



Wyoming Hospital Association

# News briefs

## WHA Urges all Hospital Staff to Receive the COVID Vaccine

The Wyoming Hospital Association and LeadingAge Wyoming, along with our governing boards, on behalf of our member hospitals and nursing homes, **strongly encourage all who are eligible, and particularly those who work in hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, to become vaccinated against COVID-19.**

Hospitals and nursing homes in Wyoming have seen firsthand the devastating impact of COVID-19. The lived experience of our healthcare heroes, and the objective evidence of what works to make a difference informs our position on this issue. Furthermore, we owe it to these brave employees and the patients they serve to provide the safest environment possible.

We are urging all healthcare workers to receive the free, safe, and effective COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. The WHA is available to assist all hospitals and nursing homes in whatever ways needed to achieve 100% vaccination in our facilities.

Hospitals are intended to be safe places of healing. We recognize the efficacy and safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, while simultaneously valuing the ability of healthcare facilities creating those environments of safety in the best ways they know how.

We know what works to stop the spread of infection, and we have the necessary tools. Vaccination, good hand hygiene, socially distancing when able, and

wearing masks are steps we all should be taking to keep everyone safe. Those who work in hospitals and nursing homes should lead the way in modeling these precautions.

The number one priority for our members is safety of all patients, staff, and visitors who enter their buildings, and patients rightly expect to be cared for in a place which minimizes the risk of infection. The decisions on how to best create a safe environment are done thoughtfully and based on the best available evidence. **The evidence today clearly demonstrates the COVID vaccines are the best tool available to help stop the spread of this disease which has caused massive disruption in our state for almost 18 months.** Unfortunately, we are now seeing a significant increase in cases and hospitalizations, further burdening the already strained capacity of our healthcare facilities. Overwhelmingly, those who become seriously ill and hospitalized with COVID are unvaccinated.

We can still responsibly participate in activities such as Cheyenne Frontier Days when we do the right things. The WHA plans to hold an in-person conference in early September while encouraging those who attend to be vaccinated, wear masks, making hand sanitizing stations readily available, and socially distancing to the extent practical.

With the emergence of COVID variants, children’s hospitals across the country are treating more and more young peo-

ple for COVID in addition to an unexpected rise in cases of RSV and croup. Children under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine, the pediatric facilities in our neighboring states are filling up, and Wyoming does not have any pediatric ICU beds. It is critical we do our part to stop the spread of the virus for the good of all our neighbors, specifically those who are more vulnerable due to age or health status.



### 2021 Contributions

- Barry Burkart
- Tim Thornell
- Robin Roling
- Carol Solie
- Irene Richardson
- Doug Faus
- Eric Boley
- Colleen Heeter
- Maureen Cadwell
- Mike Phillips
- Will Wagnon
- Doug McMillan
- Margie Molitor

## USDA Funding Opportunities

Eric Boley, WHA President sat through both of the USDA webinars regarding the emergency rural USDA funding opportunities. After reviewing the webinars, WHA is convinced many of you serving rural communities with populations of less than 20,000 will qualify for this funding program.

There are probably many questions that have not been answered for you. Lorraine Werner, program director, USDA Rural Development, and her team here in Wyoming will be administering the program, and will be on the call to answer questions. We encourage all of you to find someone to attend so you can find out how

to access this important funding source to help you in your battle against COVID.

The Zoom meeting is scheduled for

**Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
2:00-3:00 p.m. MST**

If you need the Zoom instructions, please contact WHA at 307-632-9344

**WHA Golf Tournament—September, 7  
Paradise Valley Golf Club, Casper**

**WHA Annual Meeting—September 8-9  
Clarion Inn, Casper, Wyoming**

## FEMA Public Assistance

State, Local and Tribal units of government, including some special districts and private nonprofits, are eligible for FEMA Public Assistance.

Any of the county owned hospitals are eligible. So are most of the hospital districts and private nonprofits.

Eligible activities are those that occur in a Primary Medical Care Facility. Here is FEMA's definition of that. Primary Medical Care Facility: A primary medical care facility is the facility owned and/or operated by an eligible PA Applicant that provides medical care services. This includes any licensed hospital, out-

patient facility, rehabilitation facility, or facility for long term care. The easiest thing to do is fill out a Request for Public Assistance that then gets sent to FEMA for their determination.

Basically, any eligible work performed on or after January 20, 2020 is eligible for reimbursement. Normally under this program there is a 75%/25% cost share but for the pandemic FEMA has waived this and eligible activities are eligible for 100% federal reimbursement.

Please have someone from your organization join us to learn how you can access FEMA funding to help offset and cover staffing expenses incurred due to COVID.

This is an important meeting and can provide guidance on how you can access these federal funds.

The Zoom meeting is scheduled for:

**Tuesday, August 31, 2021  
10:00 AM-11:00 AM**

Director Lynn Budd and Ashley Paulsrud from the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security will be on the call to answer questions.

For the meeting information, contact WHA at 307-632-9344.