

## **Statewide Test of Wyoming Telehealth Capabilities**

Fourteen Wyoming hospitals and one support site in Colorado successfully connected on March 14 in a statewide test of the hospitals' telehealth capabilities. The test was the first of its kind, and it represented measurable progress in the ongoing effort to implement a statewide telehealth network.

The test originated at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center and was facilitated by CRMC's technical staff. Hospitals in Casper, Lovell, Torrington, Wheatland, Worland, Afton, Cody, Douglas, Jackson, Laramie, Lusk, and Rawlins participated in the test, as did the Wyoming Hospital Association.

Technology tests are intended both to verify that systems work, and to identify issues that need to be resolved. The statewide telehealth test uncovered a temporary issue that required the hospitals to reconnect to the video conference. CRMC's technical staff is collaborating with hospital information technology staffers around the state to resolve that issue. A second test is planned for late March to expand the number of facilities that can connect and to confirm that the single identified issue has been resolved.

Ultimately, the network is expected to connect all Wyoming hospitals and serve as a tool to reduce the distances between facilities by providing a video link that can be used for meetings and consultations. Additional plans for the network include the delivery of high-quality educational and other content. Look for further updates in News Briefs as the statewide tests continue.

## **National Healthcare Decisions Day 2008**

April 16, 2008, will be the inaugural National Healthcare Decisions Day. On this day, throughout the country, healthcare providers and others will participate in a massive effort to highlight the importance of advance healthcare decision-making. To facilitate this process, initiative organizers will provide clear, concise, and consistent information and tools for the public to execute written advance directives in accordance with their applicable state laws. These resources will be available via the web at [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org). For more information on this initiative, call 1-800-658-8898 or e-mail [nhdd@nhpco.org](mailto:nhdd@nhpco.org).

## **Wyoming Behavioral Institute Announces New Construction**

Wyoming Behavioral Institute in Casper is pleased to announce construction has begun on an expansion project that will add 20 new beds to the hospital. When the addition is completed in November 2008, Wyoming Behavioral Institute will have 90 beds and greater capacity to help children, adolescents and adults with psychiatric conditions throughout Wyoming. Wyoming Behavioral Institute is a regional psychiatric care provider, working with county and state governments to provide immediate care for patients whose treatment needs exceed a local hospital's ability to respond. Greater access to care has created greater demand for care for patients of all ages, and Wyoming Behavioral Institute is responding by growing the facility to meet the need. Wyoming Behavioral Institute – the only private, freestanding psychiatric hospital in the state – has been serving Wyoming since 1985.

## **Business Training Grants Available**

The Workforce Development Training Fund, a program of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, which provides grant money to Wyoming businesses to train their employees, has reopened. According to Laurie Timm, program manager, between July 1, 2006, and October 15, 2007, the Workforce Development Training Fund helped pay for skills upgrade training for 4,012 Wyoming workers in 493 Wyoming businesses. For more information call 307-777-8650 or visit [www.wyomingworkforce.org](http://www.wyomingworkforce.org).

## **Wyoming DOH Plans Chronic Disease Conference**

Wyoming Department of Health officials are announcing the state's first Wyoming Chronic Disease Conference will take place May 7-8 in Cheyenne. With a theme of "Building a Healthy Wyoming," the event will be held at the Little America Hotel and Conference Center. The conference is being organized by the Preventive Health and Safety Division's Chronic Disease Section. Dr. Brent Sherard, Director of the Wyoming Department of Health, will offer remarks to open the conference. Other highlighted speakers include Captain Zachary Taylor of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, who will discuss chronic disease issues in America; and Dr. June Dahl, a nationally recognized pain management expert, who will talk about chronic disease and pain management. Governor Dave Freudenthal and First Lady Nancy Freudenthal have also been invited to participate. The conference will highlight five breakout session tracks focused on diabetes, cancer, heart disease and stroke prevention, tobacco prevention and control and additional general health topics. Continuing education credits will be offered in a number of areas. A complete conference schedule can be found at [www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/diabetes](http://www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/diabetes).

## **Surgeon General, First Lady Lead Meeting on Underage Drinking**

Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson, acting surgeon general of the United States, and Wyoming's First Lady Nancy Freudenthal led a town hall meeting Monday night in Riverton regarding underage drinking prevention. Galson visited Wyoming to bring attention to the Surgeon General's "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking." Freudenthal introduced youth representatives of the Lander Valley High School Change Attitudes Now (CAN) group, Riverton High School CAN group and Wind River Indian Reservation United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) group. Each described their local efforts to encourage alcohol- and drug-free lifestyles among their peers. "We should celebrate these student groups and others like them across Wyoming," Freudenthal continued. "At the same time, I join the surgeon general in asking local communities to do more to stop children from using alcohol, and to prevent other young people from ever starting." The surgeon general serves as America's chief health educator. Galson has been acting surgeon general since October 2007. Previously, he served as director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration.

## **AHRQ Issues Health Care Performance Data By State**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has issued its annual "state snapshots" <http://statesnapshots.ahrq.gov/> summarizing data on health care quality by state. Based on data from the agency's 2007 National Healthcare Quality Report, the snapshots summarize state performance by health care setting and type of care, and rank the states on 15 measures ranging from cancer deaths, vaccination and prenatal care rates to recommended heart attack care. New to the snapshots this year are data on state health status and progress toward the Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2010 health goals. The website is located at <http://statesnapshots.ahrq.gov/>.