



NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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Lower Health Care Costs Act

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions voted 20-3 to pass the Lower Health Care Costs Act (S.1895) – bipartisan legislation focused on reducing health care costs. The bill would hold patients harmless from surprise medical bills, but use a benchmark rate to resolve payments between plans and out-of-network providers.

During the mark up, Sens. Bill Cassidy, R-La., Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Mitt Romney, R-Utah, expressed concerns about unintended consequences of using a benchmark rate. Sens. Cassidy and Murkowski specifically discussed how a benchmark rate could threaten access to care in rural areas.

The American Hospital Association supports protecting patients from surprise medical bills, but has expressed serious concerns with using a benchmark rate to resolve payments between plans and out-of-network providers, which it says would underpay for these services and give insurers few incentives to develop robust provider networks.

The AHA also opposes the contracting provisions in the bill, as these would interfere with the private negotiations between providers and plans, and could undermine value-based contracting arrangements and negatively impact access by allowing insurers

to cherry pick providers within systems.

The committee adopted an AHA-supported bipartisan amendment put forth by Sens. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and Mike Braun, R-Ind., that would require drug manufacturers to disclose and provide information related to planned price increases.

Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., said he hopes the full Senate will consider the bill next month. He said bipartisan additions to the bill could come from the Senate Finance and Judiciary committees, and from legislation approved by the Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees to lower prescription drug costs.

There is support of the committee’s proposals to make important investments in public health, including efforts to improve maternal health outcomes. The AHA also supports the committee’s focus on enhancing health information technology while protecting patient privacy.

Key Takeaways are:

- Holds patients harmless from surprise medical bills in several scenarios.
- Uses a benchmark rate to resolve disputed claims for out-of-network providers including hospitals.

- Holds patients harmless from surprise air ambulance bills and uses a benchmark rate to pay air ambulance providers.
- Includes provisions aimed at increasing competition in the prescription drug market, as well as enhancing and ensuring patient access to these drugs.
- Has a number of provisions that claim to improve transparency in health care, including by adding new constraints on provider and health plan contracts, penalizing providers for delays in sending patient bills, and establishing a national all-payer claims database to help expose health care prices, among other policies.
- Bolsters public health, including addressing vaccine-preventable illnesses and improving maternal health.
- Seeks to ensure that patients have electronic access to their own health information.



WHA Calendar

WHA Golf Tournament
Cheyenne

9/3

WHA Annual Meeting & Convention
Little America, Cheyenne

9/4-9/5

2019 PAC Contributions

Barry Burkart
Bren Lowe
Margie Molitor
Doug Faus
Andy Fitzgerald
Maureen Cadwell



CCH partners with WMC for TeleStroke

Campbell County Health (CCH) has announced its partnership with Wyoming Medical Center (WMC) to bring TeleStroke Wyoming to Campbell County Memorial Hospital (CCMH).

TeleStroke connects the Emergency Department physicians in Gillette with the WMC neurologists in Casper to collaboratively devise the best treatment plans for

stroke patients in real time.

TeleStroke is the inaugural program of TeleMed Wyoming, WMC's state-of-the-art telehealth system connecting Wyoming hospitals, physicians and patients with the widest network of medical specialties in the state, from the convenience of their local hospital.

"TeleStroke Wyoming allows WMC neurologists to actively participate in patient care and decision making

from the moment the patient arrives at CCMH," says Dr. Tyler Dickey, board certified Emergency Medicine physician. "We know that life-saving stroke care is measured in minutes. That means the faster the blood flow is restored, the better the chance for a patient's survival and recovery. We are very pleased to work with WMC to bring high quality care to our patients."



Campbell County Health

Excellence Every Day

Students Experience Healthcare at PVH

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

Powell Valley Healthcare (PVH) has started a program to get Powell High School students interested in the industry. It's an afterschool, paid job working in various capacities at the PVHC campus.

"We get to expose a new generation to healthcare," said Cassie Tinsley, director of human resources for PVHC. The program had 23 Powell High School applicants this year for eight positions. The students earn some money

and gain some experience on the job, and the hospital gets part-time help.

Tinsley said one of the important lessons of the program is that careers in healthcare are not limited to nurses and doctors. There's a range of jobs in the industry, including Tinsley's, that are different.

Tinsley said the students in the program go through all the same background checks, including drug tests, as any employee of PVHC.

The positions are year-round, and the students in the program can work for more than one year. Some will go off to college — including one student who completed a certified nursing assistant course while getting her diploma. She's going to go off to complete her CNA certificate and then go right into working at PVHC.

Tinsley said the response she's gotten from students, residents, and PVHC employees has been very positive.



Powell Valley Healthcare

Make Your Hotel Reservation by August 3

This year's Annual Meeting & Convention will be held September 4-5 in Cheyenne at Little America Hotel & Resort.

The annual golf tournament will be held September 3rd at the Cheyenne Country Club.

Little America Hotel & Resort is located at 2800 West Lincolnway, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 82001.

Hotel Reservations must be made by the August 3 deadline. The Wyoming Hospital Association has reserved a limited number of rooms for Convention attendees. The WHA room block will be available through August 3 at a rate of \$100 for Deluxe Rooms and \$130 for Preferred rooms so make your reservations today.

Mention the Wyoming Hospital Association to get the preferred Convention rate!

**Reservation Deadline
August 3, 2019
Phone : 800-235-6396
\$100/night**



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