

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

State Considers Sales Tax Hike to Cover Medicaid Expansion

At a Medicaid forum in Jackson last week, Rep. Keith Gingery said the state has discussed a one-percent sales-tax hike to cover the cost of a Medicaid expansion.

"It scares me to say it," Gingery said.

While the federal government has committed to funding state Medicaid expansion for several years before backing off to a 90/10 split, state officials worry the government won't be able to back its commitments under record-high national debt.

And even the 10 percent required by the state could be a problem. State Medicaid expenditures stood at about \$520 million for 2011.

"We can't afford the current Medicaid, so we can't afford the new Medicaid," Gingery said.

He added he wasn't sure where the doubt of the federal government's ability to come up with funding for the expansion was coming from.

The state has not yet committed itself to the expansion. The Supreme Court's ruling on the Affordable Care Act made it impossible for the federal government to deny in-place funding to states that decide not to pursue the Medicaid expansion.

However, the feds will be able to withhold new sources of funding from those states that opt out.

Gingery voiced the state's concerns at the last of a string of Medicaid forums scheduled by the Wyoming Department of Health to discuss options for decreasing costs of Medicaid while maintaining quality of service.

The forums were part of an outreach effort to gather input from across the state in support of the legislatively mandated Medicaid Options Study. The input will be used to produce a report of recommendations for the Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee. 80 people attended the forum in Jackson.

Residents who voiced their opinions ranged from current and former state representatives and staff at St. John's Medical Center to citizens on Medicaid waiver programs, which one attendant called "a free check" for a hospital. The waiver program has a waiting list, but provides comprehensive in-home care for certain individuals with chronic conditions.

One couple on the program with a developmentally disabled child, who waved to

the crowd as his dad mentioned his name, said the waiver program has allowed him and his wife to continue working while leaving their child in the hands of competent caregivers.

Some voiced that problems like obesity and diabetes are cheaper to prevent than treat, saying if the state ramps up spending in prevention, the bottom line will be lower.

Others asked the state not to despise the federal government and instead take what it's offered.

"The Affordable Care Act has a lot of dollars for information systems," said Lou Hochheiser, CEO of St. John's Medical Center. "To my knowledge our state has not taken advantage of those dollars." Hochheiser said having more access to digital records could minimize duplication of tests and procedures.

Still others just want to see the bureaucracy fat trimmed in the system, saying a streamlined approach would save money for Medicaid.

Currently, Wyoming provides Medicaid for about 90,000 residents. Gingery said the expansion would add between 18,000 and 30,000 citizens to the system.

-From the Wyoming Business Report

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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



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Board Chairmen Honored with LifePoint Leadership Award

LifePoint Hospitals®, a leading hospital company focused on providing quality healthcare services close to home, recently awarded Dr. Roger Gose of Riverton Memorial Hospital and Joe Quiroz of Lander Regional Hospital with its 2012 Board Leadership Award.

The annual award recognizes an individual who exemplifies LifePoint's guiding principles – its High Five – by supporting the delivery of compassionate, high-quality patient care; supporting physicians to achieve clinical excellence;

creating excellent workplaces for employees; strengthening the hospital's role in the community; and helping ensure fiscal responsibility.

"It is vital for healthcare providers and hospitals to work together, and Dr. Gose and Joe—both visionary board members—have worked together over many months to develop a spirit of collaboration between their two hospitals," said Don Bivacca, National Division President of LifePoint.

"They started small with joint meetings, but now they're instrumental in facil-

itating open communications and encouraging the groups to create ways to work together to better serve Fremont County and the entire region. The enthusiasm and transparency with which they have approached the effort is inspiring."

Dr. Gose has been practicing medicine in Riverton for more than 40 years.

While Quiroz is a full-time international management consultant, he is currently the chairman of Lander Regional Hospital's board.

Wyoming Hospitals Represented at HRET Program

Four Wyoming hospitals were well represented at a recent program offered by the AHA's Health Research & Educational Trust (HRET).

Connected to the CMS Hospital Engagement Network activity, with which 13 Wyoming hospitals are currently participating, HRET is hosting an "Improvement Leader Fellowship" program.

This program is being held in a series of three sessions at regional sites across the country. The

first session of the Denver region was held recently with four participants from Wyoming attending: Veronica Taylor – Campbell County Memorial Hospital; Tina Smith – Washakie Medical Center; Sally Myer – Memorial Hospital of Converse County; and Amy Johnson – Star Valley Medical Center.

The aim of this program is to build a contingent of front-line quality improvement leaders who will drive their hospital's focus on improved patient care out-

comes and quality. The series of educational sessions will provide study and practice application in the science of improvement, effective measurement tools, and the dynamics of culture and teamwork.

This level of focus is intent to result in improved application of best practices and full engagement of hospital-based quality teams – to overcome challenges and spread sustainable improvement strategies that can be carried forward for all hospital statewide.

Reserve Your Room for WHA Convention

The WHA Annual Meeting and Convention will be held September 26 and 27 at the Little America Hotel and Resort in Cheyenne.

The WHA PAC Golf tournament will be held on Tuesday, September 25 at the Cheyenne Country Club.

Registration information will be available in the next week on the WHA website at www.wyohospitals.com and will also be mailed to WHA members.

Little America Hotel and Resort will only hold the room block for our meeting

until **August 25**. Please make your reservations early to ensure you get the Convention rate.

Little America Hotel can be reached at 800-235-6384 and mention the Wyoming Hospital Association to get the convention rate.