

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 39, Number 37

September 25, 2009

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

Health Department Meets with Governor to Discuss Medicaid

Department of Health officials were scheduled to meet with Gov. Dave Freudenthal last week to discuss the current state of the Medicaid program, which is about \$100 million over budget.

Lee Clabots, the department's Deputy Director of Administration, told members of the Hospital Advisory Group last week that Director Dr. Brent Sherard and Chief Financial Officer Bob Peck had a meeting scheduled with the Governor last Monday.

Later this month, Clabots said, Dr. Sherard and Peck will present the Governor with options for dealing with the current and projected shortfall.

At least part of last week's discussion with the Governor was expected to focus on the use of increased FMAP funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Clabots said the Governor and the department have to balance the needs of the current biennium with those of the coming biennium.

The Governor told the Joint Appropriations Committee earlier this year that he had planned to use the FMAP increase to soften what he expects to be even tougher budget conditions in the next biennium.

Clabots said that based

on the results of the Department's meeting with the Governor, a second round of provider cuts may be necessary. A first round of cuts announced in June anticipated a \$5.8 million reduction in Medicaid reimbursements to hospitals, with the bulk of those cuts affecting out-of-state hospitals.



If further cuts are necessary, Clabots said, the Department would plan to meet with provider groups early in October to explain those cuts. The Wyoming Hospital Association will communicate the dates of any such meetings, if they are scheduled.

Clabots said the Department had prepared a list of budget options for the discussion with the Governor, but he could not discuss those Hospital Advisory Group.

He did say, however, that the Department's priorities earlier this year may give an indication of its priorities if a second round of cuts is necessary. The earlier cuts attempted to minimize the impact to primary care and long-term care, as well as to in-state hospitals.

In terms of the process, Clabots said the Department will offer half a dozen options to the Governor later this month, and the Governor will consider those in light of his own budget priorities.

Dr. Jim Bush, medical director for the state Medicaid office, encouraged hospitals to offer the Department their ideas for handling the Medicaid budget in a targeted way that limits the impact on hospitals.

In other business, Dr. Bush reported that the Medicaid office has executed a contract with ACS for the development and implementation of its Total Health Record program. He said the Medicaid-based data system should be complete by the end of August 2010. He said he would like all hospitals to be connected to the system by that time.

Cheyenne Regional Medical Center has volunteered to become the first hospital connected to the system, he said.

Dr. Bush said the Total Health Record will be a form of Health Information Exchange that will simplify data sharing within the Medicaid program, but it is not a statewide HIE system. The Governor has established an HIE planning group to explore the expansion of HIE beyond Medicaid, he said.



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

Torrington Hospital Renovation on Schedule

The renovation and expansion of the Community Hospital in Torrington is on track, and hospital officials expect the project to be complete in the first part of next year.

The new emergency room is set to open in January and phase two of the project, the outpatient services remodel, is on schedule to open in May 2010.

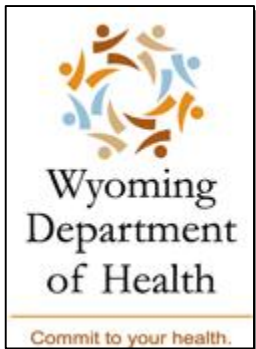
The project includes adding a waiting room and remodeling the reception area for outpatients, expanding existing lab, radiology and

physical therapy areas and improving the general flow of people through the facility.

The hospital is expanding the ER to accommodate an increased patient load and enhance patient privacy. The 3,700 square-foot ER expansion will add two large trauma rooms, two smaller exam rooms, a secure exam room, a decontamination room and a larger waiting area for patients and visitors. It will also add a garage for ambulances at

the back of the hospital and a separate entrance for walk-in patients at the front of the building.

The number of patients visiting the Community Hospital ER has steadily increased over the years, from approximately eight per day in 2004 to 14 to 15 per day so far this year, according to Steve Smith, the hospital's Chief Financial Officer.



Medicaid Office Sets Up Email Address for Comments, Concerns

The Wyoming Office of Healthcare Financing has established an email address specifically for EqualityCare providers to submit comments, concerns, complaints and compliments.

According to the Office, significant issues that impact the Medicaid program center around reimbursement reductions and changes related

to state budget shortfalls. The purpose of the dedicated email address is to solicit input on all aspects of the program, but specifically about such current concerns.

"We understand that rate adjustments may have a considerable effect on medical professionals who provide services to EqualityCare clients and want to

keep lines of communication open for comments they wish to share," according to the Office.

The Office encourages providers to suggest ways to reduce costs while maintaining access to healthcare. E-mails may be sent to HCFProviders@health.wyo.gov.

Session Offers Training on Prescription Drug Abuse

Designed by Wyoming professionals, the "First Annual Training on Prescription Drug Abuse" delivers crucial skills in combating prescription drug abuse issues.

In this live broadcast on October 8 and 9, you will be in a session with peers, interacting in real-time with the speaker and other experts.

Sessions include: Prescription Drug Abuse: A

Wyoming Perspective; Lawful Prescribing and Prevention of Diversion; Science of Addiction; Pharmacological Treatment for Opiate Addiction; HIPPA and Implications for Investigation and Intervention; Prescription Drug Abuse in Wyoming: A Pharmacy Perspective; and Prescription Drug Abuse: A National Perspective.

Pick only the sessions you want to attend. The

training has been designed so that every stakeholder can find a presentation that will better enable them to meet the prescription drug abuse problem head on.

This training is being offered free so you don't have to travel. View the training at a participating Wyoming telehealth location.

Visit tahealth.org for more information on speakers, sessions, broadcast locations and registration.

Wyoming Hospital Association

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