

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

WHA Legislative Committee 11/27

WHA Board of Directors Meeting Casper 12/12

Other Events:

Wyoming Legislature Convenes 1/8

Lawmakers Consider Changes to Medicaid Program

A state legislative committee voted last week to proceed with a series of reforms designed to address escalating costs in Wyoming's Medicaid program.

Lawmakers also want to study paying private organizations to manage care for the entire Medicaid population.

Under a managed care system, Medicaid recipients would receive services through third-party networks. In theory, managed care would save the state money, but it could also limit options for people who rely on Medicaid for coverage.

"Managed care is going to be a change of some magnitude for Wyoming that we haven't used before," said Sen. Charlie Scott, R-Casper.

"It has considerable implications both for our providers ... and frankly, for some of our populations. But it has considerable ability to reduce the costs we are seeing in Medicaid."

The reforms were included in a report that state health officials presented to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee during a meeting in Casper.

The recommendations resulted from a Wyoming Department of Health Study that examined the factors

driving Medicaid costs and options for controlling them.

Medicaid is expected to cost the state \$560 million during the current, two-year budget cycle. More people than ever are using the program, and the cost of covering them has steadily increased over the past decade.

The committee supported several changes to the existing Medicaid program.

Some will require approval from the full Legislature; others can now be implemented by the health department.

They include:

- Incentives to encourage healthy behaviors in Medicaid recipients and good outcomes among health care providers
- Increased fraud prevention
- Decreasing unnecessary visits to the emergency room, which are costly and an ineffective primary care treatment option
- Prenatal services to all pregnant women who deliver Medicaid-eligible babies
- Tightening standards for nursing home eligibility, while expanding other, home-based options.

Those recommendations and others should maintain costs at current levels, according to the report. More significant changes, like managed care, could actually save the state money.

Under the existing system, people who use Medicaid must find providers who are willing to accept Medicaid recipients.

With managed care, those people receive health care from a third-party contracted by the state.

States have increasingly turned to managed care to coordinate care among providers and cut costs.

Wyoming is one of only three states without a comprehensive program, according to a survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

The legislative committee wants to study whether to use managed care for Wyoming's entire Medicaid population, or just for certain groups — like older adults or people with disabilities — that account for the most spending.

The study must be approved by the full legislature next year. The committee also asked the health department to develop a tool for evaluating a managed care system, should it be implemented. Both cost and the quality of care should be considered, said Sen. John Schiffer, R-Kaycee.



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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Time Capsule Chronicles NBHH's Development

When workers from Wyoming Demolition, Inc. of Sheridan last week reached the cornerstone of the old hospital on East 10th Street, which the Town of Lovell is razing to make way for a senior housing project, they found something interesting, though not unexpected: a time capsule.

"We've done enough of these to know that a time capsule is usually in a wall behind the cornerstone," said Wyoming Demolition's

Randy Warnke, who is overseeing the Lovell project.

Inside the box were numerous documents that were taken to town hall in Lovell for inspection. The contents of the capsule chronicle the development of the hospital project in the late 1950s. The documents included newspaper clippings, and letters of request to help locate an administrator for the hospital.

Also included were an agreement by Dr. W. W.

Horsley and Dr. Thomas B. Croft with the North Big Horn Hospital District to close the existing hospital and purchase the old hospital upon the completion of the new facility, a letter of concern about the hospital location, and more.

The hospital was dedicated with speakers, music by the Lovell High School band and tours on Sunday, June 9, 1957, and opened for business on Monday, June 17, 1957.

Leapfrog to Post Updated Numerical Safety Scores

Leapfrog has posted updated numerical safety scores for all hospitals receiving a Hospital Safety Score in November. Letter grades will be posted for hospitals to preview on November 21.

Grades will not be published for the public until after November 26.

Leapfrog has posted updated numerical safety scores that reflect corrections to source data received by the close of the data review period (October 1, 2012, to October 28, 2012).

Due to changes that occurred during the review period, the means and standard deviations for each measure have changed slightly.

The standard measure weights may change slightly as well. The result is that almost every hospital's numerical safety score will be different from what was originally posted in October, whether changes were made to the hospital's source data or not.

To view the updated scores, visit www.leapfroggroup.org/data

-validation/hospital_data_review. Usernames and passwords have not changed. If you have lost your username or password, please contact the Safety Score Help Desk at <https://leapfrogscore.zendesk.com>.

Letter grades will be published on the data review website on November 21.

Hospitals that received a Hospital Safety Score in June 2012 are urged to visit www.HospitalSafetyScore.org to print a copy of their grade and source data before it is removed from the website at the end of November.

Committee Debates Pricing, Quality Disclosure Bill

The Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee is considering a bill that would force Wyoming hospitals to publicly disclose more of their prices and quality-of-care statistics.

The free data would be posted on the Internet and include the standard charge for inpatient care, the standard charge for obstetric pa-

tients, prices for various procedures and the hospitals' infection rates.

Wyoming Hospital Association President Dan Perdue testified to the committee that the bill is unnecessary, since the WHA already sponsors a web site with price information, and quality information is available via the Hospital Compare

web site, among other sources.

The committee debated the bill draft during its meeting last week in Casper but put off a vote until its December meeting.

Supporters of the proposal say the idea is aimed at lowering health care costs by encouraging competition among the hospitals.