

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 46, Number 2

January 16, 2015

WHA Calendar:

2015 General Session of the Wyoming Legislature
Cheyenne 1/13-3/6

WCAHN Flex Planning Meeting
Cheyenne 2/4

Other Events:

Leading Age Wyoming 1/21-1/23

Rural Health Policy Institute Washington, DC 2/3-2/5

National Nurses Week 5/6-5/12



President's Corner

We are still facing a very difficult challenge with the Convalescent Care Center bill.

I have argued and testified before committee and in legislative receptions held in Casper and the Big Horn Basin that this bill is a mistake and that it doesn't allow for fair competition.

Our hospitals are safety nets to our communities and we provide services, staff in a manner to provide those services and deliver care to all that come through our doors, while the surgery centers will be able to cherry pick and not care for Medicare, Medicaid or uninsured patients.

There are concerns regarding the safety of caring for patients for a long period of time in convalescent care setting as opposed to a hospital setting where we are equipped and trained to deal with any complications.

As you are aware, in our state there is strong sentiment towards free enterprise and legislators are arguing that competition is a good thing, but I don't really believe they understand that this is not fair competition and that as services are diluted it continues to erode our ability to stay competitive and puts our safety net hospitals in even more jeopardy.

The legislative session is in full swing and it promises to be an interesting one.

As you are all aware, Medicaid expansion is one of the biggest topics. Governor Mead made it very clear that he believes that expansion needs to be passed in this session, during his State of the State address.

There are two plans that will be reviewed. The SHARE plan which was prepared by the Department of Health and which has been vetted with HHS and CMS and the alternative plan sponsored by Senator Charlie Scott.

As we have monitored the two plans and worked with the Medicaid Coalition, we believe the SHARE plan is the best but I would like to see any plan passed that could provide us some relief from the growing amount of uncompensated care and charity care we deliver each year.

I want to thank those of you that have either utilized voter voice or reached out and personally contacted your legislators.

When we take the time to make those contacts it makes a difference.

I will tell you, that as I testified for the first time as President of the WHA before the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services committee, the comment was made by a couple of the legislative members that they never hear from the hospitals in their areas and wonder why we (hospitals) are not more active in having our voices heard.

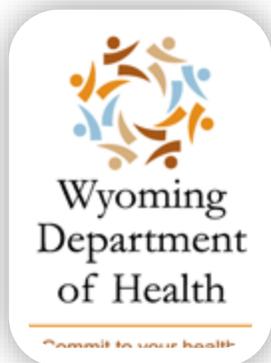
I encourage all of you to reach out to you legislators. Get your board members and you staff members mobilized. Get the public involved and tell your story.

I am amazed at how powerful and active lobbyists are here in Cheyenne and Neil, Steve and I are doing all we can but your voices make a difference.

I am optimistic that we will actually see Medicaid expansion pass this year. There is still a long way to go but there is more support and momentum this year than in years past.



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



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New Services Available At WCHS

Weston County Health Services (WCHS) announced that is offering more resources to community members, by providing the services of mental health professionals through electronic medicine.

The service is available after a referral from a doctor. Patients can see board certified adult psychiatrists and child-adolescent psychiatrists or other mental health specialists via a tele-health conference at the hospital.

“How the process works, is the family practice provider makes a referral for them to see a mental health provider. The hospital faxes a referral to HealthLinkNow and they assign them a patient care navigator, explained Piper Allard, WCHS’ director of Patient Services.

HLN will contact the patient based on the referral to assess their needs to determine the type of provider to schedule an appointment.

WCHS is then notified to make sure a room is available for the teleconference. When it is time for their appointment, a staff member will escort the patient to a room, help them log on to the computer and establish video connection to begin their appointment.

The staff member then leaves the room so the patient will have complete privacy.

WDH Names Senior Leadership Team

Two new members of the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) senior leadership team were named recently by WDH Director Tom Forslund.

Korin Schmidt is the new WDH deputy director.

Schmidt has been serving at WDH since 2012 as the deputy administrator of the Public Health Division and has also been the interim chief of that division’s Community Health Section. Schmidt’s human services experience includes administrative positions at the Wy-

oming Department of Family Services and a previous WDH stint in the former Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services division.

“As a Wyoming native, I feel fortunate to be working in this new role for the department because it allows me to continue supporting the well-being of our state’s residents,” Schmidt said.

Eric McVicker is now the WDH chief financial officer.

McVicker moves in to this role after serving as

deputy chief financial officer for the last two and half years. McVicker has nearly 25 years of experience in healthcare administration and finance including serving as the chief executive officer for Platte County Memorial Hospital in Wheatland.

McVicker said, “The activities of our department, providing and promoting healthcare to citizens across our state, does require a large budget. I take the fiscal responsibilities of this position seriously.”

MPQH Annual Infection Prevention Conference

“Save-the-date” for the third annual Wyoming Infection Prevention Conference, set to be held in Casper on April 21-22 at the Best Western Ramkota.

The leadership from Mountain-Pacific Quality Health has assembled an excellent agenda for the 2-day conference that will focus upon key compo-

nents of effective infection prevention protocols.

With focused clinical content, this conference has quickly grown to be an outstanding learning opportunity for staff from both venues of care – attendance last year grew to nearly 100 participants statewide.

WHA is very pleased to be a co-sponsor of this event

alongside others in support of this important and timely educational offering initiated by Mountain-Pacific in their role at QIO for our state.

Final agenda details are being confirmed, with program brochure and registration information to be available soon – so please mark your calendars and watch for further information.