



# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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### WHA Calendar:

Healthcare Leadership Training 11/1

Wyoming Patient Safety Summit Casper 11/15

### Other Events:

HFMA Fall Meeting Sheridan 11/7-11/8



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## Medicaid Expansion Can Drive Down Costs for Consumers

The basic arguments in favor of expanding Medicaid in Wyoming are well known.

It would offer coverage to some 17,500 currently uninsured people in the state. It would shift most of the cost for those newly insured citizens to the federal government. It would save the state an estimated \$47 million over seven years.

It would drive down the costs of uncompensated care for Wyoming's hospitals.

But a number of facts about the Medicaid expansion are significantly less well known, and they have a direct impact on consumers.

For example, Medicaid coverage enables people to access lower-cost primary care. If they remain uninsured, the costs of their illnesses continue to be shifted onto privately insured residents, and this cost-shift is raising family health insurance premiums.

What is the effect on families? The cost-shift to privately insured families is raising their premiums, on average, by more than \$1,000 per year, according to the National Health Law Program.

"Medicaid coverage offers access to lower-cost pri-

mary care," said Wyoming Hospital Association President Dan Perdue. "That is not only a benefit to those patients in terms of higher-quality, lower-cost care, but it is also a benefit to every-

**"Most importantly, it would be good for patients and families."**

**- Dan Perdue, President Wyoming Hospital Association**

one else through reduced costs and insurance premiums."

Here's another. People who are uninsured tend to depend on the emergency room for their primary care, since they cannot be turned away if they come to the emergency room seeking care, regardless of their illness or ability to pay.

The emergency room, however, is one of the most expensive places to receive care, whether that care is for an emergency or a non-emergency.

According to a randomized, controlled study by the National Bureau of Economic Research that compared Medicaid coverage to being uninsured, however, Medicaid coverage increased the use of preventive care, which is a key to reducing overall healthcare costs.

But there's more.

Once people are enrolled in Medicaid, they use the emergency room at the same rate as people who have private insurance.

Increased use of preventive care and decreased use of the emergency room will not only drive down overall healthcare costs, but they will also help reduce the cost-shift that is driving up family insurance premiums.

"The Medicaid expansion would clearly be good for providers, and for the state of Wyoming," Perdue said, "but most importantly, it would be good for patients and families."

### What's Next?

The Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee will consider Medicaid expansion options at its November meeting.

Meeting Date: November 4-5  
Location: The Inn at Lander  
Time: 8 a.m.—5 p.m.

The committee will consider two key expansion bills: one offering premium assistance, and one offering a limited set of Medicaid services.

Both draft bills are available for review at: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>

## 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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## IMH Institutes Color-Coded Scrubs

Visitors to Iverson Memorial Hospital (IMH) will notice a change in the appearance of the employees.

IMH has instituted a program called "Dressing by Discipline." Each department at the hospital is now wearing scrubs of a different color to distinguish one from another.

Leslie Comely, who chairs the patient-centered

care committee at IMH, said color-coded scrubs would help patients more easily identify who is taking care of them. Clinical staff members include doctors, nurses, therapists and aides.

"During a typical stay, a patient encounters up to 13 different disciplines," she said.

It's also a way to improve the patient experience,

she said. Helping patients understand who's taking care of them can create a better healing environment and alleviate some of the fear and uncertainty that come with a hospital stay.

Now, every patient will have a diagram at their bedside as a reference to who is taking care of them.

## Iverson Hospital Welcomes new CEO

Doug Faus has been named the Chief Executive Officer of Iverson Memorial Hospital. Faus assumed his new role October 21.

Faus was most recently the interim Chief Operating Officer of Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Over the course of his career, Faus has served various healthcare organizations, progressing from an administrator of a critical access hospital in Montana to Chief Executive Officer at the Estes Park Medical Center before joining the former Poudre Valley Health Sys-

tem to lead major components of the opening of Medical Center of the Rockies as the Chief Operating Officer.

His accomplishments include leading process improvement efforts that generated over \$20 million in savings and net revenue gains, participating in efforts that resulted in the highly coveted Baldrige National Quality Award and the Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence Award, leading a \$20 million major hospital addition and remodel, and the successful creation of a physician group

aligning physician and hospital interests.

Faus holds a Masters of Business Administration and Masters of Healthcare Administration. He is Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Faus replaces Carol Dozier who relocated to King's Daughters' Health in Madison, Indiana.

Trustees agreed Faus has "a proven track record in hospital operations and development and has dedicated his entire professional career to working and serving rural communities."

## Register Online for the Patient Safety Summit

The Wyoming Medical Society and the Wyoming Hospital Association have come together once again to organize the second annual Patient Safety Summit, aimed at hosting a forum to assist all types of healthcare providers in identifying best practices to improve patient safety and quality across the continuum of care.

The Summit will strive to establish a definition as we talk about both inpatient and office safety culture.

Topics include engaging patients as partners, the role of electronic records in patient safety, applying lessons learned from aviation safety to healthcare, and the possible role of a patient safety organization in the state.

The Patient Safety Summit is being held November 15 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Casper. You can contact the Hilton Garden Inn at 307-266-1300 and mention the Wyoming Medical Society for a \$83 sleeping room rate.

Visit [www.wyomed.org/patientsafety](http://www.wyomed.org/patientsafety) for a complete schedule and to register online.