Services at 307-777-7084 to receive more information on how to apply for the grants.