



Wyoming Hospital Association

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NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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The WHA At Work For Its Members

A lot has been happening and the WHA staff has been working hard on behalf of its members. For the past two years the WHA has been working in concert with the Wyoming EMS Association, the state EMS agency, and the legislature to find a way to secure additional funding to support EMS services all across the state. During the 2020 interim, draft legislation was created by the Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Committee and SF53 was introduced during the 66th Wyoming State Legislative Session.

In a condensed two-week session WHA President Eric Boley, along with legal counsel Eric Weatherford presented the bill. It was first presented to the Senate Labor Committee and then presented to the House Labor Committee once successfully passing through the Senate. Working closely with partners, and initiating a full scale grassroots effort, the bill passed the legislature. On February 9, 2021 Governor Gordon signed SEA14 into law.

This piece of legislation will provide a means of increasing funding for ground ambulance services across the state either through a UPL program or through enhanced reimbursement rates. EMS services in Wyoming have become more difficult to maintain and there have been closures of several services, while other services are downsizing or close to closing. This is an attempt for EMS providers to solve some of the funding problems on their own. A kickoff meeting with the Wyoming Department of Health and their consultants has already



occurred to start the process and get this program implemented as quickly as possible. Eric Weatherford from Husch Blackwell will take the lead on writing the State Plan Amendment, hopefully expediting approval of the program.

During the short two-week session held in late January and early February the WHA worked closely with the Wyoming Department of Health, specifically regarding the Health Information Exchange, and SF54 was passed. SF54 protects any fees received for sustaining and operating the HIE. Those funds will be placed in a separate account, cannot be swept into the general fund, and can only be used to ensure the HIE is self sustaining.

The WHA has continued the work with the Wyoming Department of Health and CMS pertaining to the PSSP or Provider UPL. After several additional recent conversations and correspondence with CMS, notification has been received there

are no further questions from CMS regarding the new program and approval of the SPA, including the new UPL, is imminent. This program will bring millions of additional dollars to most, if not all, hospitals across the state. With recent cuts (and more on the way) to the state budget, these funds will be vital in helping hospitals remain financially viable. This program will be retroactive to July of 2020, the date the State Plan Amendment was originally submitted to CMS.

Finally, the WHA has also been working closely with the Governor's office and with the legislature to ensure all state CARES funding awarded to members will be paid. With the extension granted by Congress and signed by President Trump on December 27, state CARES funding can be used through the entirety of 2021. WHA President Boley testified before Joint Appropriations in favor a draft legislation which would ensure outstanding invoices be paid. A bill to that effect advanced out of committee and will be considered by the entire legislature. The bill was supported by the Governor's office with their desire to pay hospitals and nursing homes for work completed and in progress. The WHA has been meeting regularly with the Governor's office to help expedite CARES payments attempting to get facilities paid even without the new legislation.

The WHA continues to look for ways to protect members and to add value for membership. The staff at the WHA are honored and blessed to serve and represent the incredible members, the healthcare heroes of Wyoming.

WHA Calendar	
WHA Golf Tournament Casper	9/7 2021
Annual Meeting & Convention Casper	9/8- 9/9 2021



2021 Contributions

Barry Burkart
Tim Thornell
Robin Roling

WBI Celebrates 25 Years Serving Community & Wyoming

Member Spotlight

Since 1996, Wyoming Behavioral Institute (WBI) has been providing superior quality inpatient child, adolescent and adult psychiatric treatment in Casper. Chief Executive Officer Mike Phillips announced the hospital will be celebrating its 25th anniversary throughout 2021.

“We are proud to be a large employer in our community, and to serve as a critical piece of the health care infrastructure in the state,” Phillips said. “We are actively partnering with government and non-profit organizations to assure access to inpatient psychiatry and we work closely with other organizations to help our patients continue to recover after discharging from inpatient care.”

WBI will be opening an adult outpatient clinic this year. “Even though Casper has more outpatient psychiatrists, nurse practitioners and therapists than most communities in the state, there are still far too few prescribers available to meet demand,” Phillips said. “We were asked for help by the medical community and other mental health professionals and began making a plan to meet the need.”

WBI is an 85-bed acute care hospital and 30-bed youth residential facility employing five psychiatrists treating children, adolescents, adults and older adults from across Wyoming, Montana and Nebraska. The facility focuses on stabilization of symptoms of mental illness. Phillips joined the WBI team in 2019. He notes that the hospital and its staff are award-

winning and are recognized across the state for taking the lead in the delivery of mental health services.

“For 25 years, WBI has provided the highest quality care and services to thousands of individuals in need,” Phillips said. “It is with great pride we celebrate how our employees and community partners have worked together to bring about recovery and support for others.”



WMC Earns Top Grade from Safety Group

Wyoming Medical Center (WMC) has for the second time in a row received an “A” grade for safety from the Leapfrog Group. The Leapfrog Group is a nonprofit founded to increase hospital safety and accountability.

In total, six of the state’s hospitals receive grades from the national safety group. The group does not score critical access hospitals.

The grades assess how well hospitals prevent medical errors or other patient harm.

“Patient safety is a core value for everyone at Wyoming Medical Center. Safe, high-quality care is what matters most to patients, and we’re proud of our commitment to positive patient outcomes through evidence-based care,” said Lance Porter, hospital CEO. “I am incredibly proud of the entire WMC staff which has worked through a very challenging time to care for the community and state. This award is a testament of their skill, hard work and dedication.”

The grades are derived from 28 different metrics, each receiving their own score. The hospital scored highest in areas of infection control and practices that prevent errors.



WMC Earns Top Grade



Wyoming Frontier Information (WYFI) is the Statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE) hosted by the Wyoming Department of Health, Division of Healthcare Financing.

On May 1, 2021, Hospitals participating in Medicare and Medicaid, Psychiatric Hospitals

Is Your Team Using Notify?

and Critical Access Hospitals will be required to send electronic patient event notifications of a patient’s admission, discharge, and/or transfer to the primary care provider identified by the patient.

WYFI Notify is compliant with CMS conditions and can send admission, discharge, and transfer (ADT) notifications to treating providers to update phy-

sicians and care teams on a patient’s status to improve care coordination and deliver appropriate follow-up care in a timely manner.

If you would like to learn more and enroll please reach out to Andrea Bailey andrea.bailey@wyo.gov or by phone at 307.777.7594

WYFI