

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

WHA PAC Golf Tournament Sheridan	9/17
WHA Annual Meeting & Convention Sheridan	9/18- 9/19

Other Events:

2nd Annual Quality Conference Casper	8/21- 8/22
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Committee Considers Delay in Benefits Exchange Info

The Obama administration's decision to postpone a key part of the Affordable Care Act prompted state lawmakers recently to delay advertising the federal health exchange that's being developed for Wyoming.

The online insurance marketplace won't be directly affected by the decision to delay until 2015 the requirement that companies provide health insurance for workers.

But members of a legislative committee studying exchanges interpreted the slowdown as a sign the federal health reform law could fall apart.

Legislators prefer to see what happens with the law before promoting the new marketplace — which is designed to allow people to shop online for insurance like they do airline tickets. The marketplace will begin enrollment Oct. 1.

"I worry about the state taking ownership of a federal disaster, misleading people, and they drop coverage thinking the ACA is coming," said Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper. "And then the federal thing doesn't work."

Officials at the Wyoming Department of Insurance want to keep people informed about the law but share lawmaker's concerns, said Stephanie McGee, the

state's deputy insurance commissioner.

"We don't want to push somebody some place ... when it could fall apart," she said.

The comments came during a meeting of the Select Committee on Health Benefits Exchanges, which the Legislature established earlier this year after failing to meet federal deadlines to start a Wyoming-run marketplace. That failure resulted in a federal program run on the state's behalf.

Committee members are studying whether to eventually take over some or all of the exchange. The state is planning to apply for a \$1.8 million federal grant to help in that effort.

The grant includes \$500,000 to educate people in Wyoming about the exchange. The program could serve some of the roughly 83,000 uninsured people in Wyoming, including people who lack coverage because of pre-existing conditions.

Outreach money could become available later this year, but committee members recommended officials hold off spending it until at least January. That would give state leaders more time to learn whether federal officials encounter additional problems implementing the

Affordable Care Act.

"We have to be very careful with this federal blunder we are dealing with," said Sen. Jim Anderson, R-Casper.

It would also allow officials to determine which populations are being overlooked by the advertising campaigns of other groups, Scott noted. Others questioned the wisdom of waiting. Rep. Elaine Harvey, R-Lovell, has been a frequent critic of the health reform law. But she said delaying outreach over concerns about the marketplace could result in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"I think we are doing our uninsured population a disservice by not giving them an opportunity to sign up for insurance that is available to them," she said.

More advertising could also alleviate confusion about the law, said Marguerite Herman of Project Health Care: Consumer Advocates, a Wyoming group that supports the federal reform law. A survey conducted this spring by the Kaiser Family Foundation found 40 percent of Americans were unaware the Affordable Care Act was still the law of the land.

"Information is not the enemy," Herman said. "I think it is going to help."

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



All Departments at Iverson Achieve Planetree Designation

Iverson Memorial Hospital has reached a milestone in its adoption of the Planetree Model of patient-centered care, as all departments at the hospital have achieved Planetree designation.

Achieving that designation requires that a department meet requirements in 10 categories, including facets of care such as human interactions, patient empowerment, nutrition and patient choices.

“That is a way that we can look at all aspects of that

patient — body, mind and spirit — and deliver their care appropriately,” IMH Planetree coordinator Sandy Knapton said.

Interim CEO Karl Vilums said IMH decided to work with Planetree more than three years ago, under the leadership of former CEO Carol Dozier, as a way to encourage the hospital to sharpen its focus.

Knapton said each of the hospital’s 35 departments, whether working directly with patients or not, has brainstormed and undertak-

en initiatives to enhance the experience of patients at IMH. A steering committee has overseen the process.

For example, the Meredith and Jeannie Ray Cancer Center provides tote bags for patients. The Emergency Services Department provides teddy bears. The Engineering Department has painted trees on the walls, while Medical Records gives a lullaby tape to new mothers. Even the Administrative Department participates, by decorating the bathrooms.

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



Steve Erixon

Erixon Named Market CEO of Hospitals

Lander Regional Hospital (LRH) and Riverton Memorial Hospital (RMH) have announced that Stephen M. Erixon, FACHE, will lead both hospitals on a permanent basis in a newly-created market chief executive officer (CEO) position within LifePoint Hospitals®, of which LRH and RMH are a part.

Erixon has been CEO of LRH since June 2012 and has served as CEO of RMH on an interim basis since January.

“I am very excited to see Steve expand his role

and assume the position of market CEO for Lander Regional and Riverton Memorial. He has been an asset to both of these facilities over the last several months, increasing collaboration between the hospitals and enhancing the services they provide their communities,” Don Bivacca, Western Group president for LifePoint, said.

“Steve has been an incredible leader during his short time at Lander, and I am thrilled to see him apply the same leadership and drive similar successes at

Riverton Memorial,” Dr. Roger Gose, chairman of the RMH Board of Trustees, said.

“We are proud to see our two hospitals continue to work together to advance health care in this region, and I am confident that Steve is the right leader to help us continue down this path.”

This new CEO structure supports the hospitals’ ongoing efforts to increase their collaboration in order to expand services, reduce costs and extend the continuum of care offered in the Lander and Riverton communities.

Wyoming Hospital Association

2005 Warren Ave.
Cheyenne, WY
82001

www.wyohospitals.com

307.632.9344

HPP Program Seeking Regional Coordinators

The Hospital Preparedness Program is seeking to contract with five individuals to act as regional coordinators.

Regional Coordinators would be responsible for developing and coordinating regional coalition develop-

ment, assisting with outreach and coordination with partner agencies, facilitate preparedness assessments, planning, training, exercise coordination, communications, and public information dissemination.

Applicants must be able

to work effectively with public officials and others within the Wyoming Department of Health and complete and submit required reports on time.

To apply, send cover letter and resume to Brittany.wardle@wyo.gov.