



NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 46, Number 40

October 9, 2015

WHA Calendar:

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| HFMA Meeting Laramie | 11/18-11/19 |
| WHA Board Meeting Lander | 11/23 |
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Other Events:

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| Labor, Health & Social Services Committee Buffalo | 10/19-10/20 |
| LeadingAge Wyoming Board Meeting | 11/10 |
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President's Message

Of particular interest with the

It's been about a month since our annual meeting and it has been busy. We have received only positive feedback from attendee of the annual conference. I am so grateful to Rose, Neil and Barry for their hard work in putting together such a great event. I really think combining forces between the WHA and LeadingAge Wyoming makes so much sense and it was evident by the end of the convention that we are onto something good. Combining forces only makes us stronger.

It is hard to believe but the next legislative session is right around the corner. During the next month I will be attending hearings of both the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee and the Title 25 Joint Task Force. Both of these committees have important challenges and topics they are considering. In addition to this you should all be aware that Governor Mead has come out in support of Medicaid expansion and is submitting it as part of his budget for consideration. It is time for us all to get out and contact our legislators and let them know how important expansion is to our facilities and the patients we serve.

JLHSSC are two bills I am working on getting out as committee bills. The first is legislation that would allow us to participate in Upper Payment Limit or GAP Payment programs. These programs are being used in other states and are helping bring in additional federal funds to shore up hospitals and nursing homes financially. There are actually two programs that we are looking at and we discussed those at the annual meeting. I have speaking with Chairman Harvey and believe we will get a committee bill out and be able to work on it during the session. We will also be bringing a committee bill out that would restrict free standing ERs from being constructed or opened in Wyoming unless they are affiliated with a Wyoming hospital. I have been working on this with Chairman Harvey, Representative Barlow and with State License and Survey. This bill will be worked during the JLHSSC hearing in January.

In addition to these two bills, we will be working with AARP on a designated care giver bill, we will be working with the Board of Nursing on a nurse licensure compact bill,

and we will be working on a bill to free up borrowing authority and financing options for hospitals and rural health care districts. It is going to be a very busy 20 days session and I will need you help in reaching out to your local legislators and letting them know these bills are important to you and our organization. I want to encourage you to invite legislators in to your facilities and get to know them personally. I am willing to travel the state and meet with you and your local representatives...anywhere and any-time. They need to hear from you on a regular basis. Your relationships with them (not just when we need their help) makes a huge difference. Get them into your facilities and get them before your Board of Trustees. You have the ability to affect change and to help them understand what you are facing in your respective communities.

With the Governor proposing Medicaid expansion, I fear a great deal of time will be devoted to the issue during the session, so I would like to do all we can to make the legislators aware of our support for the other committee bills before they even get to Cheyenne so that we can get them passed quickly and not lose them in the quagmire the budget is going to create.



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

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Brake for Breakfast

Star Valley Medical Center held its annual Brake for Breakfast cancer awareness event on Wednesday, Oct. 1.

The event is designed to educate the local community about cancer treatments and options available.

“October has been deemed National Breast Cancer Awareness Month by the American Cancer Society and one way that Star Valley Medical Center involves the community is through our Brake for

Breakfast event,” said Joel Johnson of Star Valley Medical Center. “Oct. 1 from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., or until supplies are gone, SVMC sets up stops to distribute a continental breakfast, a pink gift and literature about breast cancer awareness.”

According to Johnson, the Brake for Breakfast event has proven to be popular in the past.

“Each year we plan on 1,000 valley residents stopping by and taking ad-

vantage of Brake for Breakfast,” he said. “A number of those who stop by are men picking up the gift and information for their spouses or significant others. This is a great way for our board, administration, staff, auxiliary and foundation to visit with residents, share important information about health care and say thank you to the community for their support.”

Governor Mead to Push for Medicaid Expansion

Governor Matt Mead says he will make another attempt to expand Medicaid to 17,000 low-income adults.

But Mead says the new attempt will take a different tact by starting with his budget request to the Legislature.

Past attempts to expand

Medicaid have failed in Wyoming’s Republican-dominated Legislature.

With revenue from oil, natural gas and coal on the decline, the tens of millions in federal Medicaid dollars could help the state.

As part of the regular state budgeting process, Mead gives lawmakers his

budget requests by December 1. He said he will submit two versions of the Health Department budget—one with and one without expansion.

Medicaid expansion has traditionally first been reviewed by non-budget committees where the idea has faced stiff opposition.

WHA Resources, Inc. Natural Gas Contract Pricing

WHA is very pleased to begin initial services under our new subsidiary “WHA Resources, Inc.” While legal work is in process, articles of incorporation and bylaws to be finalized and approved – there is an exciting opportunity underway to build a roster of participation leading into the fall/winter season, seasonally important as involves our being in a position to coordinate very competitive natural gas contract pricing for Wyoming hospitals.

Commercial Energy, based in Cut Bank, Montana has had a contract pricing program in place for Montana hospitals for many years, having been extremely beneficial for hospitals to take part in a large bulk purchase direct from our very rich natural gas market region.

Through “WHA Resources”, we are implementing the same opportunity for Wyoming hospitals that will further expand upon the purchasing leverage of Commercial Energy for very

aggressive natural gas service pricing.

Wyoming hospitals are reminded that they have been asked to provide information and provisional intent to participate in this program by responding to a customer usage authorization form that has been circulated statewide. This information will provide the ability to determine the numbers of hospitals seeking to participate – and calculate estimates of the total natural gas volumes, and how the volumes are geographically distributed around the state.