

# NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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December 2, 2016

## WHA Calendar:

<b>WHA Board Meeting</b>	12/16

## Other Events:

<b>Joint Labor Health &amp; Social Services Committee Cheyenne</b>	12/12-12-13

## President's Message

As the year begins to wind down and the final committee hearings are taking place, I thought this would be a good opportunity to give the membership and update. Also, with the recent election being completed there has been significant turnover and changes to many of the different committees and particularly to the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee.

The new Joint Labor Committee consists of Senate Chairman Scott and Senators Baldwin, Boner, Bouchard and Peterson. The House Chairman is Representative Barlow with Representatives Clem, Dayton, Gierau, Hallinan, Halverson, Kroeker, Lone and Sweeney as the rest of the committee.

I can't express how important it is that you get to know your legislators and invite them into your facilities. They will listen to you more than me and having a relationship with them year round is very important. Show them what you are doing in your communities. Let them see your successes and also explain to them the challenges you are facing. There is a tremendous amount of turnover on this committee and you can do a great deal to educate and inform the new committee members.

As far as legislative activity is concerned....Many of

you are aware that there was a legislative task force formed to look at special districts within the state. The task force took a look at all 670 special districts, which included the 15 hospital districts. I have attended three task force meetings and two Joint Corporation Committee hearings during the last several months.

The final JCC hearing was held last week and I am happy to report that the WHA was successful in exempting hospital districts from the special district budget bill that will be up for consideration during the legislative session. In addition, we testified against the dissolution bill and the JCC decided not to advance that bill for consideration during the upcoming session. In addition, the JCC voted not to recommend that the task force be continued for another year.

With that said, I will tell you that I guaranteed to the JCC that if county commissioners in any of the hospital districts requested a meeting with our hospitals to discuss budgets or any other issues, we would willingly meet with them. I promised them that we wanted to have a good working relationship with the county commissioners and that there was no reason to pass a bill to require us to meet with county commissioners.....we would do it

willingly. I believe we have some of the smartest and most capable CFOs in the state and the country and that we also have statutes on the books, along with internal processes that address our budgeting requirements and that we are all very compliant with existing rules and regulations. I also assured the JCC that we take all rules, regulations and statutes seriously and we strive to be compliant to all such requirements. I would like to thank those of you that reached out to the members of the task force and the JCC to help them make what I think is a very educated decision.

Finally, I will be presenting a bill at the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee hearing later in December that will allow the EMT Licensure Compact within our state. Extensive time and effort have been spent with the State EMS, the State AG, the LSO and the WHA to address any concerns and to put together a bill that can be defended on the floor of the legislature. I am very optimistic that we have addressed all the concerns of Chairman Scott and that we will have a committee bill ready for the session. Once again, I encourage all of you to reach out to your legislators and let them know that we are collectively supportive of this bill and would like it passed.



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

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## Banner Health's Wyoming Hospital Receive Awards

Banner Health's three Wyoming hospitals have been recognized by iVantage Health Analytics and the National Organization of State Office of Rural Health for overall Excellence in Quality reflecting top performance among all rural acute care hospital in the nation.

Community Hospital in Torrington, Platte County Memorial Hospi-

tal in Wheatland and Washakie Medical Center in Worland were three of four Wyoming hospitals recognized. The fourth was Memorial Hospital of Converse County in Douglas.

In addition, Community Hospital and Platte County Memorial Hospital were recognized for Excellence in Patient Satisfaction. Community Hospital received honors for Excellence in Financial Strength as well.

These rankings have been determined by the Hospital Strength INDEX, a comprehensive and objective assessment of rural hospital performance.

The Hospital Strength INDEX captures performance information for all rural and critical access hospitals.

## Toner Gets Surprise Visit From Nurse who Inspired Her

Tina Toner, RN, North Big Horn Hospital, recently won the Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence, The Wyoming Hospital Association presented the award to her in September.

During Toner's acceptance speech, she told the story of how Nikki Brockler inspired her. Brockler cared for her in the neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU) of a hospital in Great Falls, where, as a teen, she was giving birth to her first

child prematurely.

Deb Anderson, a representative for Mountain Pacific Quality Health, was in the audience. So inspired was she by Toner's speech, Anderson took it upon herself to track down Brockler. With very little information to go on, not even a name, Anderson found Brockler in Rochester, New York. Anderson then co-conspired with NBHH CEO Rick Schroeder and others to reunite the two.

On Tuesday afternoon, Toner was invited to a ruse

event to hear "a special speaker who happened to be passing through the area." At first she didn't recognize Brockler, who after a few moments called her forward to stand with her in front of a room full of nurses and other staff from the hospital. Toner was quickly brought to tears once she realized the woman at the podium was the one who had inspired her to go into the nursing profession so many years ago.

The moving reunion brought many to tears in the audience.

## Cures Act Heads to Senate After Quick Passage in House

The House passed the 21st Century Cures Act 392-26 after months of negotiations and nearly three years after it was first introduced. The legislation aims to expedite federal approval of new drugs and also includes a sweeping package of biomedical innovation and mental health reform

bills.

Senate leaders have said they will vote on the Cures Act early next week and the White House has said President Barack Obama would sign the long-delayed act into law.

The bill would be one of the few episodes of cooperation between the GOP-run 114th Congress.

All but six House Democrats voted for the 996-page bill despite some reservations. Twenty House Republicans voted against the bill, which envisions spending \$6.3 billion over the next decade.