

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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WHA Calendar:

Healthcare Leadership Training **6/7**

Other Events:

Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee Meeting Casper **6/4-6/5**

Western Regional Trustee Symposium Utah **6/5-6/7**

NE Wyoming Skin and Wound Symposium Sheridan **6/7-6/8**

Wyoming Medical Society Meeting Laramie **6/7-6/9**

ACA Provision Protects Young Adults & Hospitals, Study Says

An Affordable Care Act provision has shielded thousands of young U.S. adults and their families from millions of dollars in treatment costs for serious medical emergencies, a new study shows.

Starting in September 2010, federal health care reform has required private health plans to cover young adults up to age 25 under their parents' insurance.

More than 22,000 cases of emergency hospital treatment in 2011 involving young adults aged 19 to 25 received coverage under private plans due to the expansion, the study found. The coverage protected patients and parents from an estimated \$147 million in hospital charges.

The study was published in the May 30 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"Without this provision, they'd be facing hospital bills," said study author Andrew Mulcahy, a health policy researcher at RAND Health, a nonprofit research organization. "Their family might be on the hook for it. If they can't pay, as a last resort, the hospital might have to eat the cost and write it off.

Ultimately, in some states, the taxpayers are on the hook because the state chips in and tries to compensate hospitals

for care that is uncompensated."

The study also noted that the provision increased health insurance rates about 3 percent among the young adults who sought emergency treatment.

In the study, researchers examined details about emergency medical care provided to adults aged 19 to 31 at 392 hospitals from 2008 through 2011.

The study focused on injuries so severe that the young adults would have to receive emergency treatment regardless of insurance coverage, including broken bones and head injuries.

"We were very careful in looking at the most serious conditions -- conditions so serious you have to go to the ER for treatment," Mulcahy said. "This study is about real-world impact and a very direct test of whether the provision is improving financial protection."

Those sorts of injuries accounted for about 6 percent of emergency department visits by young adults, the researchers concluded.

The research team then compared the coverage of those aged 19 to 25 to patients aged 26 to 31, who were unaffected by the new health care law. That way, they could rule out other

trends that might have affected the subjects' insurance coverage.

"We found that the provision resulted in increased financial protection for young adults and the hospitals who provided care for these patients," Mulcahy concluded. "We're careful to say it didn't result in additional visits. It's a shift. The provision didn't lead to more people going to the ER. They would have gone without this provision, but they would have been uninsured."

However, the RAND study's focus on nondiscretionary hospital treatment raises more questions than answers, said health economist Devon Herrick, a senior fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis, a free-market think tank headquartered in Dallas.

"RAND is touting the financial protection provided by the Affordable Care Act, but then they say only 6 percent of these visits fall under the category of nondiscretionary," Herrick said. "The other 94 percent, to me, is the more interesting story. Are we wasting money on discretionary emergency room treatment? Are they going to the ER for trivial things that would better be left with them covering the cost rather than using their insurance?"



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



CRMC's MyChart Gives Patients Access to Medical Records

Patients at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center with access to a computer can now view their health records online through a new system called MyChart.

The new service is part of the hospital's recent conversion to an electronic medical records system by Epic.

MyChart is available to patients treated at CRMC in the last two years. Patients whose doctors work at hospital-owned clinics can also access their last two years' worth of data.

The system gives patients a view of most of their medical records, including blood test results and other exams. It also offers patients information about current health issues and summaries of care from previous admissions.

Additionally, patients can access their children's records, including immunization records and growth charts.

"The big part of it is having more access to your own health records," said Tina

Nelson, CRMC's coordinator for MyChart. "It's being in control of your medical care by having immediate access to your chart."

Patients can use MyChart to request appointments with doctors and to refill prescriptions.

"You're taking charge of yourself with your doctor's office," Nelson said.

The system can also improve communication by enabling patients to send messages to their doctors' offices using MyChart.

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

WyGEC Cognitive Health Workshop – June 7th

The Wyoming Geriatric Education Center (WyGEC), in conjunction with the St. John's Institute for Cognitive Health is pleased to be hosting an engaging workshop Friday, June 7th in Jackson.

This workshop is intended for health professionals of all disciplines, as well as caregivers of patients with various aspects of memory loss.

The program will feature David Knopman, MD,

a leading physician with the Mayo Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and Martha Stern, M.D., as the Founding Director of the St. John's Institute and it's local efforts towards advancing the treatment and care for patients with cognitive and memory disorders.

Carol Taylor, LCSW, serving as the geriatric social worker with the Institute, will discuss common stress factors involved in the dementia cycle.

In addition, University of Wyoming's leading faculty PharmD, Tonya Woods, will present care considerations involving current pharmacologic therapies.

Professional staffs, as well as family caregivers, are all encouraged to attend this educational opportunity provided by the WyGEC and the St. John's Institute.

For more information, visit www.cognitive.tetonhospital.org or call 307 203-2454.

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Nominations Being Accepted for Nursing Award

In 1983, the Wyoming Hospital Association Board of Directors, in honor and memory of Norm Holt, established the Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence due to his tremendous understanding and active involvement with the nursing profession.

The award is presented annually at the Wyoming Hospital Association Convention to honor one out-

standing nurse in Wyoming.

Each Wyoming hospital is allowed to submit one candidate per year. The individual institution is responsible for determining its own method of nominating and selecting the candidate who will be submitted for further consideration.

Final selection is determined by the WONE Board, and the WHA Board of Directors. It is imperative to

remember that every R.N. and L.P.N., regardless of position, should be considered an eligible candidate provided he/she meets the award criteria as shown on the application form.

All applications for this year's award must be received no later than July 1, 2013.

For more information, contact WHA at 307-632-9344.