

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

WHA Board of Directors Meeting Casper	12/12
WHA Legislative Committee Meeting	12/19

Other Events:

Labor Committee Cheyenne	12/13-12/14
Wyoming Legislature Convenes	1/8

Kaiser Estimates Cost of Medicaid Expansion in Wyoming

According to a study released last week by the Kaiser Family Foundation, Medicaid changes from the Affordable Care Act could cost Wyoming \$204 million by 2022, while the feds could dump \$1.5 billion into a state expansion.

That represents a 4.1 percent spike in state funding to Medicaid and a 24.2 percent change in federal funding.

Under the ACA, states that undergo the optional Medicaid expansion will have full federal funding from 2014 to 2016, after which it will phase down to 90 percent funding of the expansion by 2020.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead has expressed concerns that even the 10 percent could be a lot for the state to bear.

Kaiser's numbers seem in line with state projections.

"If Wyoming expands Medicaid, our best estimate is that the state's share of additional Medicaid healthcare costs due to expansion will total \$131 million for state fiscal years 2014-2020," a state Medicaid study shows.

However, that is a best guess in a range of \$53 million to \$311 million over that same period due to considerable uncertainty.

The populations affected by the Medicaid expansion fall into three categories, two of which are not optional.

Those include a newly eligible group of children and what is referred to as the 'woodwork population': the group of people who are currently eligible for Medicaid but who are not enrolled. It is expected that they will enroll due to the coverage mandate.

The optional population would consist of adults who are currently uninsured and ineligible for Medicaid, but whose incomes fall below the federal poverty limit.

Others in this population include privately insured, low income adults who may lose or drop their private coverage.

Rep. Keith Gingery has said the optional expansion could draw in as many as 30,000 Wyoming residents, expanding the program by a full third and placing more than one in five residents on Medicaid.

The state has volleyed ideas like a sales tax rate increase to cover the expansion, though it hasn't committed at this point.

According to the state Medicaid study, the state has identified potential opportunities to offset the costs of the Medicaid expansion.

Such offsets include a \$4 million prescription drug assistance program which is currently fully funded by the state.

The report estimates that all of the members currently enrolled in the program would become eligible for Medicaid.

Other potential offsets include a shift of an estimated 1,000 children from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to Medicaid, and reductions in uncompensated care.

Uncompensated care results in higher state employee health premiums. A reduction in the number of uninsured people would be expected to bring down these costs.

Kaiser minimizes the cost of the expansion as a small budget increase compared to current spending.

"Our findings suggest that, by implementing the Medicaid expansion with other provisions of the ACA, states could significantly reduce the number of uninsured," the study states.

"Overall state costs of implementing the Medicaid expansion would be modest compared to non-ACA Medicaid spending and relative to increases in federal funds."

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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



Vickie Diamond

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

CRMC Patient Call-Back Program Highlighted Nationally

Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (CRMC) was one of more than 30 healthcare organizations selected to present at the "What's Right in Health Care" conference Oct. 10 – 12 in Nashville, Tenn.

Studer Group, a Florida-based firm that focuses on healthcare outcomes and improvement, sponsored the conference.

Presenting organizations had recently achieved out-

standing healthcare results in several areas, including increased patient safety and improved quality.

CRMC was the only hospital from the Rocky Mountain region to present at the conference.

The hospital started a patient call-back program in June 2011 that was highlighted in one of the conference's breakout sessions. A registered nurse calls every CRMC patient within 24 to

48 hours of being discharged from the hospital, or after receiving care as an outpatient or in the emergency department.

Cheryl Crumpton, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center's nursing system administrator for the call-back program, said that the program has saved lives. It helped find complications in patients that required attention right away, she said.

WMC CEO to Serve on American Hospital Association Board

In January 2013, Wyoming Medical Center CEO Vickie Diamond will begin a three-year term on the American Hospital Association (AHA) Board of Trustees.

Ms. Diamond is the first woman ever elected as chair for Region 8, which includes Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. She joins six other hospital executives from around the nation for this distinguished position.

"I am honored to serve as the next (Regional Policy Board) chair and mem-

ber of the Board of Trustees," Ms. Diamond said.

"As a longstanding member of the American Hospital Association and the first woman ever to chair Region 8, I understand the incredible value of such a nomination and the position it represents."

Known as a professional negotiator to her peers, Diamond will call on her ability to develop common ground and partnerships among individuals who have diverse experiences in healthcare.

She also brings a critical understanding of the deliv-

ery of healthcare in rural communities. Ms. Diamond oversees one of only two Level II trauma centers in the entire state, so she recognizes the importance of resource management and healthcare delivery in sparsely populated areas.

"I have a profound sense of admiration for the AHA and its mission to promote healthy individuals and communities," she said. "It is my belief in this mission that gives me a unique perspective in my approach to understanding healthcare in my state and around the nation."

Nurse-For-A-Day Volunteers Needed for Upcoming Session

The Wyoming Hospital Association is accepting volunteers for its annual Nurse-For-A-Day Program during the 2013 General Session of the legislature.

Volunteers are stationed in the Medical Aid Station on the third floor of the State Capitol building in Cheyenne during the session. Typically, they handle rou-

tine procedures such as taking blood pressures, or treating minor cold and flu complaints, headaches, and upset stomachs.

Nurses work in tandem with the Doctor-For-The-Day, a program sponsored by the Wyoming Medical Society.

Each morning, the nurse is introduced in both the

Senate and House chambers. And throughout the day, the nurse is encouraged to spend time with legislators from their home counties. The WHA is happy to help facilitate those introductions.

The session begins January 8. To volunteer for the program, contact Rose Fishback at (307) 632-9344, or rose@wyohospitals.com.