



# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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October 5, 2012

## WHA Calendar:

Hospital Advisory Group Meeting 10/11

WMS/WHA Patient Safety Conference Casper 11/2

## Other Events:

HFMA Meeting Saratoga 10/17-10/19

Joint Labor Health and Social Services Committee Casper 11/12-11/13

## 67th WHA Convention Focuses on Patient Safety, Quality

More than 260 people attended the 67th Wyoming Hospital Association Annual Meeting and Convention in September, a meeting that focused on the hospitals' continuous efforts to ensure the delivery of high-quality care across the state.

The convention was held at Little America in Cheyenne.

Alicia Cole initiated the quality and patient safety discussion by relating her experience in contracting a hospital-acquired infection.

Cole, an actress and co-founder of The Alliance for Safety Awareness for Patients, is a survivor of necrotizing fasciitis, a flesh eating bacteria that nearly took her life.

Cole said she went into the hospital for a relatively routine surgery, a procedure that should have had her in and out of the hospital in a couple of days.

Instead, after the bacteria first appeared on her abdomen and went untreated for a period of time, she spent several weeks in the hospital, undergoing excruciating treatments.

At one point, doctors thought she might lose a leg as a result of the bacteria. At another, her doctors thought she would die.

Throughout her discussion, Cole drew attention to practices, which, if handled differently, could have prevented the spread of the bacteria. Nurses who did not properly dress her surgical wound. Physicians who were difficult to reach and did not thoroughly examine her symptoms.

Cole emphasized the well-known series of simple practices that can dramatically reduce infections in hospitals. And she stressed the importance of the patient's role in their own healthcare. Of all the voices that contribute to patient care, it is the patient's that is most often ignored, she said.

Hospital administrators attended a second session focused on quality, this one presented by the American College of Healthcare Executives. The session provided details and case studies on the development of error-free systems in hospitals.

In addition to its focus on quality and patient safety, the WHA Convention also provided a forum for discussion of many of the key policy issues facing Wyoming hospitals, including health information technology, the potential expansion of Medicaid, and the ongoing Medicaid Options and Cost Studies.

Heather Roe Day, CEO of the eHealth Partnership, updated attendees on the status of her organization's efforts to stand up a statewide health information exchange. That technology is already making it possible for providers across the state to access patient records electronically, improving the care of patients when they are away from home and reducing the potential for error.

Liz Hoy, Gov. Mead's health policy advisor, discussed the principles that are driving discussions of health care solutions within the Governor's office. Those same ideas are guiding consideration of whether to expand the state's Medicaid population, a voluntary decision allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court's June ruling on the healthcare reform law. No decision has yet been made.

Tom Forslund, Director of the Department of Health, described the status of the Medicaid Options Study, which was mandated by the Legislature to identify ways to control the costs of the program, while continuing to ensure access to care.

Forslund said the Department presented more than 100 options to the Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee in September, and it will make recommendations to the committee later this year.



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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



**Sherrill Sorensen**

## Kemmerer's Boley Installed as WHA Board Chair

Eric Boley, CEO of South Lincoln Medical Center in Kemmerer, was installed as the 2012-2013 Chairman of the Wyoming Hospital Association's Board of Directors during the WHA's annual meeting and convention in September.

Mr. Boley succeeds outgoing Chairman Vickie Diamond, CEO of Wyoming Medical Center in Casper. Ms. Diamond will remain on the board as past chair.

The 2012-2013 officers also include Chair Elect

Rick Schroeder, CEO of North Big Horn Hospital in Lovell, Secretary/Treasurer Mike McCafferty, CEO of Sheridan Memorial Hospital.

Directors Bob Morasko, CEO of Campbell County Memorial Hospital, Vincent DiFranco, CEO of Community Hospital in Torrington, and Chris Smolik, CEO of Riverton Memorial Hospital, will also serve another term on the board. Doug McMullan, CEO of West Park Hospital will serve as the AHA Alternate Delegate.

Mr. Boley retakes the helm of the WHA this year to serve his second term as Chairman. He is also the Chairman of the Quality Health Care Foundation of Wyoming Board of Directors.

The WHA Board of Directors provides vision, sets direction, and establishes policy for the association.

To offer your feedback or input, you can reach the directors at their hospitals, or contact the WHA at (307) 632-9344, and we will help you reach them.

## Washakie's Sorensen Receives Nursing Excellence Award

Sherrill Sorensen, Chief Nursing Officer at Washakie Medical Center in Worland, received the prestigious Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence at the 67th annual Wyoming Hospital Association Annual Meeting and Convention.

The award was established in 1983 by the WHA Board of Directors in honor and memory of Norm

Holt because of his tremendous understanding and active involvement with the nursing profession.

The award is presented annually at the WHA Convention to honor one outstanding nurse in Wyoming.

Sorensen's nomination for the award touted her "absolute dedication, an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, passion for the profession of nursing, an

unwavering compass always focused on the highest standards of care."

Sorensen earned her BSN in 2004, and completed a Master's Degree in Health Law in 2006.

She is on track to complete her Doctorate of Nursing Practice in December of this year. She has had numerous articles on obstetric care and other topics published in health care journals.

## Wyoming Hospitals Receive Quality Healthcare Awards

Mountain-Pacific Quality Health presented 12 Hospital Quality Awards during the Wyoming Hospital Association Annual Meeting and Convention in September.

This is the twelfth year that the Hospital Quality Awards have been presented.

Recipients of the Quality Achievement Award – the highest quality award possi-

ble – were Memorial Hospital of Converse County, Platte County Memorial Hospital, Washakie Medical Center in Worland, and Wyoming Medical Center in Casper.

Eight hospitals earned the Commitment to Quality Award. Those recipients were Campbell County Memorial Hospital in Gillette, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, Community Hospital

in Torrington, Evanston Regional Hospital, Lander Regional Hospital, Powell Valley Medical Center, Star Valley Medical Center, and St. John's Medical Center in Jackson.

Mountain-Pacific's goal is to promote excellence in healthcare to ensure the right care is provided to every person, every time.

**Wyoming Hospital Association**

**2005 Warren Ave.  
Cheyenne, WY  
82001**

**[www.wyohospitals.com](http://www.wyohospitals.com)**

**307.632.9344**