

## **WHA Board Meets With Senator Barrasso**

U.S. Senator John Barrasso discussed federal policy issues and his early experiences in Congress during a lunch with the Wyoming Hospital Association Board of Directors last week. Although Sen. Barrasso said he is currently spending significant time working on energy policy, he also discussed President Bush's proposed budget, which includes nearly \$200 billion in Medicare and Medicaid cuts. In its current form, that proposal would mean nearly \$70 million in cuts to Wyoming hospitals over five years. Sen. Barrasso said he does not support those elements of Bush's budget proposal. One of only two physicians in the Senate, Sen. Barrasso said that serving in Congress has been demanding, but not as demanding as his days as a practicing physician. Sen. Barrasso also addressed both houses of the Wyoming Legislature and other organizations during his stop in Cheyenne on Tuesday.

## **Hospital Preparedness Program End of Year Reports**

In the spring of 2007 each Wyoming hospital received funding via the Wyoming Hospital Preparedness Program, to enhance their emergency preparedness activities. This funding is provided through the Department of Health and Human Services, Wyoming Department of Health, Hospital Preparedness Program. 2007 represented the fourth year Wyoming facilities have received this funding. Each facility is required to complete an end-of-year progress report.

It is imperative that the State of Wyoming provide accurate and complete information to federal officials in order that future funding is continued. End-of-year reports are due by February 29, 2008. For further information contact Merit Thomas, Hospital Preparedness Program at 307-777-6904 or via e-mail at [merit.thomas@health.wyo.gov](mailto:merit.thomas@health.wyo.gov).

## **Mountain-Pacific Quality Health Says Health Care Improving**

Mountain-Pacific Quality Health announced new statistics from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services showing Wyoming's health care is improving in several areas. Nationally, nursing homes are getting better at treating pain in long-term residents, but Wyoming's improvement was exceptional, with pain rates reduced from 13 to 7 percent between quarter two of 2004 and quarter four of 2006. Wyoming also reduced physical-restraint use and incidence of pressure ulcers. Home health agencies also improved in the areas of pain, managing oral medications and improving ambulation. Hospital care for heart and pneumonia patients is tracked by individual components and also by an overall appropriate-care measurement. Wyoming's 74 percent in the fourth quarter of 2004 rose to 83 percent by the first quarter of 2007. Mountain-Pacific Quality Health's agency sponsors educational events, workshops, and teleconferences, offers consulting and resources, and assists physicians in adopting information technology. More health care statistics by agency are available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) in the Compare sections.

## **Wyoming Behavioral Institute To Partner With WWAMI**

As a result of legislative action and funding, Wyoming Behavioral Institute (WBI) in Casper will partner with the University of Washington School of Medicine and the Division of Medical Education at the University of Wyoming to offer two-month elective rotations in community-based general psychiatry beginning with residency rotations in 2007-2008. Dr. Stephen Brown, Medical Director at WBI and Director for WWAMI's third year clerkship there will oversee the elective. As participants in this rural rotation, psychiatry residents will work in one of the most coordinated mental health systems in the country, seeing firsthand the cooperative efforts of a private hospital, a county hospital, and a community mental health center. Residents also will experience working in a rural area without easy access to specialists.

## **Lab Well Program Opens At Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital**

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital has opened the new Lab Well program. People can go directly to the hospital laboratory for six tests offered Monday through Friday. Visitors pay a reduced rate for the tests. Patient information is not entered into the hospital system, no medical record is kept and nothing is turned into insurance, which is one of the reasons the low rate is offered. No interpretation of the test results is done by laboratory staff, but normal range reference charts are posted for patients to consult, and they are encouraged to contact their physicians. After the lab work is completed, patients can return to the hospital for their results or have them mailed.

## **Wyoming Emergency Nurses Conference**

The State Council of the Wyoming Emergency Nurses Association representing Emergency Nurses throughout the state of Wyoming is sponsoring the first annual ENA conference at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper on April 10 & 11, 2008. This program is designed for emergency department nurses and those health care providers who care for emergency patients in hospitals, clinics, or the pre-hospital setting in the rural setting. Objectives of the conference are to identify and describe aspects of rural trauma care; recognize, identify and describe trauma patients who may require safe transfer from primary facilities to a tertiary care center; and describe the role of caregivers and team members in the emergency department throughout the resuscitation process in regard to the different levels of trauma team activations. More information on the program is available by contacting Kay Herndon, Wyoming Medical Center, 307-577-7201. <mailto:kherndon@wmcnet.org>

## **Day Planned To Educate Public About Advance Directives**

AHA encourages hospitals to participate April 16 in National Healthcare Decisions Day, an effort to help the public understand and use advance directives to make their end-of-life health

care wishes known. While hospitals work to educate their communities about this topic every day, the one-day initiative will enable them to offer focused education outreach to staff, community groups and others. Visit [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org) for suggested activities and free promotional and other resources, and [www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org) for translated versions of the popular Five Wishes advance directive.