

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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November 9, 2012

WHA Calendar:

WHA Legislative Committee **11/27**

WHA Board of Directors Meeting Casper **12/12**

Other Events:

Joint Labor Health and Social Services **11/12-11/13**

Health Department Presents Budget Cut Proposals to JAC

Department of Health Director Tom Forslund presented a budget proposal on Thursday to the legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee that calls for a total of \$132 million in cuts through the 2015-2016 biennium.

Mr. Forslund was invited by the committee to present both his budget recommendations and the results of the third report from the Medicaid Options Study, which the legislature required the department to conduct. The study is an effort to identify cost drivers in the Medicaid program, as well as methods for containing those costs.

Mr. Forslund's recommendations would achieve the 4 percent cuts the department must make for fiscal year 2014, as well as the 8 percent cuts Governor Mead has asked all agencies to plan for the 2015-2016 biennium.

Proposed budget cuts primarily focus on the five most costly programs in the department: Medicaid, mental health and substance abuse, preschool services, the State Hospital in Evanston, and the Life Resource Center in Lander.

The most immediate round of cuts would trim some \$7.3 million from Medicaid, about \$4.7 million from mental health and sub-

stance abuse services, \$1.4 million from preschool services, \$1.3 million from the State Hospital, and \$1.4 million from the Life Resource Center.

Each of those programs would realize increasing cuts for the 2015-2016 biennium as well.

Other costly programs within the department would also see cuts. Those include public health nursing, the senior services board, senior care, information technology, maternal and family services, drug courts, the public health lab, and the tobacco prevention program.

Mr. Forslund told the committee that all budget cuts are based on values, and while all may not agree on those values, the department's budget proposal was guided by a series of such considerations.

Those values included the notion that every program within the department must be considered for potential services. Further, the department attempted to minimize the impact of cuts on safety net programs, on core services, and on programs that provide services to a broad population rather than a narrow population.

Mr. Forslund said the department also worked to minimize the impact of cuts on

provider groups that received significant cuts during the last round of budget reductions.

He said the recommendations attempted to minimize the impact on economically dependent provider groups, such as nursing homes, many of which depend on Medicaid and operate on very thin margins.

Finally, the budget proposal is an effort to reduce funding for those programs that have seen the greatest growth in recent years, and to reduce reimbursements to out-of-state providers.

In fiscal year 2011, Wyoming spent \$518.9 million on Medicaid, serving more than 77,000 recipients at a cost of \$6,720 per recipient.

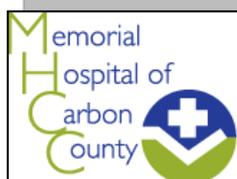
Within Medicaid, the department proposed cuts to physician reimbursement for OBGYN services. Across 22 obstetric procedure codes, Wyoming pays 235% of the regional average compared to Colorado, Montana, Idaho, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Utah, according to the budget document.

These rates were exempted from previous cuts under Gov. Dave Freudenthal. The department recommended reducing them now to bring them more in line with regional Medicaid rates.

No hospital-specific Medicaid cuts were recommended.

The budget recommendation is online at ww.health.wyo.gov.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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

WCAHN

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MHCC Department Delivers Get Well Cards

The Materials Department at Memorial Hospital of Carbon County has found a unique way to give back to its community: giving its own 'get well soon' cards to patients in its own hospital.

"We're the only hospital I know of that is doing this," said Derek Elliott, materials/purchasing manager for the hospital.

The cards are printed outside Elliott's office on the department's printer. Every day, Elliott and

Katharine Golden, materials technology handler, get a list of check-ins since the afternoon of the previous day and deliver the cards to new patients.

Elliott and Golden make the cards in their free time. The cards, which are printed on cardstock that was delivered to the department by mistake, feature a bear holding two balloons and a 'Get Well Soon' message outside and inside.

The idea was born during

a department meeting.

"Our department's behind the scenes, but how could we interact with patients to make their day a little brighter?" Elliott said. Elliott and Golden deliver up to seven or eight cards each day.

Making the cards costs only a few cents each, since they are printed on material that wouldn't otherwise be used. The cost to deliver them is paid 10 times over.

WCAHN Offers Community Needs Assessments to CAHs

The Wyoming Critical Access Hospital Network is partnering with the Wyoming Institute of Population Health and the Wyoming Office of Rural Health to provide comprehensive community needs assessments to critical access hospitals.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires all tax-exempt hospitals to work with their local department of health and other community partners to conduct the assessments every three years.

A comprehensive com-

munity needs assessment is a disciplined approach to collecting, analyzing, and using local data to identify barriers to the health and well-being of its residents.

The ACA is driving hospitals toward population health management by promoting and incenting prevention, quality and safety, and care coordination strategies.

The Wyoming Institute of Population Health, a division of Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, has developed an assessment that an American Hospital Associa-

tion committee has called "one of the best in the nation." The American Medical Association has also requested copies of the assessment to share with its members.

Through its partnership with the Office of Rural Health, the WCAHN will provide funding for critical access hospitals to collect the necessary data, conduct the assessment, and develop an ongoing health improvement action plan for their communities.

For more information, contact Steve Bahmer at steve@wyohospitals.com.

Health Department Releases Third Medicaid Options Report

During its 2012 session, the Wyoming Legislature passed legislation requiring the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) to conduct a Medicaid Options Study.

The study's first report provided an overview of the Wyoming Medicaid program including costs, comparative data and information on current cost con-

tainment efforts.

A second report provided detailed information and analysis on Medicaid costs and described numerous potential options for streamlining the program and controlling those costs.

The study's newly available third report offers WDH recommendations for reforms or redesign of Wyo-

oming Medicaid. Multiple packages of recommendations are included for three major areas within the program: healthcare services, long-term care services and developmental disability and acquired brain services.

The third "Medicaid Options Study" report can be found online at www.health.wyo.gov.