



Wyoming Hospital Association

Wyoming Hospital Association

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

Volume 52, Number 11

March 26, 2021

HHS Report on Hospitals' Challenges Amid Pandemic

The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Inspector General reported findings from a random survey of hospital leaders last month on their most difficult current challenges responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, greatest concerns going forward and how the government could best help.

The review provides a national snapshot, from the perspective of front-line hospital administrators, on how responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their capacity to care for patients, staff, and communities.

This is not a review of the HHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic. HHS conducted the first pulse survey of challenges that hospitals reported facing in response to COVID-19 during the early weeks of the pandemic (March 23-27, 2020). This snapshot from 2021 provides HHS and other decisionmakers with updated information on hospital perspectives.

This report is based on a pulse survey conducted during February 22-26, 2021, with hospital administrators from 320 hospitals across 45 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Interviews focused on three key questions:

- What are your most difficult challenges in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic right now, and what strategies have you been using to address the challenges?

- What are your organization's greatest concerns going forward?
- How can government best support hospitals?

In February 2021, hospitals reported that operating in "survival mode" for an extended period of time has created new and different problems than experienced earlier in the pandemic and exacerbated longstanding challenges in health care delivery, access, and health outcomes.

Hospital Reported Challenge

Hospitals described difficulty balancing the complex and resource-intensive care needed for COVID-19 patients with efforts to resume routine hospital care. They reported that staffing shortages have affected patient care, and that exhaustion and trauma have taken a toll on staff's mental health. Administrators detailed challenges associated with vaccine distribution efforts and concerns about vaccine hesitancy among staff and members of their communities. Hospitals also raised concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities in access to care and health outcomes. Additionally, many hospitals reported experiencing financial instability because of increased expenses associated with responding to a pandemic and lower revenues from decreased use of other hospital services. Hospitals indicated that many of the challenges were more severe for rural hospitals.

Addressing Hospital Challenges:

Hospitals reported a range of strategies to address their challenges and identified areas in which further government support could help as they continue responding to the pandemic. Broadly, the areas of government support included enhancing knowledge and guidance on the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, including safe means to discharge patients with COVID-19; helping to fill gaps in hospital staffing, especially for nurses and certain specialists; continuing financial relief, especially to increase care to rural and underserved communities; and, encouraging widespread vaccinations to reduce the circulation of the virus.

Looking Forward.

Beyond the immediate needs in responding to COVID-19, the pulse survey documents hospitals' perspectives about longer-term opportunities for improvement to address challenges that existed before, and were exacerbated by, the pandemic. These improvements include reducing disparities in access to health care and in health outcomes, building and maintaining a more robust health care workforce, and strengthening the resiliency of our health care system to respond to pandemics and other public health emergencies and disasters.

A copy of the report can be found at <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-09-21-00140.asp>

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



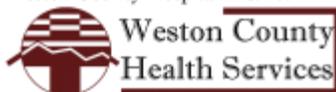
2021 Contributions

Barry Burkart
Tim Thornell
Robin Roling
Carol Solie

WMC Partners with WCHS for TeleStroke Wyoming

Member Spotlight

Weston County Hospital District DBA



Wyoming Medical Center is proud to announce its TeleStroke Wyoming partnership with Weston County Health Services. TeleStroke will connect the ER physicians in Newcastle with WMC neurologists to collaboratively devise the best treatment plans for stroke patients in real time.

“TeleStroke Wyoming allows WMC neurologists to actively

participate in patient care and decision making from the moment the patient arrives at Weston County Health Services.” said neurologist David Wheeler, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., medical director of WMC’s Primary Stroke Center.

“Having neurologists involved early increases the likelihood that patients will get the appropriate diagnosis and treatment quickly, and that’s the metric of excellence in stroke care,” Dr. Wheeler said.

WMC’s TeleStroke partners are equipped with InTouch Health’s Vici robot at no cost to the hospitals. The Vici is a scalable, mobile cart system that can be rolled into any patient room.

From Casper, WMC neurologists can examine and speak with patients and ER physicians in

Newcastle through the high-definition cameras and display monitors. They can zoom in or out or swing their view from side to side to ensure a complete field of vision.

The system shares a patient’s history, vital signs and other data in real time in consultation with the on-site physician.

We are very excited to partner with Wyoming Medical Center for access to the TeleStroke system” states Weston County Health Services CEO, Maureen Cadwell. “The access this system provides is on-the-spot, life-saving expertise for stroke patients that may save them being transferred to higher level facilities, from debilitating results or death.”

Trauma System in Wyoming

WY Trauma System

For a seriously injured person, the time between sustaining an injury and receiving definitive care may be an important aspect of survival. The chance of survival diminishes with time, but a trauma system can improve the chances of survival through shortened transit times and appropriate trauma care.

Wyoming’s trauma system is an organized, coordinated effort in a defined geographic area that delivers the full range of care to all injured patients and is integrated with the public health system. The true value of a trauma

system is derived from the seamless transition between each phase of patient care, integrating existing resources to achieve improved patient outcomes. In Wyoming, the trauma system is made up of a network of hospitals and ambulance services organized and coordinated to optimize the care provided to seriously injured people by ensuring that injured people are cared for at a hospital with resources that are matched with the injured persons’ needs. The success of a trauma system is largely determined by the degree to which it is support-

ed by public policy.

Robust trauma systems are effective. There is a demonstrated 15-20% improved survival rate for patients who are injured in an established trauma system. Care of the injured patient that is delivered at a trauma center hospital is associated with less morbidity and mortality than non-trauma center hospitals. A significant decrease of “preventable” deaths among the severely injured has been identified in regions with an established and functioning trauma system.

National Hospital Week

National Hospital Week Where Health Comes First

National Hospital week will be celebrated May 9-15, 2021.

National Hospital Week is an opportunity to highlight our hospitals, health systems and health care workers and the innovative ways they are supporting the needs of their community members, especially during this pandemic.

Recognizing the care and support provided by over 5,500 hospitals across the country, National Hospital Week kicks off on the first full week of May.

Providing everything from emergency care, labor and delivery, minor surgery and specialized care, hospitals big and small fill a vital need in communities.

Every nurse, doctor, practitioner and staff member are necessary to deliver the compassion and quality services needed. During National Hospital Week, the dedicated personnel are at the center of the celebration.

For more information visit aha.org.