

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 45, Number 21

May 23, 2014

WHA Calendar:

Wyoming Medical Society Meeting
Cheyenne **6/6-6/8**

WHA Annual Meeting & Convention
Cheyenne **9/24-9/25**

Other Events:

Western Regional Trustee Symposium
Henderson, NV **6/11-6/13**



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WHA Trustee Meeting Deemed a Success

WHA is very pleased to have had outstanding attendance and participation at the Annual Trustee Education Program, hosted in Casper on May 16. Nearly 70 total hospital trustees and CEOs took active part in the event, representing 19 different Wyoming hospitals.

The morning sessions proved to be a very dynamic and informative series of presentations focused on all aspects of hospital quality improvement initiatives. Nancy Foster, as Vice President of Quality & Patient Safety Policy with the American Hospital Association, opened with a wide variety of issues and programs from a nationwide perspective.

Ann McGowan, Executive Director of the Nebraska Coalition of Patient Safety, discussed all aspects of the mission and functionality of patient safety organizations.

Kelly Court, as Chief Quality Officer for the Wisconsin Hospital Association and the lead representative of their Quality CheckPoint program, delivered a full overview of this effort.

With WHA having recently made commitment to enroll in this program – Kelly’s presentation was highly pertinent for hospital leadership to gain awareness and knowledge regarding Check-

Point and the plans taking shape within WHA to support this program.

The leadership team from Mountain-Pacific Quality Health also reviewed their new scope-of-work details and their role as the QIO organization serving our state.

WHA’s Neil Hilton provided a brief review regarding our Wyoming-based hospital participation in the HRET Hospital Engagement Network program.



With Kelly Court serving as their state lead for Wisconsin in this same effort, she delivered additional commentary regarding how this program effectively fits within the scope and context of overall quality improvement efforts.

Following the noon break, Dan Perdue and Neil presented certificates awarded jointly by Best-on-Board and WHA – recognizing the individual trustees statewide that have entered into participation in the “Essentials of

Healthcare Governance” and “Quality Imperative” programs, as offered in an online format by Best-on-Board.

Just as planned, the afternoon attention turned to hospital board functionality and board leadership in the context of a “Chairman’s Forum”. Robert Kayser, Board Chairman at Memorial Hospital of Converse County and Ron Mischke, Board Chairman of Sheridan Memorial Hospital, very effectively led a thoughtful review and facilitated excellent open discussion regarding numerous aspects of hospital board functions and strategic issues.

This forum component, providing highly tangible and timely topics of discussion was very well received – with feedback indicating that some form of this occasion should be included within the agenda of all future WHA trustee education events.

WHA clearly appreciates the great participation and support for this program and will look forward to furthering these efforts in successive years to come. For those not in attendance, but interested in the presentation materials, please contact neil@wyohospitals.com to be provided copy.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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



Wyoming Hospital Association

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Blessing of the Hands Performed at WMC

The Blessing of the Hands is a hospital tradition practiced around the world, said the Rev. Keith Evans, Wyoming Medical Center (WMC) chaplain.

It is something the clergy has done for eons, probably since the time of Florence Nightingale – a 19th Century nurse considered the founder of modern nursing.

WMC chaplains have led the interfaith, non-denominational ceremony for about eight years.

“Because human touch is such an important component of health care, the

blessing is especially meaningful to physicians, nurses and other hospital staff. It provides a spiritual experience, symbolically linking the art and science of healthcare,” Evans said.

“Those who participate reflect upon the interconnectedness of their own humanity and the privilege to provide holistic care to their patients.”

The ceremony is open to anyone, religious or not, no matter his or her job description.

Every person at Wyoming Medical Center is re-

sponsible for the healing of every patient.

Surgical Unit clerk Becky Stevens participates every year: “It makes me feel good, and it opens my heart and my hands to my work.”

Physical Therapist Mike Fowler agreed: “Even if you aren’t religious, I just think that whatever you can do to help yourself feel better about helping people, you should do it. This gives me a sense of direction in my work – a little boost to keep me going through the day.”

Health Committee Hosts Discussion of Healthcare Cost

The Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee spent a full day of its meeting in Casper this week hearing from healthcare industry experts about cost drivers in Wyoming’s healthcare system and ideas for controlling those costs.

Committee members heard from physicians, insurers, hospitals, employers about the many factors that make the delivery of healthcare in a frontier state comparatively more expensive than in an urban state.

For the most part, those cost drivers were fairly well-known: geographic isolation, high fixed operating costs, low patient volumes, a shortage of primary care physicians, and inadequate reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid, among others.

During the hearing, Dr. Phyllis Sherard of the Insti-

tute of Population Health, Mary Lynne Shickich from Wyoming Medical Center, and Mike McCafferty, CEO of Sheridan Memorial Hospitals, explained the challenges that hospitals face in the current environment, as well as solutions each is working on to continue delivering high-quality care while reducing costs.

Mr. McCafferty also highlighted the evolution of hospital finance over the past 60 years, including the movement away from bartering for healthcare to a complex system involving government programs and private financing.

He also discussed the need for an increased focus on consumers of healthcare and developing models that best meet consumers’ needs.

He illustrated for committee members the relative percentages hospitals

receive for services from Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurers – making the strains on hospitals and the reasons for cost shifting clear. He also discussed the need for an increased focus on consumers of healthcare and developing models that best meet consumers’ needs.

Steve Bahmer, director of the Wyoming Critical Access Hospital Network, spoke briefly on behalf of critical access hospitals. In an effort to more clearly define the challenges facing rural hospitals, Mr. Bahmer discussed the hospitals’ fixed costs and low volumes, as well as poor reimbursements and the pressures that under-reimbursed nursing homes put on the hospitals that are attached to them.

The committee’s work will continue at their next interim meeting in Lovell in September.