



NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 47, Number 7

February 26, 2016

WHA Calendar:

WHA Board of Directors Meeting
Cody, WY

5/18

WHA CEO/Trustee Educational Program
Cody, WY

5/19

Other Events:

Legislature Convenes

2/8

LeadingAge Wyoming Spring Meeting
Cody, WY

5/17-5/18

Legislature Votes Down Medicaid Expansion

Wyoming Business Report

For the fourth year in a row, the Legislature has rejected extending Medicaid coverage to 20,000 low-income Wyomingites.

The state Senate voted 20-10 against on an amendment to the 2017-18 biennial budget bill that would have restored about \$268 million in federal Medicaid expansion funding.

A subsequent amendment, which called for spending extra state funds to boost other health programs in addition to accepting the expansion, was rejected on a 19-11 vote.

Yet another amendment was introduced several hours later, this one authorizing the director of the Department of Health, the state insurance commissioner and the governor to negotiate with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a state plan amendment to expand Medicaid services. It failed on a vote of 21-9.

Most debate focused on the first amendment, and hewed closely to testimony from previous sessions, with many of the same voices making the same arguments. Sen. Bernadine Craft, D-Rock Springs, acknowledged that as she introduced the amendment.

"There's really not much that hasn't been said," Craft said. "You've already heard from diverse citizens from all

over the state. I know you've all heard from the 36 groups coming from all facets of Wyoming society that support expansion."

And, as he has for the last three years, Sen. Charles Scott, R-Casper, led the opposition to expansion. Scott referenced a study of Oregon's Medicaid expansion that he said found that health outcomes had not improved in a way that was statistically significant.

One notable difference in this year's debate was Sen. Tony Ross, R-Cheyenne, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Ross said he has opposed Medicaid expansion since it was first proposed in Wyoming. But having looked at the potential savings and compared them to the state's massive looming budget shortfalls, Ross said he was finally convinced expansion was the sound thing to do.

"We came into this session with guiding principles about reducing our state's structural deficit," Ross said, adding that Medicaid expansion effectively would accomplish that, providing a net savings of \$33.4 million to the state's general fund over the next two years.

"I truly believe that's what caused me to change my

mind," Ross added. "The thing that caused me mostly to go that way is that it's in the budget itself (as proposed by Gov. Matt Mead), and it's only here for two years at best.

Eric Boley with the Wyoming Hospital Association said that as much as struggling hospitals stood to gain from Medicaid expansion, ultimately it wasn't hospitals that legislators should make their first priority.

"It's not just about hospitals; it's about coverage for those in our state who need help," Boley said. "We're not going to give up though. Expansion is the right answer for Wyoming."

Boley suggested that, even if the next president were to take such a stance, he doesn't see repeal of the act happening, given what it has already accomplished for so many Americans.

"I think that's the biggest misconception and fallacy out there," Boley said. "They're going to have to come up with a replacement for it, and a lot of the programs that it put in place are already so powerful and so important, there's no way they can actually think it's going to be repealed whole meal and start from scratch. "The Affordable Care Act is here to stay."



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

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South Big Horn County Hospital Unveils New Expansion

South Big Horn County Hospital District has officially opened its new expansion to patients.

Interim CEO Margie Molitor said the new facility is up and running and ready for patients.

Molitor has been working as interim administrator, taking over for longtime administrator Jackie Claudson who remains hospitalized in Denver.

According to Molitor, the new expansion has six hospital rooms and a capacity of approximately 10.

One of the new features of the expansion is a brand new emergency room and an upgraded trauma room.

The hospital also has a new decontamination room.

Before the decontamination room was built, a tent was used which took about 20 minutes to set up.

Having more rooms is seen through the rest of the expansion as well with an upgraded, state-of-the-art kitchen, where meals for the entire facility will be prepared.

"It's here," Molitor said. "A lot of people don't realize there is this great facility right here. This is a perfect example of what a hospital district can do for you."

Help for Wyoming's Caregivers

A little help or rest may be available for Wyoming residents who care for loved ones, family members or friends on an ongoing basis through a program offered by the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH).

"Ongoing caregiving can lead to emotional, physical and financial burdens. For example, many caregivers also work outside the home and must juggle their caregiving responsibilities with their work obligations.

The National Family

Caregiver Support Program helps adults who are caregivers for loved ones or friends 60 or older or for someone who has Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia condition of any age. In Wyoming, program services are available in all counties except Albany, Crook, Platte, Sublette and Weston. Support is also available in Laramie and Sheridan counties for grandparents or other family member caregivers 55 or older who find themselves

raising their grandchildren 17 years of age or younger or helping an adult with a disability.

For more information about the National Family Caregiver Support Program, please contact the WDH Aging Division's Community Living Section by calling 1-800-442-2766 or sending an email to wyaging@wyo.gov. The Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC) also has resources for caregivers; please call 1-877-435-7851.

Flower Used to Raise Awareness

Each Spring, the first flower to bloom is the daffodil.

This is just one of the many reasons why the American Cancer Society has picked this particular flower as it symbol of hope.

What has been called Daffodil Days is also the American Cancer Society's first big fundraiser of the

year.

Daffodil Days is also about getting the word out to those who have been diagnosed with cancer. The ACS's website www.cancer.org is a great source for information for the ACS's programs and services.

For example, those who have recently been diagnosed with cancer can find

out more about the kind of cancer they have in terminology then can understand.

