

# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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## WHA Calendar:

WCAHN Financial 8/14  
Workshop  
Webinar

WHA PAC Golf 9/25  
Tournament  
Cheyenne,

Annual Meeting & 9/26-  
Convention 9/27  
Little America  
Cheyenne

## Other Events:

Wyoming Quality 8/22-  
Conference 8/23  
Lander, WY

Mid America 9/5-9/7  
Summit  
Des Moines, IA

## Wyoming Studies Options for Health Insurance Exchange

*From the Wyoming Business Report*

As of July 17, Wyoming was listed as one of 10 states with "no significant activity" toward establishing or denying a state health-insurance exchange, according to statehealthfacts.org, run by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Meanwhile, seven states have decided not to establish exchanges, and the rest have either implemented one or are studying options.

Despite showing as a "no significant activity" state, Gov. Matt Mead has announced that the state is studying its options for creating a health-insurance exchange.

The exchanges are organizations intended to offer a way for individuals and small businesses to better examine their in-state health-care options.

Since the Supreme Court upheld the majority of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act as constitutional, Wyoming has set up forums for individuals concerned about Medicaid expansion while also searching out solutions for the unique demographic needs of a large state with a small population.

"As a rural frontier state, Wyoming has a health-care delivery system and insur-

ance markets with some distinctive challenges to overcome," Gov. Mead wrote in a letter to U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius asking for more information about the sweeping act.

He also pointed out that Health & Human Services often calls Delaware and Rhode Island small states, and that those states have distinctive issues in regards to implementing the PPACA.

"Wyoming has half the population of Delaware and Rhode Island spread out over many times the geographic area," Mead wrote. Another challenge Mead highlighted was the high percentage of small businesses that self-insure compared to other states.

"It is not unreasonable to project a number of small employers will stop providing insurance coverage and move their employees to the individual market or self-insure to avoid regulation," Mead wrote.

Mead added he has heard from small employers during

recent town hall meetings that "it would be cheaper for them to pay the PPACA penalties for not providing coverage than it will be to continue to provide coverage."

Meanwhile, Sebelius has been praising the Supreme Court decision as "a turning point in the health-care debate, a chance to stop refighting old political battles and move forward with implementing and improving a law that is already lowering health-care costs and providing more security for millions of American families."

Sebelius has also criticized the Republican-dominated House for continuing to stage repeal attempts they know will get shot down by the Senate.

"In the decade before the law was passed, national health expenditures increased about 7 percent a year," she wrote. "But in the past two years, those increases have dropped to less than 4 percent per year, saving Americans more than \$220 billion. And that trend is expected to continue, with health-care costs projected to stay level as a share of gross domestic product from 2009 all the way through 2013."

Mead has invited Sebelius to the state to witness the state's unique challenges firsthand.





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



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## WPH Named to 100 Great Community Hospitals List

West Park Hospital (WPH) in Cody has been named to Becker's Hospital Review's list of 100 Great Community Hospitals.

All of the hospitals on the list have fewer than 550 patient beds and minimal teaching programs. West Park Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital and has no university affiliation or physician teaching program.

The honor comes on the heels of being named a top-100 critical access hospital by the National Rural Health

Association.

"Cody is extremely fortunate to have a medical community that's incredibly large and progressive for a town of its size," WPH CEO Doug McMillan said.

"The national recognition we've received during the past year confirms that the investment we've made in recruiting physicians, upgrading infrastructure and staff satisfaction and development are directly impacting the quality and availability of health care in our community and the entire

Big Horn Basin in a positive way."

WPH is the only Wyoming hospital and one of just three critical access hospitals on the list.

Becker's Hospital Review cited WPH's Pulmonary Care Excellence Award in 2010 and 2011 and Spine Surgery Excellence Award in 2011 and 2012 from HealthGrades as well as its adherence to the Planetree philosophy of patient-centered care as reasons for inclusion in the list.

## WCAHN to Present Financial Workshop for CAHs

The Wyoming Critical Access Hospital Network has scheduled a financial workshop for WCAHN members for Tuesday, August 14, from 10 a.m. to noon.

The workshop will be delivered as a webinar by Sano Capital Group.

Webinar connection information will be provided to WCAHN members this week.

Sano Capital Group conducted a financial workshop at the Western Region Flex conference in Park City, Utah, in June.

Sano specializes in the analysis of financial data in the healthcare industry. Additionally, Sano works directly with the National Rural Health Association to estimate impact of federal legislation on rural hospitals.

Their session was based

on their unique method for analyzing critical access hospitals and using financial benchmarks to determine current levels of performance compared to CAHs in the state, in the region, and nationwide.

The firm's approach also provides insights into the top-performing CAHs and how others can elevate their financial performance.

## CMS Redesigns Hospital, Nursing Home Compare Sites

Two websites that help Americans make informed choices about hospitals and nursing homes have been redesigned and will make more information available to the public.

The two sites – Hospital Compare and Nursing Home Compare – have been enhanced to make navigation easier, and have added new comparison tools like findings from nursing home inspections.

"These enhanced tools give patients, their families, and caregivers the ability to make an informed decision on where to seek care by looking at how well hospitals and nursing homes are performing on important quality measures," said Acting CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner.

Both sites contain important data on how well these facilities perform on quality measures – such as

the frequency of infections that develop in the hospital, how often patients have to be readmitted to the hospital, and the percentage of nursing residents who report having moderate to severe pain while staying in the nursing homes.

Researchers will now be able to access the data on both of these sites through mobile ready applications.