

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

Healthcare Effective
Communication Webinar 1/8/14

Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee Meeting Cheyenne 1/9-1/10

Other Events:

Wyoming Legislative Session Convenes 2/10



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Looking Back, While Looking Forward

As we transition for the New Year at WHA, it's important to look back on the year just completed. As I review the past year, I can't help but think that we have unfinished priorities that still need our attention.

Medicaid Expansion – While we have made some strides, we have a long way to go. We still need to convince the governor and legislators to put politics aside and act in the best interest of the state's budget, healthcare providers, consumers and employers. The Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee will be deliberating on various expansion options when they meet in Cheyenne next week. It is clear that we have an uphill battle in getting them to approve legislation that is beneficial. When Medicaid was first created by Congress, it took many years before all states opted into the program. We hope our efforts in this area will soon prove to be successful.

Quality Issues – Even though hospitals' quality improvement efforts have reaped substantial results, our members are far from declaring victory on QI activities and turning their attention elsewhere. Likewise, WHA should not abandon the work we are doing with the Hospital Engagement Network (HEN), the continuance of the Annual Patient Safety Summit, or our joint efforts with our QIO, Mountain Pacific Quality Health and the Wyoming Business Coalition on Health.

Communications – Any organization can always improve the communications aspect of their operation and WHA is no different. The release of the Medicaid Expansion info-graphic and op-ed are good examples of the type of outreach we need to continue. We have a presence in the social media world through Facebook and Twitter, but more can be done. We need to continue to stress that Wyoming hospitals provide high-quality care; Wyoming's hospitals are a great value for our citizens; and WHA is the state's leader in advocating for high-quality care.

A crucial issue that looms large is the advent of a third acute care hospital in Casper and the possibility of similar

hospitals being built around the state. A Kansas-based company, Nueterra, is attempting to build a 52,000 square-foot physician-owned hospital there. The Affordable Care Act prohibits physician-owned hospitals from treating Medicare/Medicaid and Tricare patients, resulting in this facility serving only insured patients and leaving Wyoming Medical Center with the responsibility of caring for patients who rely on the lesser paying governmental programs. We will be pursuing Legislative remedies in the upcoming Budget Session to address this issue.

Another issue that needs additional attention in the coming year is the on-going work between WHA and the Wyoming Business Coalition on Health regarding a publicly-reported tool for hospital quality measurements. Our joint subcommittee has examined the Wisconsin CheckPoint program, the Leapfrog Hospital Survey and the quality reporting features of CMS' value based-purchasing program.

Our trustee education program will be held on May 18 in Casper at the Best Western Ramkota. Details will be forthcoming, but please mark your calendars for that important annual event.



Star Valley Adds More Recognitions

Star Valley Medical Center has been recognized as a Top 20 Critical Access Hospital for 2013 by the National Rural Health Association.

This ranking compares the hospital’s strength in areas of finance, quality, patient satisfaction, market competitiveness and value of 1,400 Critical Access Hospitals in the nation.

This comes after Star Valley Medical Center was recognized as a top 100 hospital in March by Ivantage Health Analytics.

“I have to admit that I was somewhat surprised”

said Charlie Button, CEO of Star Valley Medical Center. There are a lot of good hospitals in the nation and to be ranked in the top 1.4% is amazing. You would have to drive by 70 hospitals to get to another hospital ranked in the top 20. This is truly a reflection of the great providers and staff that we have at Star Valley Medical Center.

The health system has also been awarded the “Women’s Choice Award for 2014” from WomenCertified, Inc. Star Valley Medical Center will be one of 241

hospitals throughout the U.S. that will be honored through national and regional initiatives based on emergency department performance.

Star Valley Medical Center was selected based on measures women feel are most important in emergency care. “I am very proud of our staff for achieving this award”, Button added. Improvements in the ER have been a focus this last year and the hospital is seeing exceptional patient satisfaction scores.

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

Healthcare Effective Communication Webinar

A free educational webinar titled “Effective Communication with HIPAA and the Affordable Care Act” will be held January 8 from Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Jonathan R. Friesen, J.D., an Equal Opportunity Specialist with HHS’s Office for Civil Rights will focus on the intersection of the HIPAA Privacy Rule and how it impacts effective communication practices.

First, he will address the use of interpreters who are members of the provider’s

workforce. Second, he will address the issues surrounding the use of outside/contract interpreters who are not direct members of the provider’s workforce.

This will lead to a discussion of the basic requirements of the business associate agreements that may or may not be required. Third, he will discuss the use of “others” for interpretation services which includes telephone and video/telecommunications relay services.

Then, Elsa Ramirez from

the HHS’s Office of the Regional Director will give a short presentation to help staff learn more about healthcare.gov, how to direct people to resources to sign up for health coverage, and learn more about resources that will help providers and consumers navigate the new health care law.

To register for the webinar please e-mail Rose Fishback at rose@wyohospitals.com or call 307-632-9344.

Wyoming Hospital Association
 2005 Warren Ave.
 Cheyenne, WY 82001
 www.wyohospitals.com
 307.632.9344

Volunteers Needed for 2014 Nurse-For-The-Day

The Wyoming Hospital Association is seeking nurses for the WHA’s Nurse-For-A-Day program during the upcoming Wyoming Legislative Session.

The session convenes on February 10, 2014 and is scheduled to end March 7, 2014.

For more than 30 years, the Nurse-For-A-Day program has provided basic medical care – such as taking blood pressures and treating complaints of cold and flu, headaches, and upset stomachs – to Wyoming’s lawmakers at the State Capitol.

In addition to delivering that care, the program has enhanced the image of hospitals and caregivers, and it has provided a terrific opportunity for nurses to spend time with legislators from their home counties.

Nurses who would like to volunteer can email rose@wyohospitals.com.