

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 42, Number 49

December 14, 2012

WHA Calendar:

WHA Legislative Committee Meeting **12/19**

Other Events:

Wyoming Legislature Convenes **1/8**

Legislators Vote to Support Hospital Reporting Bill

The Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee considered a bill for the second time last week that would require hospitals to publicly report cost and quality information online.

Meeting in Cheyenne for its final time during the interim, the committee wrestled with whether the bill is necessary, and if so, whether it was ready to be submitted to the full Legislature for debate. Committee members had heard the bill initially during their November meeting in Casper.

WHA President Dan Perdue reminded the committee during his testimony that the WHA launched its PricePoint web site nearly two years ago, and the site had received more than 150 hits in the last month.

Through Wyoming PricePoint, Wyoming hospitals voluntarily post online their charges for the most common inpatient procedures.

Because of that, Sen. Dan Dockstader, R-Afton, asked whether the bill was necessary.

"I represent one of the flagship rural healthcare facilities in the state," Sen. Dockstader said. "It seems like it's working now. They are updating the data," and there is no big push from the public for more information.

However, Anne Ladd of the Wyoming Business Coalition on Health, said there is currently no place business owners or consumers can go to get consolidated hospital cost and quality data.

Posting only pricing information will drive up healthcare costs, she said, because consumers tend to associate higher cost with better quality in healthcare and will therefore seek out the most expensive providers.



Mr. Perdue told the committee that hospitals already report tremendous amounts of quality information to various agencies, and all of that information is available to the public online already.

In fact, he said, Wyoming is one of few states in which all hospitals report quality data to NHSN and to Hospital Compare. Further, he said, the WHA is working with the Department of Health to publicly report the

data in more user-friendly ways.

"We have made great strides in quality reporting," Mr. Perdue said. "And we can continue to make strides. We should not stop. Our members favor transparency to help create more educated consumers of healthcare."

Following additional testimony from insurance carriers and Wyoming Medical Center, legislators debated the complexity of providing information to consumers that is truly useful – that gives consumers an idea of how much a particular procedure will actually cost them.

In addition to reporting cost information, Sen. Leslie Nutting, R-Cheyenne, said quality reporting should include patient risk factors, since providers who treat high-risk patients may not appear as favorably as providers who do not treat high-risk patients.

Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper, acknowledged the difficulty in devising a system that is clear, concise, and useful to the public.

"We have hit a fundamental issue with this bill, one that is worthy of considerable attention," he said.

The committee ultimately voted to support the bill, and it was scheduled to work on amendments during the final day of its meeting on Friday.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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



Jerry Klein

\$5.2M Cancer Grant to Improve Services in Cody

St. Vincent Healthcare, in collaboration with West Park Hospital, has announced that the St. Vincent Healthcare Foundation has received a \$5,254,322 grant from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

These funds will be used to expand the cancer services of the Big Horn Basin Regional Cancer Center located in Cody, Wyoming.

The funding received

from The Trust will be used for the purchase of a new linear accelerator and the building adaptations needed to allow its placement. New furnishings, electrical updates and HVAC installation are also expected to be completed.

The grant funds St. Vincent Healthcare and West Park Hospital teamed together to create Big Horn Basin Regional Cancer Center in January of 2012 con-

tinuing a tradition of successful partnership.

"We represent the sentiments of those in our community when we express our deep appreciation to The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and its trustees," said Doug McMillan, CEO, West Park Hospital. "Their generosity will make a significant impact in the lives of patients with cancer and their families."

Klein Elected to AHA Regional Policy Board 8

Jerry Klein has been elected as an American Hospital Association Section for Small or Rural Hospitals alternate delegate and member of the Regional Policy Board 8.

Mr. Klein is the CEO of Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County. He will serve on the AHA board from January 1, 2013 until December 31, 2015.

The AHA Regional Policy Boards meet to discuss policy issues and alternatives.

Their recommendations and analyses are used by the AHA Board in its policy deliberations.

Jerry Klein assumed his role of chief executive officer Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County on January 1, 2011.

Klein completed a master's of health services administration degree at University of St. Francis in Joliet, Ill., as well as a bachelor's degree in medical technology at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine in Omaha, Neb., and a bachelor's degree in pre-med at John. F. Kennedy College in Wahoo, Neb.

Regional Telehealth Conference Set

"Healthcare providers, patients, administrators and those who are interested in learning more about Telehealth will have an opportunity to meet and network at our annual conference," said Bob Wolverton, Program Director of the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center (NRTRC).

Conference Dates are March 18 – 20, 2013. The conference is structured to provide information and education to direct care providers, hospital administrators, patients and technical

staff members.

Speakers scheduled to appear include American Telemedicine Association President Stewart Ferguson, Nationally-recognized patient advocate Dave deBronkart, known as "e-Patient Dave," Nirav Desai of Hands On Telehealth, James Bush, MD, and a number of nationally- and regionally-know presenters in the two educational tracks, Technology and Administrative/Clinical.

NRTRC is a source of technical assistance, education and resources for Tele-

health providers throughout a seven-state region in the Northwestern United States.

"We do so much of our interaction electronically," said Wolverton, "but we felt that a chance to meet others who practice Telemedicine or who are interested in the discipline face-to-face would be valuable."

For further information, log on to the conference website, www.nrtrcconference.com or e-mail Martha@nrtrc.org.

**Wyoming Hospital
Association**

**2005 Warren Ave.
Cheyenne, WY
82001**

www.wyohospitals.com

307.632.9344