



# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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## WHA Calendar:

WHA Board of  
Directors  
Meeting  
Cody, WY

5/18

WHA CEO/  
Trustee  
Educational  
Program  
Cody, WY

5/19

## Other Events:

Infection  
Prevention  
Conference  
Casper

4/19-  
4/20

Labor, Health  
& Social Ser-  
vices Interim  
Meeting  
Casper

4/28-  
4/29

LeadingAge  
Wyoming  
Spring Meeting  
Cody, WY

5/17-  
5/18

## Powell, Cody and Lovell Hospitals Work Together Powell Tribune

This is a tough time for rural hospitals.

Doug McMillan, chief executive officer at West Park Hospital in Cody, said more than 100 rural hospitals have closed in the past 10 years.

McMillan said it's important for both West Park and Powell Valley Hospital to remain strong. If one were to fail, "it would jeopardize the other hospital's ability to maintain its hospital's critical access status, and that's very important," he said.

Critical access hospitals — hospitals with 25 or fewer beds — are reimbursed by Medicare at a higher rate than their larger counterparts.

To remain strong in today's difficult medical environment, both of Park County's hospitals work together when possible, McMillan said.

"We talk about our organization and Powell Valley Healthcare, the importance of both of our organizations working together," he said.

"Historically, we've had a great relationship with being able to work together" to help both hospitals operate more cost efficiently, he said.

For instance, Dr. Nathaniel Rieb, the general surgeon at Powell Valley Hospital, rotates with the two surgeons from West Park Hospital, Dr. Thomas Etter and Dr. Charlie

Welch, together to cover on-call hours at both hospitals.

"We have three general surgeons between Cody and Powell, and the two hospitals work together to ensure that we have full coverage that covers both hospitals," McMillan said.

Locums, or traveling surgeons, cover the fourth week, and both hospitals share that cost, said Terry Odom, interim chief executive officer for Powell Valley Healthcare. In addition, "Doug and I collaborate occasionally about things we can do," Odom said. McMillan said, "I think a lot of our managers work with each other and speak closely with each other, addressing how they can work together."

Powell Valley Healthcare also works cooperatively with North Big Horn Hospital in Lovell and Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital in Thermopolis by providing a pharmacist on a weekly basis.

A PVHC pharmacist helps out at North Big Horn Hospital three mornings each week. Another pharmacist visits Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital twice per week.

"Doctors would tell you it's been helpful to have a pharmacist from Powell," said Rick Schroeder, chief executive officer at North Big Horn Hospital.

PVHC Pharmacist Gareth Robertson said he's the one who helps out in Lovell when he's on duty.

Robertson said another way the three hospitals cooperate is by ordering expensive medications together.

By ordering it as a group, the cost is reduced and the medication can be shared between the hospitals, making it less likely that it will expire before it can be used, he said.

Schroeder said both hospitals occasionally find themselves short of a medical supply, "some little item that we run out of, when we have a higher volume than we thought or run out of materials. We call on Powell, and they call on us from time to time" to provide supplies until replacement items arrive.

"We're competitors ... in the same business, but really, I feel like we're more colleagues, doing the same thing," Schroeder said. "We recognized that we all do better when we're all here."

"Overall though, "If the hospitals can more effectively work together, they're going to provide better health care and hopefully at a better cost for everyone at Park County," McMillan said. "It's important for both hospitals in Park County to not only survive, but thrive."



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



**Phyllis Sherard**

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## Sheridan Hospital Auxiliary Donates \$50,000 to Hospital

The Sheridan Memorial Hospital Auxiliary presented donations totaling \$50,000 to the hospital.

With the gift, the Auxiliary has given nearly \$550,000 in total since 1991.

The auxiliary board voted to provide the funds to the Intensive Care Unit ex-

pansion project which is currently underway.

The Hospital's ICU Manager Robin Horsley and Chief Nursing Officer Charlotte Mather were also on hand to accept the gift.

Approximately \$5,000 was generated through the auxiliary's annual Christmas

Trees of Love Project, and the remaining \$45,000 came from the Kozy Korner Gift Shop proceeds.

According to Hanebrink, the auxiliary will be recognized with a plaque in the new ICU family waiting area.

## Phyllis Sherard Highlighted in Becker's Hospital Review

Becker's Hospital Review, an industry trade publication for healthcare leaders, recently asked a healthcare leader from each state to discuss the most pressing population health concerns facing their patients and health systems and what is being done to address those concerns.

The spokesperson selected for the state of Wyoming was Phyllis Sherard, PhD, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center's Chief Strategy Officer and Vice President of Population Health.

Dr. Sherard was quoted as saying: "As public and commercial payer expectations for well-managed care

are rapidly tightening, we recognize the need to prepare for the inevitable 'demand destruction' that is already beginning to be felt on hospital margins still dependent on inpatient volumes. Well-managed populations in the new era will receive more primary care and thus will need fewer emergency department visits, and effective care management and care transitions are already reducing hospital readmissions. Managing our costs is a very high priority.

"Becoming well-prepared, both strategically and operationally, to execute and manage risk-based populations heads the top of our

'must-do list.' Optimization of our clinical practices and implementation of population health management strategies are imperative if we are to succeed with alternate payment models.

"When you couple operating a nonprofit hospital in a state that has not expanded Medicaid, we are increasingly seeing our competitive advantage go to health systems in contiguous states that did expand Medicaid and have been able to invest charity care dollars into infrastructure improvement and technology, and even into growing their physician networks."

## Western Region Flex Conference

The Western Region Flex Conference is scheduled for June 8-10 in Tucson, Arizona.

Break out sessions include Medicare Reimbursement Updates, Emergency Department Transfer Communication, Increasing Specialty Care Access for Rural Patients, Project ECHO, and many more.

The Western Region Flex Conference will be held at The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain—located northwest of Tucson in the scenic town of Maran. It is nestled in the high Sonoran desert in the foots of the Torolita mountains.

The room block expires May 6th so you are encouraged to make accommodations now.

Reservations can be made by calling 800-686-2747 and mention the 14th Annual Western Region Flex Conference to receive the discounted room rate.

For additional information on the conference, please contact Jordan Baker Friend at 775-784-4791.