

Rural Health Plan

A panel composed of hospital CEOs and staff, leadership from the Department of Health, EMS, and the Wyoming Hospital Association collaborated to develop an outline of Wyoming's State Rural Health Plan during a Feb. 6 meeting in Casper. The 2008 Flex Program grant requires Wyoming to develop a state rural health plan. A draft plan is due in May, and the final plan is due in August. Dr. Keith Mueller, Director of the Rural Policy Research Institute Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis, facilitated the discussion. When complete, the plan will outline Wyoming's approach to addressing key rural health issues, such as sustaining critical access hospitals, integrating EMS services, addressing recruitment and retention needs, and improving quality. At the meeting, which was hosted by the Wyoming Office of Rural Health, the panel discussed the structure and function of a steering committee that will oversee the rural health plan. Additionally, the panel began outlining plan priorities, including workforce recruitment and retention, trauma programs, telehealth, electronic health records, and community health needs assessments. Dr. Mueller will begin working on a draft of the state plan, which will be the subject of the group's next meeting in May.

***Community Connections* Highlights Thermopolis Hospital**

The American Hospital Association has published the third book in a series entitled "*Community Connections*." The book highlights examples from hospitals that are meeting their communities social and basic needs, promoting community health, improving access and coverage and enhancing the quality of life for the people they serve. Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital in Thermopolis is highlighted under the Quality of Life section for its "Sharps Disposal" program. The program allows diabetics or anyone using medical sharps to safely dispose of them, using an approved container. Containers can be picked up at the hospital for a one-time fee of \$10. They are returned to the emergency department when about 3/4 full, where they are properly disposed of free of charge.

If your hospital has a program you're proud of and want others to know about, visit the website www.caringforcommunities.org, click "Hospitals in Action" and fill out the "Tell Your Story" form. The web site also contains additional programs, as well as resources designed to help tackle challenging accountability, billing and transparency issues.

Carbon County Chosen As Pilot Program Site

Carbon County has been chosen for a pilot program aimed at increasing health care services in rural areas of Wyoming. While the rural health care pilot project is still in its infancy, the program's goal is to prioritize health care needs in rural areas of Carbon County and design ways to improve them. The project also includes Wamsutter, which is in Sweetwater County. The evolution of this program came when the Wyoming Healthcare Commission requested a study to look at health care delivery for the state of Wyoming. The rural health care pilot project is led

by the University of Nebraska's Rural Policy Research Institute. The recommendations from the pilot project should be available in March.

Cheyenne Regional Medical Center Offers Hyperbaric Chambers

Hyperbaric oxygen chambers— which provide the medical use of oxygen at higher than atmospheric pressure – have been shown to help wounds heal. Cheyenne Regional Medical Center has partnered with Diversified Clinical Services to bring this technology to Wyoming. The CRMC now offers an updated and nationally benchmarked Wound Management Center providing specialized care for individuals who suffer from chronic, non-healing wounds. Located on the first floor of the hospital's west campus, the center includes two new hyperbaric oxygen chambers. Treatment at the center features the latest advancements in wound healing and may include hyperbaric oxygen therapy to enhance the healing process for certain types of wounds. Cheyenne Regional's Wound Management Center is the only wound care center in the immediate Cheyenne area to offer hyperbaric oxygen therapy, in which patients breathe 100 percent oxygen while inside a clear, pressurized chamber. About 15 percent of wound care patients are candidates for the therapy. Statistics show that more than 5 million Americans suffer annually from chronic wounds, often caused by diabetes, circulatory problems and other conditions. Other treatment services at the center may include topical wound therapy, nutrition assessment and counseling, and tissue therapy. For more information about the center's wound care services, call Tonya Keightley, program director, at 307-633-6088.

Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program Expansion

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced a solicitation for up to six additional hospitals to participate in the Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program for the remainder of the 5-year period scheduled to end in 2010. These hospitals must have fewer than 51 beds and be located in the original 10 states which includes Wyoming. Qualifying hospitals will be able to receive cost-based reimbursement for inpatient services for two years. Applications must be received by March 24, 2008. For more information contact Sid Mazumdar at (410)786-6673.

2008 Governor's Summit On Workforce Solutions

On May 28th and 29th, 2008, the fourth Governor's Summit on Workforce Solutions will take place at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The Wyoming Workforce Development Council, in partnership with the Department of Workforce Services, is sponsoring the event. The Summit is designed to assist Wyoming businesses in developing solutions to the many workforce issues they face. The theme of the 2008 Summit is "Defining Our Future." Topics will include Human Resources, Customer Service, Recruitment, Youth Issues, Education, Healthcare and various others. A new feature to this year's Summit includes a sector focus where industries will

come together to identify needs and create solutions to address those issues. For more information on the 2008 Governor's Summit on Workforce Solutions, please visit wyowdc.org.

AONE, AACN Plan Nurse Manager Certification Exam

The American Organization of Nurse Executives and the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses have announced plans to develop a certification exam exclusively for nurse managers. The program will enable nurse managers to validate that they have acquired the knowledge and skills essential to their leadership role. The organizations previously have collaborated on an e-learning program, and partnered with the Association of PeriOperative Registered Nurses on a framework and assessment tool for developing nurse leaders.