

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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June 29, 2012

WHA Calendar:

WHA Board of Directors Meeting
Casper, WY **7/16**

WCAHN Meeting
Casper, WY **7/16**

Annual Meeting & Convention
Little America
Cheyenne **9/26-9/27**

Other Events:

Wyoming Quality Conference
Lander, WY **8/22-8/23**

Mid America Summit
Des Moines, IA **9/5-9/7**

Supreme Court Rules on ACA

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's individual mandate and Medicaid expansion are constitutional.

But the court struck down a provision that allowed Congress to take all Medicaid funds from a state that refuses to participate in the Medicaid expansion.

States that participate in the Medicaid expansion would receive federal financial support that is outlined in the ACA.

The court's 5-4 decision allowed the individual mandate to stand as a tax under Congress' taxing power, and means the hundreds of other provisions in the statute also stand.

"Today's historic decision lifts a heavy burden from millions of Americans who need access to health coverage," AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock said last week. "The promise of coverage can now become a reality. The decision means that hospitals now have much-needed clarity to continue on their path toward transformation."

Though the court's decision answers many questions about key components of the law, it raises numerous others.

For example, without the threat of punishment from the ACA, some analysts wonder whether states will choose not to participate in the Medicaid expansion.

Indeed, it was difficult for some last week to imagine states with Republican governors who joined in a multi-state challenge of the ACA moving forward with the Medicaid expansion, now that penalties have been removed.

Meanwhile, implementation of other features of the bill will move ahead. The year 2014 is the deadline for most Americans to purchase insurance.

Failure to obtain insurance in 2014 will cost a person \$95 or 1% of his or her income, whichever is higher. In 2015, that figure jumps to \$325, or 2% of income. For families, the penalty will be \$285 per household or 1% of income, whichever is greater.

By 2016, the per-family cost goes up to \$2,085 per family or 2.5% of income.

Hospitals offered a mixed response to the Supreme Court's ruling. From a purely financial standpoint, the ACA would result in greater rates of insurance coverage, reducing the pressures of uninsured patients, bad debt and charity care.

On the other hand, expanded coverage is funded, in part, by reduced Medicare reimbursements over the next decade.

In a statement released last week, AHA President Umbdenstock said the ruling provides hospitals with some clarity.

"But transforming the delivery of healthcare will take much more than the strike of a gavel or stroke of a pen," he said. "It calls for the entire healthcare community to continue to work together, along with patients and purchasers, to implement better coordinated, high-quality care."

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) announced just hours after the ruling that a vote to repeal the entire ACA had been scheduled in the U.S. House of Representatives for July 11.

ICD-10 Training

Last chance to register for ICD-10 Training

Must register by: July 11, 2012

Contact WHA at 307-632-9344 or jody@wyohospitals.com

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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SVMC Hosts Scrubs Camp for Local Students

Eighth grade students from Star Valley Middle School recently took part in the first annual Star Valley Medical Center Scrubs Camp.

The camp is designed to give area youth a chance to learn more about careers in the healthcare profession.

"The idea comes from the REACH program funded and sponsored by the Wyoming Department of Health," said Mike Hunsaker, vice president of support services at Star Valley Medical Center.

"The overall purpose of

the Program is to increase awareness, interest, and understanding of health careers available in rural Wyoming through creative and interactive activities."

According to Hunsaker, informing young people about career options in health care is necessary to help meet future healthcare needs.

"SVMC has placed importance on this program due to the need for qualified healthcare professionals in our community and at SVMC," he said.

"We need to fill the pipe-

line with young people who have an interest in healthcare so when they get to high school and college they can be more focused on a rewarding career path that has great job demand throughout the country."

As part of the Scrubs Camp, the students spent time in the EMS Department, the Physician's Clinic, the Med/Surgical Department, the Dietary Department, the Pharmacy and the Radiology and Lab Departments. They also spent time in the care center.

Long-time QIO Chief Executive Retires

After three decades at its helm, Janice Connors has retired from her position as chief executive officer (CEO) at Mountain-Pacific Quality Health.

Connors has been with Mountain-Pacific since 1974, and has served as its CEO since 1982. Her final day at Mountain-Pacific was June 5, 2012.

"Working in health care to improve patient safety and the quality of care with providers and practitioners across four states and three

territories was a perfect job," says Connors. "I will surely miss it and thank all the bright and talented people who contributed to our work and the organization's success since the beginning of Mountain-Pacific in 1973."

Under Connors' leadership, Mountain-Pacific has grown from its Montana beginnings, providing quality improvement consultation and review services to providing services in Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii,

American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. Her departure has been noted by national health and political leaders, including Montana Senator Max Baucus.

"Janice led from the front, never asking her staff to work harder than she did," says Sara Medley, shared services director, who will step in as co-interim CEO along with Christine Wall, chief financial officer, until a new CEO is hired.

Homeland Security to Offer Webinar on WyoLink

A webinar scheduled for July will help Wyoming's hospitals understand the WyoLink system and the benefits it offers them.

The webinar is set for 10 a.m. on July 10, and will be presented by Bob Symons, statewide interoperable coordinator for the Wyo-

oming Office of Homeland Security's Public Safety Communications Commission.

WyoLink is a public safety communications system designed to coordinate and integrate communications among state, local, and federal public safety agencies.

A link to the webinar will be provided upon receipt of an email indicating you would like to participate.

Deadline to pre-register is July 5, 2012. With questions, or to register for this webinar, contact mer-it.thomas@wyo.gov.