

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 46, Number 6

February 13, 2015

WHA Calendar:

2015 General Session of the Wyoming Legislature Cheyenne	1/13-3/6
WHA Trustee Education Riverton	5/21

Other Events:

HFMA Conference Casper	3/18-3/20
AHA Annual Meeting Washington, DC	5/3-5/6
National Nurses Week	5/6-5/12

Hospitals May Share \$5M for Unpaid Bills

Wyoming Tribune Eagle

The state Senate gave its final approval to a bill that would provide some relief to hospitals across the state that are dealing with the costs of providing care to those who can't pay.

Senate File 145 passed Wednesday morning by a vote of 19-11. Supporters argued the bill would provide a temporary stop-gap solution, particularly for the state's rural critical-access hospitals, some of which are facing closure due to the burden of these costs.

"They're desperate, and when you're desperate for a drink of water, you'll take a cup or the whole gallon, whatever you can get," said Sen. Jim D. Anderson, R-Glenrock. "Yes, this is a one-time appropriation, a one-time shot. But it buys some time for these people who are in desperate straits, which we can then figure something else out."

Opponents argued that the \$5 million appropriation in the bill placed too big a strain on the state budget and still wouldn't do enough to address the ongoing problem hospitals are facing. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Tony Ross, R-Cheyenne, said passage of SF 145 would only result in the Senate coming back next year to discuss the same

problem.

"Mark my words, folks. You will be back, and we'll be picking winners and losers," Ross said. "While we all want to help these hospitals, this is not the vehicle to do it. And by doing it, you're taking our budget underwater."

Sen. Michael Von Flatern, R-Gillette, as a strong proponent of Medicaid Expansion agreed, saying the \$5 million appropriation was a "very small Band-Aid" for a gargantuan problem. Sen. Chris Rothfuss, D-Laramie, said the problem of uncompensated care "didn't sneak up" on the Senate, and just throwing money at it wouldn't make it go away.

"There are much, much better ways we could accomplish this; we could have accomplished this if we had diligently worked on it," Rothfuss said. "This is not enough money to actually make a difference as to a solution to the problem, and we do have higher priorities, in my view, in terms of expenditures for the state."

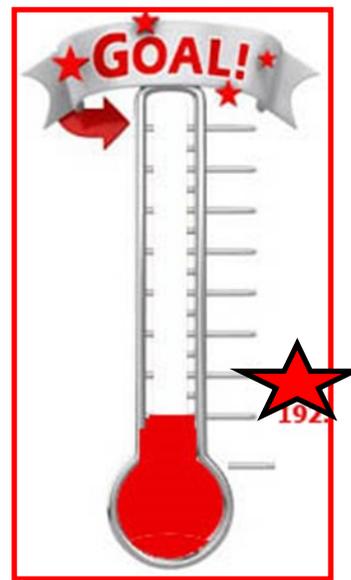
Sen. Bruce Burns, R-Sheridan, maintained his objection that the bill is unfair to certain smaller hospitals. As it stands, two-thirds of the \$5 million appropriation would be divvied out to critical-access hospitals, which carry fewer than 25

beds.

Burns offered an amendment changing that portion of the appropriation to cover hospitals with fewer than 100 beds.

Burns argued that while the state's three biggest hospitals have resources in place to better weather the costs of uncompensated care, smaller hospitals like Sheridan's do not, and they don't fit the criteria for critical-access hospitals.

Burns said his amendment would ensure that smaller non-critical-access hospitals get the help they need; but the amendment was defeated on a voice vote.



Help us reach our PAC goal of \$8,200. For more information, contact the WHA

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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



Dana Barnett

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WBI Offering Outpatient Mental Health Services

Wyoming Behavioral Institute is now offering adult outpatient mental health services at 2546 E. 2nd St., Suite 600, Casper, Wyoming.

For individual therapy or medication management appointments, call (307) 337-4560. Group therapy is also available.

Group therapy is for adults transitioning out of inpatient treatment, or in need of more than individual therapy. Groups are scheduled between 4 and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Group options include

- Anger Management
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Relapse Prevention

- Illness Management and Recovery
- Gender Specific Groups
- Process Group
- Family Education Group

For more information or to get group admission information, call (307) 337-4560.

Barnett Named CEO at Rawlins Hospital

Memorial Hospital of Carbon County has named Dana Barnett their new CEO.

After his first full week on the job, Dana has met with board members, physicians and hospital staff to identify the needs of the more than 40 year old facility.

“It’s all about getting to know our people and understand what the issues are, Barnett said. “Our mission statement is to be one of the best small hospitals in the

country. I’ve asked our employees if they really felt that we could achieve that. I received an enthusiastic position response. Everyone is dedicated to providing high quality health care here.”

Barnett brings to Carbon County many years of hospital administration experience.

Prior to accepting the job, Barnett was the director of regional development at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center for the past decade. He has also worked for Ban-

ner Health in many capacities, including administrator of three rural hospitals.

Faced with the need to turn around public perception of the hospital, an ever-changing regulatory atmosphere, retraining physicians and facility maintenance issues, Barnett realizes the road ahead will be long, yet there is nothing that cannot be mended, he added.

Barnett also plans to improve the recruitment and retention of physicians.

AHA Annual Meeting May 3-6, 2015

The American Hospital Association Annual Membership Meeting will be held May 3-6, 2015 at the Washington Hilton, Washington, DC.

As always, the AHA Annual Meeting has an impressive lineup of speakers and educational programs scheduled for the Meeting.

During Tuesday morning's plenary, a special panel will discuss one of the hot topics of the day -

the implications of the Supreme Court's imminent decision on challenges to health insurance subsidies provided through the Affordable Care Act.

The panel will include Michael Leavitt, former governor of Utah and former secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services; Joseph Swedish, president and CEO of Anthem, Inc., one of the nation's largest health benefits providers serving 37 million people;

and Kaiser Health News Senior Correspondent Julie Rovner.

The Wyoming Hospital Association staff will be taking our members to visit with the Wyoming Congressional delegation for the Capitol Hill Visits on Wednesday, May 6th.

Registration information can be found online at www.aha.org or you can call 1-805-290-1336.