

News Briefs

June 19, 2026

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Wyoming Hospital Association

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WHA Helps Launch Wyoming's First Healthcare Policy Summit

The Wyoming Hospital Association joined the Wyoming Medical Society, Wyoming Nurses Association and Wyoming Primary Care Association to host the state's first-ever Healthcare Policy Summit on June 12, 2026, at the University of Wyoming Conference Center in Laramie.

The summit brought together physicians, nurses, hospital leaders, providers and lawmakers for a day of policy discussion centered on the Association's core priorities: hospital financial sustainability, workforce development, rural access to care and equitable reimbursement.

A highlight of the day was a forum with Republican gubernatorial candidates Eric Barlow, Brent Bien and Megan Degenfelder — each asked not just whether healthcare was a priority, but how they would act on it. Degenfelder emphasized building the healthcare workforce pipeline starting in junior high school. Barlow stressed the importance of listening to local providers and communities. Bien called for reducing bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of care.

All three candidates acknowledged what WHA members experience daily: no single policy fix will solve Wyoming's healthcare challenges, and sustained collaboration between providers, lawmakers and state leaders is essential.



WHA President Joins Wyoming's Health Insurance Affordability Task Force

Wyoming Hospital Association President Eric Boley is participating in the newly formed Health Insurance Affordability Task Force, which held its inaugural meeting June 17–18, 2026. The task force was created by the Wyoming Legislature's Management Council to tackle the mounting crisis in private health insurance costs across the state.

Task Force Members:

- Senators: Gary Crum, Taft Love, Tara Nethercott
- Representatives: Rob Geringer, Lloyd Larsen, Ken Pendergraft
- Additional members: Insurance Commission, Dept. of Health Healthcare Financing, A&I Group Insurance, Wyoming Hospital Association, Insurance Industry representative

The task force grew out of a proposal by Rep. Lloyd Larsen, R-Lander, who cited constituents paying as much as \$4,300 per month for family health coverage. Wyoming's insurance market is among the most expensive in the nation, with premiums rising roughly 25.9 percent in 2026 after enhanced federal subsidies expired — and with only one major private insurer remaining in the market following Mountain Health CO-OP's exit at the end of 2025.

Boley's seat at the table ensures the hospital perspective is part of the conversation. Uncompensated care — driven by Wyoming's 10.5 percent uninsured rate — is a key factor pushing hospital costs higher, which in turn affects premiums for everyone with coverage. "It's gonna be a heavy lift," Boley said, "but I think our folks are ready to sit down at the table and see how we can make it work."

The task force aims to deliver concrete policy recommendations to the Legislature ahead of the 2027 session.

A More Reliable Drug Supply for Wyoming's Rural Hospitals

Drug shortages strain staff, delay care and drive up costs — a reality Wyoming's rural and critical access hospitals know well. Civica Rx, a nonprofit pharmaceutical company, has expanded its proven drug shortage prevention model specifically for rural and critical access hospitals, and Wyoming facilities are eligible to participate.

Civica works with member hospitals to identify medications most at risk of shortage and maintains a targeted six-month safety stock to stabilize supply when the broader market cannot. Pricing is consistent and transparent — every member pays the same price, with no volume discounts or rebates, leveling the playing field for smaller hospitals.

For Wyoming hospitals, participation means:

- Critical medications available when needed
- Fewer treatment delays and last-minute substitutions
- Less staff time spent sourcing alternatives
- More stable pharmaceutical costs

Thanks to a grant from the Helmsley Charitable Trust, there is **no membership fee for eligible Wyoming hospitals**, and **no annual purchasing commitments** are required. Program funding is limited, so early interest is encouraged.

To obtain copies of the slide deck from the recent WHA/CivicaRx meeting and a copy of the contract and drug list, contact **Kelsey Prestesater** at kelsey@wyohospitals.com. To opt in to the program, contact **Michael Laffin**, Vice President of Member Accounts, at Michael.laffin@civicarx.org or visit CivicaRx.org.

HRSA Seeking Applicants for Rural Hospital Financial Assistance Program

The Health Resources and Services Administration is seeking applicants for its **Rural Hospital Provider Assistance Program**, which provides financial assistance to rural hospitals facing structural payment disadvantages to help maintain essential healthcare services and prevent closures. Eligible hospitals must have no more than 50 acute care inpatient beds and an established Medicare wage index value below 0.90. The deadline for applying is July 27.

\$25 Million Gift to Grow Rural Physicians Across Wyoming and the West

A landmark \$25 million donation from William and Carolyn Franke and their family to the University of Washington School of Medicine will help address Wyoming's chronic rural physician shortage. The gift — the largest ever family contribution to rural medical education in the United States — creates the Franke Medical Student Scholars Program for the WWAMI region: Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho.

A \$20 million endowment will cover half of medical school tuition annually for approximately 30 students committed to practicing in rural or Native communities. Additional funds will support recruitment, retention and a new W.A. Franke Rural Medical Education Summit.

"The Franke family's extraordinary generosity will help reduce many of these barriers to allow our students to pursue their dreams, not their debt," said Dr. Tim Dellit, CEO of UW Medicine and dean of the UW School of Medicine.

For Wyoming hospitals serving patients who already travel great distances for basic care, this investment in the rural physician pipeline is welcome news.

Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDAR • 2026

GOLF

WHA Golf Tournament

Sep 8, 2026

Tuesday

Cheyenne Country Club

ANNUAL

WHA Annual Meeting

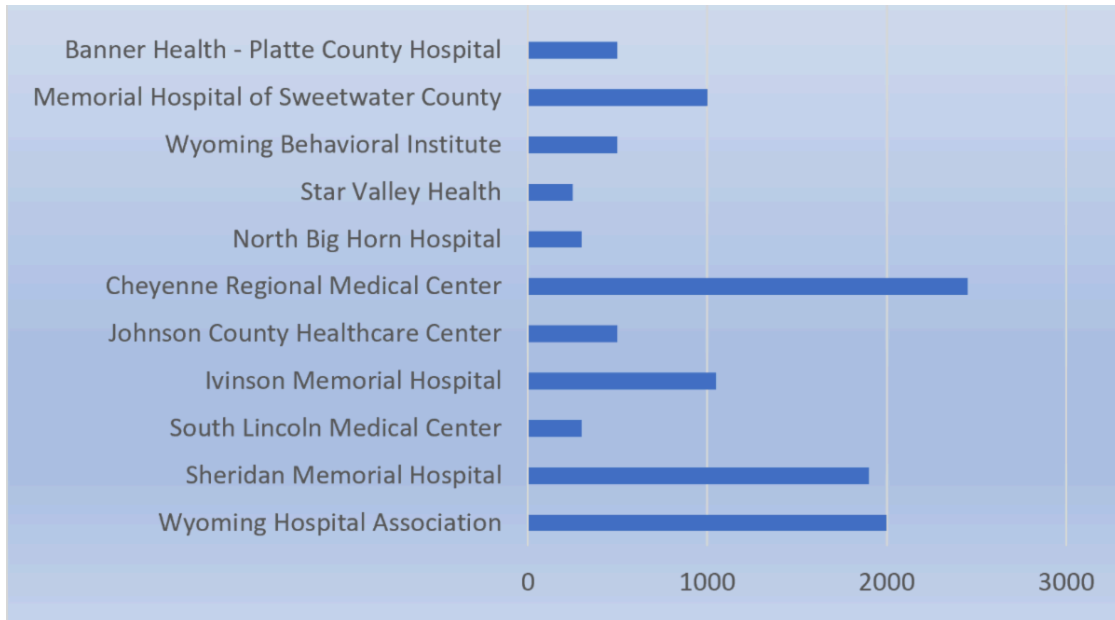
Sep 9–10, 2026

Wednesday – Thursday

Little America, Cheyenne

WHA Golf Tournament

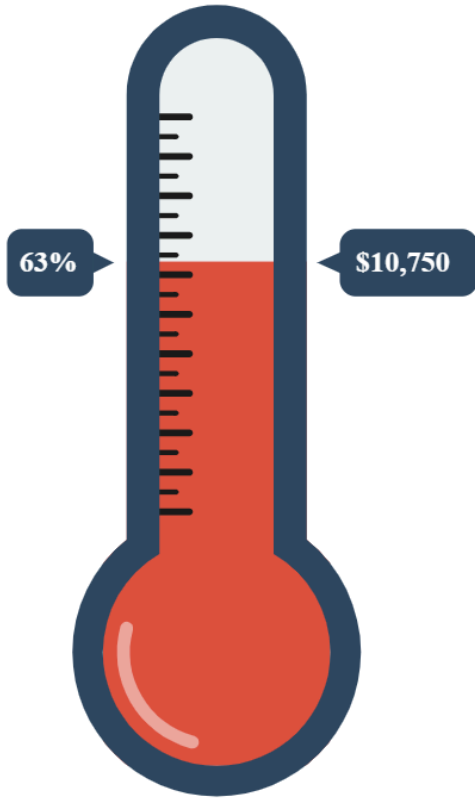
WHA PAC Goal for 2026 Contributors



WHA PAC

Barry Burkart
Eric Boley
Kelsey Prestesater
Jenifer Shassetz
Dave Ryerse

GOAL: \$17,000



- Terry Moss
- Mike McCafferty
- Shelli Shelton
- Joe Wright
- Tim Thornell
- Doug Faus
- Luke Senden
- Joanna Vilos
- Robin Roling
- Scott Fox
- Darcy Robertson
- Mike Hunsaker
- Mike Phillips
- Steven Leafgreen
- Brad Jackson
- Irene Richardson
- Sandy Dugger
- Mark Drumhiller
- Ron Mischke
- Brady Shoemaker
- Tommi Ritterbusch



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