

# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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December 21, 2012

## WHA Calendar:

Wyoming  
Legislature  
Convenes **1/8**

## Other Events:

WyICN  
Membership  
Meeting **1/25**

Rural Healthcare  
Leadership  
Conference  
Phoenix, AZ **2/10-  
2/13**

## WHA Focuses on ACA, Quality, Education in 2012

In 2012, some of the answers the healthcare community had been waiting for were finally delivered.

In hindsight, though, it remains difficult to know whether those answers provided any real clarity regarding the impact of federal healthcare reform on Wyoming's providers, and on the delivery of healthcare in the state.

Perhaps the only real element of clarity arises from the Presidential election of 2012. With President Obama's re-election, and control of the Senate remaining with the Democrats, it is all but certain that implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will proceed as initially envisioned in the bill.

This came on the heels of a Supreme Court decision in June that upheld much of the ACA, and which left a significant element – the optional expansion of Medicaid – up to the states.

That potential expansion, among other issues, vexed state lawmakers until the very end of the year. In November, Gov. Matt Mead opted not to expand Medicaid coverage in Wyoming to the optional adult population.

The Governor's decision was driven, at least in part, by the failure of the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services to answer questions relating to the implementation of the ACA.

Additionally, however, Gov. Mead shared many others' concerns about the federal government's ability to deliver on its promise to increase funding for Medicaid, especially as the nation careens toward the 'fiscal cliff.'

Meanwhile, the Department of Health spent the spring and summer of 2012 executing a legislatively mandated study of options for controlling costs in Medicaid. The Medicaid Cost Study and the Medicaid Options Study combined to examine the cost drivers in Medicaid, and to develop 122 options for reforming the program.

The Wyoming Hospital Association played a central role in all of these efforts – consulting with the Governor on the expansion of Medicaid, and ensuring a seat at the table for member hospitals during deliberations about Medicaid reforms.

Additionally, the WHA lobbied hard on behalf of Wyoming's hospitals, in particular to help resolve a \$37.7 million shortfall in Medicaid funding that resulted from expiration of enhanced federal Medicaid dollars.

Ultimately, following a concerted lobbying effort by the WHA and other health associations, lawmakers forged a deal that restored the \$37.7 million and maintained funding levels for the first year of the biennium.

The WHA also worked with Rep. Dave Bonner, R-Powell, to extend the Critical Access/Rural Hospital Endowment Challenge Program, which provides grants to Wyoming's small rural hospitals.

Rep. Bonner's bill extended the program for two more years and reserved \$1.5 million of the originally appropriated \$4 million for the extension of the program.

Continuing its commitment to helping members deliver the highest possible quality care, the WHA also worked with members on the Central Line Infection Project – an effort aimed at eliminating all hospital acquired infections. Further, the WHA led an ongoing patient safety effort through the Partnership for Patients/Hospital Engagement Network project.

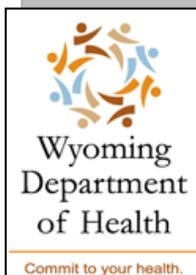
In addition to its advocacy and quality efforts in 2012, the WHA continued the development of a trustee certification program, creating a Trustee Education Council to help select a standard training platform for the program.



## 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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## Wyoming Health Medical Group Achieves Level 2 Recognition

Having met the required standards for a Patient-Centered Medical Home™ (PCMH) practice, Wyoming Health Medical Group (WHMG), a subsidiary of Wyoming Medical Center, recently received national Level 2 Recognition for its efforts from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

This is the first such recognition in the state of Wyoming and the first such recognition for WHMG, which began gathering

PCMH data from one of its physician practices, Sage Primary Care, in April 2011.

The six standards reviewed under the PCMH model of care are: (1) enhance access and continuity, (2) identify and manage patient population, (3) plan and manage care, (4) provide self-care support and community resources, (5) track and coordinate care, and (6) measure and improve performance.

The level of recognition achieved by WHMG was

dependent upon the number of points it scored for these standards.

According to the NCQA, the PCMH model is one in which patients have a direct relationship with their physicians who, along with other healthcare professionals, provide a coordinated approach to healthcare delivery.

This process ultimately increases continuity of care for the patient and supports quality practices among the patient's healthcare team.

## Report Describes Potential Medicaid Expansion Impacts

Expanding Wyoming Medicaid as encouraged by the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) could reduce the number of uninsured residents and save more than \$47 million in state budget funds over six years, according to a new Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) report.

The WDH report described both positive and negative impacts of expanding Medicaid in Wyoming.

On the positive side,

reducing the uninsured rate could help more Wyoming residents gain healthcare services and could also support the state's healthcare providers by reducing the amount of uncompensated care they now must cover.

Potential negative impacts of expansion included potential healthcare provider shortages and uncertainty about the federal deficit's effect on future federal funding.

The net cost to the state

of covering the mandatory groups is estimated by consulting group Milliman to be \$79.4 million for state fiscal years 2014-20 with an additional 10,600 Wyoming individuals expected to enroll in Medicaid by 2016.

Figures contained in the new report, as well as those in other ACA-related reports, are estimated and based on the best-available data and analysis.

The report is available online at [www.health.wyo.gov](http://www.health.wyo.gov).

## 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](mailto:rose@wyohospitals.com).