

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

Wyoming Legislature Convenes	1/8
HFMA Spring Meeting Casper	3/20- 3/22

Other Events:

WyICN Membership Meeting	1/25
Rural Healthcare Leadership Conference Phoenix, AZ	2/10- 2/13

Gov. Mead Addresses Medicaid During State of State

Governor Matt Mead highlighted a number of his priorities during his 2013 State of the State address last week, including a preference for Wyoming to develop its own approach to health insurance exchanges and the expansion of Medicaid.

In his address, the Governor said the state's strength provides an opportunity to tackle tough issues from a long-term funding source for highways, health care and education.

"There will be difficult decisions to be sure but what we do this session is all about progress for our state, not about our personal popularity. By making the difficult decisions we have the chance to leave a better legacy for Wyoming," Gov. Mead told the 62nd Wyoming Legislature.

Governor Mead's recommendations to the Legislature include:

- Build savings;
- Reduce the ongoing budget;
- Cut the size of government;
- Streamline state regulations;
- Decide on the funding mechanism for our highways;
- Change fiscal policies to build up the rainy-day account; and

- Provide funding for major items including wildfires, landfills, local government, the Gillette-Madison water project, UW School of Engineering and employee performance pay.

Gov. Mead said his proposal to reduce ongoing spending by over \$60 million per year is necessary because Wyoming is losing federal Abandoned Mine Land money, incurred significant expenses from wildfires, had its budget double in size over the last decade, continues to see mineral price and production fluctuations, and faces uncertainty about the nation's debt and deficit.

"We have the opportunity to reduce the standard budget in a very deliberate and considered way – at a time when revenue is flat but stable and our state continues to grow.

In fact, last year we were the 4th fastest growing state in the country. We face no immediate economic crisis. Therefore, this is an opportunity we should take – not miss," Governor Mead said.

Regarding healthcare, Gov. Mead said he continues to believe the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is not good policy.

"Unfortunately there is no magic wand waving, there is

no approach that will extricate us from the ACA. It is upon us and we must act," he said.

Full implementation of the ACA begins in 2014, and the Governor said now is the time to prepare a set of conditions for Wyoming to submit to the federal government on a health insurance exchange and Medicaid optional expansion.

"This body (the Legislature) has the opportunity to develop what we would like to see in that request. Now, perhaps the federal government will not agree to our terms.

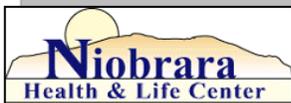
We can say no if they do not, but it is far better that we express our terms and make a request than to not make a request and get a package without our input. Let's view this as an opportunity for innovation."

He also laid out his priorities for one-time spending. These one-time proposals are for landfills, local governments, the Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, data center recruitment, transformational energy projects, the Gillette-Madison water project and the UW School of Engineering.

"This is one-time money, and these are one-time expenses – they will improve our future without growing our next budget," Gov. Mead said.



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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NHLC Says Thank You with Annual Chili Feed

Niobrara Health & Life Center knows how to thank its patrons. With chili and cinnamon rolls.

In December, the Lusk hospital hosted its annual Chili Feed to say thank you to the community for its ongoing support of the hospital.

"Basically, it's a Thank You and a Merry Christmas to the community," said Jan Jory, NHLC head dietician and kitchen manager.

Though turnout for the event was best in 2011, pre-

paring for the community feast is no small task. Fortunately, Jory had the advantage of advance planning and the assistance of NHLC Head Cook Janice Zysk.

Jory said she started working on the meal the day before the event, and she completed her preparations at 3 p.m. on the day of the Chili Feed.

"I cut it kind of close," she said.

And that is saying something, because all of the food prepared for the community

dinner was home made.

"Everything is made from scratch," Jory said. "The chili is a Jory recipe and I'm not giving it out."

The menu has been such a hit that she expects it to be a fixture of NHLC Chili Feeds into the future.

"I mean, why fix something that isn't broke?" she said. "I might go with something extra, but we have to keep the chili and cinnamon rolls."

New HRET Leadership Opportunities – 2013

Wyoming hospitals continue their efforts statewide as participants in the HRET Hospital Engagement Network project.

With additional hospitals recently joining this effort – the Wyoming roster of participating hospitals has grown to 17 as we turn to year-two of the project.

As a key educational component to this endeavor, HRET has announced several fellowship program opportunities upcoming in 2013. A series of learning

collaboratives were developed and held regionally through this past year, and HRET is pleased to offer again the "Improvement Leaders Fellowship".

Recognizing that eight Wyoming hospital personnel participated in this program in 2012, WHA is pleased to have this program available again – this year being held in Phoenix, as our regional location.

The first session of the fellowship has been announced to be held February 21-22. Participating hospi-

tal are being provided specifics regarding registration information at this time.

Also to be held for the first time, a specific program for medical staff leaders is scheduled for February 25-26 in Miami – as a nationwide HRET agenda for physician leadership and engagement.

Designed as a focused two-year initiative, the Hospital Engagement Network program will carry forward into 2013 with new program content that will build upon the improvements documented through the past year.

AHA Asks CMS to Speed EHR Program Fix for CAHs

The AHA again urged the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to quickly address a claims processing limitation that inappropriately excludes certain physicians providing services in the outpatient departments of CAHs from the Medicare and Medicaid electronic health record in-

centive programs.

The affected physicians are those for whom a CAH bills Medicare for their outpatient department services using the optional Method II.

The letter notes that physicians and other eligible professionals must first attest to meaningful use in

2012 to fully benefit from the incentives, and that waiting until 2014 would reduce their incentives by almost half.

The AHA states, "this is an unacceptable loss for financially strapped rural providers who maintain access to care in underserved areas."