

Steve Perry Recognized As Grassroots Champion

The American Hospital Association (AHA), in partnership with the Wyoming Hospital Association has awarded Steve Perry, CEO of Star Valley Medical Center with the Partnership for Action *Grassroots Champion Award*. As a 2008 Grassroots Champion Steve is being recognized for his exceptional leadership in generating grassroots and community activity in support of a hospital's mission. The Partnership for Action *Grassroots Champion Award* was created to recognize those hospital leaders who most effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect the hospital's vital role in the community, who have done an exemplary job in broadening the base of community support for the hospital, and is a tireless advocate for the hospital and its patients. The award is presented annually to one individual from each state. Steve Perry is one of 51 individuals honored this year.

Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) Program Delayed

Ongoing efforts from the AHA and others have contributed to the delay of the Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program. Although not official, we have been told that the implementation date for Wyoming's participation will probably be delayed until some time mid-summer. The program was authorized by Congress to identify improper Medicare payments – both overpayments and underpayments. Originally implemented as a demonstration project in California, Florida, and New York, the RAC program has since expanded to Massachusetts and South Carolina.

CMS had originally intended to award contracts to four regional RACs in April and begin reviews in all states by January 2009. CMS has reported that RACs collected \$357 million in overpayments from Medicare providers in the three demonstration states in 2007, with 92 to 94 percent of these funds collected from hospitals. Legislation backed by the AHA would place a one-year moratorium on the RAC program. The AHA has criticized CMS for unleashing the RACs with too little oversight and too much autonomy, and for paying RACs on a contingency basis, which allows them to keep a percentage of the payments they recover. A number of resources have been developed to help hospitals, including those in Wyoming, prepare for expansion of the program. For additional background on the RACs and a number of other resources, visit www.aha.org/aha/issues/Medicare/RAC/resources.html, or contact the WHA with questions.

Wyoming Medical Center Earns ACR Accreditation

Casper Medical Imaging, Outpatient Radiology and Wyoming Medical Center have earned

American College of Radiology accreditation in ultrasound, mammography and computed tomography. According to the hospital's release, the machines at CMI and WMC are the first and only ACR-accredited computed tomography systems in Wyoming. "It is important to know the accreditation status of your healthcare provider and the services they provide. Accreditation credentials help ensure that the care being rendered is optimal," said Dr. Geoffrey Smith, radiology physician with Casper Medical Imaging. Insurers are reinforcing the importance of accreditation. According to an Associated Press report, health insurers are requiring preauthorizations more often for advanced medical scans and requiring the imaging equipment and medical staff operating it be credentialed. Accreditation means patients receive the highest quality care and service. The American College of Radiology (www.acr.org) awards accreditation to facilities for the achievement of high practice standards based on a peer-reviewed evaluation of the practice. Evaluations are conducted by board-certified physicians and medical physicists that are experts in the field.

AHA Annual Meeting

Wyoming hospital CEOs and the president of the Wyoming Hospital Association visited Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., last week to discuss the American Hospital Association advocacy agenda with Wyoming's Congressional delegation. Steve Perry, CEO of Star Valley Medical Center, Charles Harms, CEO of Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, and Dan Perdue, president of the WHA, met with U.S. Sen. John Barrasso and representatives for Sen. Mike Enzi and Rep. Barbara Cubin during the AHA annual meeting. On the agenda were discussions about quality of care and patient safety, expanding coverage to the uninsured, workforce challenges, accountability, and Medicare/Medicaid. In addition to their Capitol Hill visits, Wyoming's representatives also attended conference sessions that featured former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, former White House Press Secretary Tony Snow, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and Fox News anchor Brit Hume, among others. The sessions addressed the role of hospitals in healthcare reform efforts, proposed Medicaid regulations that could cut funding to safety-net hospitals, pay-for-performance programs, and price transparency. For more information about the AHA annual meeting, visit www.aha.org.

Enzi awarded Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's top congressional honor

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society honored U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, for his work to further blood cancer research and awareness Tuesday night by awarding him with the 2008 Congressional Honors award. The award is the society's top recognition for lawmakers and is given to one senator and one representative each year. "I am honored to be a recipient of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's 2008 Congressional Honors award," Enzi said. "Last year, I lost a great friend, Senator Craig Thomas, to blood cancer, and that is always a reminder for me that even though we're doing great work, we can do better. There is much more to be done." At the reception, the society honored the late Senator Thomas, who passed away last June after

battling leukemia. A video tribute highlighted scenes from his life and also featured words of remembrance and hope by his wife Susan Thomas, who also attended the reception. Following the tribute to Thomas, Dr. Jim Davis, a member of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's national board of directors, presented Enzi with his award. Enzi is the Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society is world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research, education and patient services. The House winner of the society's 2008 Congressional Honors award was Representative Doris Matsui, D-Calif.

National Nurses Week

National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6-12. The theme for 2008 National Nurses Week is Nurses: *Making a Difference Every Day*. National Nurses Week provides recognition to nurses for their contributions and commitment to quality health care. It brings awareness to the importance of nurses in the care, comfort, and well being of all of us, and especially our children and the aging, and those in poor health.