

# News Briefs

March 8, 2024



Wyoming  
Hospital  
Association

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## 2024 Legislative Budget Session

The 2024 Legislative Budget Session is all but in the books, and the Wyoming Hospital Association and LeadingAge Wyoming are happy with the progress made. The passage of HB14-Prior Authorization Regulations, and HB15-Health Insurance Reimbursement of Overpayments are both huge accomplishments which will have a major impact for patients and providers all across the state.

HB14 creates new requirements for insurers to expedite the prior authorization process, including having a peer-to-peer consultation before a denial can be determined, expedited timelines for approvals, an electronic submission portal for prior authorizations, reporting requirements by the insurance companies to the Department of Insurance, gold carding for providers, and restrictions on step therapy requirements. This is a major step in improving access to care for patients and simplifying the prior authorization process for providers. The Wyoming Hospital Association and the Wyoming Medical Society partnered with insurance companies from around the state to reach a collective solution. Senator Dan Dockstader and Representative Sarah Penn, as well as Chairmen Baldwin and Zwonitzer, deserve special recognition for their leadership and extra work on this

important issue.

HB15 puts in statute insurance companies have only two years to look back to recoup potential overpayments. This bill creates security and certainty for healthcare providers that they will not be accessed a huge repayment demand many years after claims have been paid. With razor thin or nonexistent margins, this legislation will help ensure there are not huge liabilities for organizations that could put the entities at jeopardy. Representative Ken Clouston was a huge proponent of this legislation and brought the topic forward to the Joint Labor Committee, which ultimately adopted the topic as a committee bill.

The defeat of HB 24-Certificate of Need Repeal (CoN) was also a major victory for LeadingAge Wyoming and the Wyoming Hospital Association. By repealing the CoN, critical access hospitals swing bed programs could have been in jeopardy. Nursing homes across the state may have also been in jeopardy and faced with huge staffing shortages, long term care could have become more fractured and difficult, had the CoN been repealed.

Late in the day on Thursday, SF132 passed the House and headed to a conference committee. This bill authorizes the Governor to allocate and distribute remaining ARPA funds to many areas, most importantly HHS capitol construction projects. These funds will be used to help cover inflationary cost increases to ARPA funded projects already approved by the SLIB. Eligible projects will include those that have already gone to bid or have already been started or completed. There are also budget amendments still in play within the budget that give the Governor authorization to utilize ARPA funds for the same projects. There are many legislators responsible for pushing for these funds including Senator Dave Kinsksey, Senator Dan Dockstader, Senator Tara Nethercott, Representative Dan Zwonitzer, and the House appropriations committee.

Finally, the focus of this session was on the state's biennial budget. The budget bill includes funding requested for maintaining Medicaid rates at the new levels set last session. Making these rates permanent moves nursing homes closer to covering their daily costs of delivering care to Medicaid recipients. The Wyoming Hospital Association and LeadingAge Wyoming are grateful to Governor Gordon and the Wyoming Department of Health for recognizing and responding to the need to assist our nursing homes who operate in an environment of challenging economics yet deliver high quality, critical care for residents across the state. Additionally, \$250,000 was added to the Department of Health Budget to assist hospitals maintain or obtain their trauma designations. This investment will allow our facilities to perform and complete essential site designation surveys, provide trauma specific education, and ultimately reduce morbidity, mortality and disability for trauma patients across Wyoming.

As we close the book on the 2024 Budget Session, we want to thank our policy makers who have dedicated their time and expertise to strengthen healthcare in our state. They are faced with competing priorities, finite dollars, along with policy and political complications. Many stepped up to face these challenges right along with us, and we owe them our appreciation. Most importantly, we want to thank our members for whom we are proud to serve. Our hospitals and nursing homes provide unwavering support, lend us their knowledge, and play a critical role in helping us advocate for sound policy to advance healthcare and improve the health of Wyoming.



## **House Enrolled Act 20 - Health Insurance - Reimbursement of Overpayments**

### **WHA To Provide Public Officer Training Webinar provided by: Tom Lubnau, Lubnau Law Office, PC**

**March 14, 2024  
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Attend a concise course that hits the necessary high points to make you an effective public official. Eight modules with Quizzes touching government structure, public meeting and record requirements, reporting requirements, compliance, construction and liability. A cost-effective and thorough training program designed to provide the information necessary to serve as an effective Wyoming Public Officer.

This training is provided free of charge to the Wyoming Hospital Association member hospitals and their boards of trustees.

State statute requires all public officers to participate in a course regarding management of public funds. The legal requirement for all public officials originates from House Bill 60, passed during the 2022 legislative session, and dictates all public officers who held their position as of July 1, 2023 must receive the training before July 1, 2024.

Public officials only need to take the course once during their time of service, and show proof they received the training when being re-elected or elected to a new position. Hansen said his department views the training as necessary to protect the vast swaths of public funds handled by local entities every year.

The requirements focus on the basics of public finance: what officials should and shouldn't do with money, what kinds of internal controls government organizations are required to implement, what information they must report to the state and so on.

Moving forward, those officials will have to complete the training within a year of taking office. People who were already in office when the law took effect this summer have until July 2024.

Tom Lubnau, of Lubnau Law Office, PC will be presenting the program. Mr. Lubnau has received certification from the State of Wyoming to give the training to hospitals.

## Governor Gordon Continues Strengthening Wyoming's Healthcare Workforce

Governor Mark Gordon has signed an Executive Order creating the Wyoming Healthcare Workforce Task Force, a continuation of efforts to address the shortage of healthcare professionals in Wyoming and to look to the future needs of the state.

The Task Force will develop recommendations to streamline the healthcare licensing process; develop strategies to better support Wyoming students pursuing healthcare certification and degree programs; and determine reimbursement strategies for all certified and degreed behavioral health professionals.

“Strengthening and expanding our healthcare workforce is critical to Wyoming’s future,” Governor Gordon said. “That’s why it’s so important to have our state entities work collaboratively to make it easier for healthcare professionals to practice, and for students preparing for a career in healthcare to access educational programs. This task force is an important step in this process.”

Since establishing the Governor’s Healthcare Task Force, Governor Gordon has worked to address the state’s healthcare workforce shortage and improve access to healthcare for Wyoming residents.

The Governor’s **Wyoming Innovation Partnership (WIP) initiative furthered these efforts** through the state’s community colleges, establishing a new Echocardiography program and expanding opportunities for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). Additional WIP programs will focus on creating and expanding CNA I, CNA II, Practical Nursing, and Registered Nursing programs around the state.

The Wyoming Healthcare Task Force will include representatives from Wyoming healthcare licensing boards; the University of Wyoming and Wyoming community colleges; Wyoming health insurance payors; state agency leadership; the Governor’s office and other non-governmental and industry organizations. WHA President Eric Boley is proud to be a member of the Governor’s Wyoming Healthcare Workforce Task Force.

The Governor’s Executive Order may be found [here](#).

## Afton and Lovell Hospitals Receive Top 100 Critical Access Hospital Award

Star Valley Hospital in Afton and North Big Horn Hospital in Lovell have received the Chartis 2024 Top 100 Critical Access Hospital Award.

Chartis, a comprehensive healthcare advisory firm, announced the 2024 Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals and the 2024 Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals. Based on the results of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX®, this annual program recognizes outstanding performance among the nation’s rural hospitals.

There is no better illustration of the value that rural facilities provide to their communities than the annual identification and recognition of the top-performing rural facilities. Each year, the rural hospitals are analyzed through the lens of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX, the industry’s most comprehensive and objective assessment of rural hospital performance in the United States.

Amidst uncertainty, transition and strain, these top performers are excelling in managing risk, achieving higher quality, securing better outcomes, increasing patient satisfaction, and operating at a lower cost than their peers. These groups serve as a benchmark for other rural facilities as they

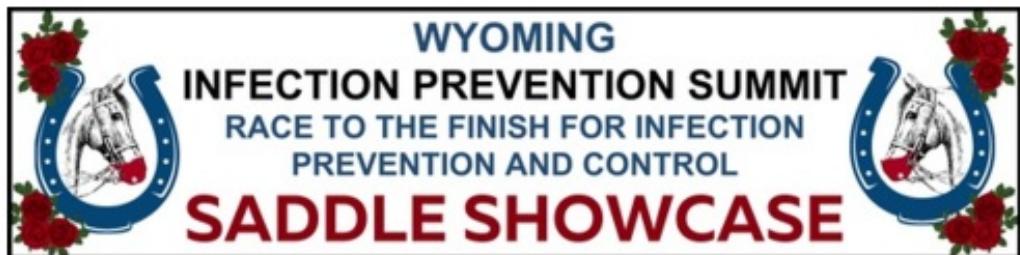
strive to achieve similar results and provide a blueprint for successfully navigating the uncertainty of the new healthcare.



North Big Horn Hospital District



STAR VALLEY  
HEALTH



We are thrilled to announce **Stephanie Boroz** will be joining us for the upcoming summit in Casper to discuss **sterilization and disinfection**.

During Stephanie's session, she will provide information about:

- Multidisciplinary collaboration and its importance in Central Sterilizing Processing Department (CSPD) processes.
- Lifecycle of critical and semi-critical devices and key takeaways for sterility achievement and maintenance throughout each step of the cycle.
- Verification testing and maintenance standards on terminal sterilization and high-level disinfection (HLD) equipment
- Best processes in reprocessing critical devices and the incorporation of high reliability organization (HRO) mentality in everyday processes and procedures
- How to read manufacturer instructions for use (IFU) and making smart decisions in choosing what processes best fit manufacturer recommendations
- HLD lifecycle and key talking points on new, innovative practices to ensure compliance and patient safety
- Amendments to ST:79 and what that means for infection prevention



Stephanie Boroz, ASHA,  
RSO, CRCST, CIS, CHL

#### About Stephanie

Stephanie Boroz has been with Banner Health at Wyoming Medical Center as an associate director for sterile processing for just under one year. Stephanie holds a degree in health care administration from Colorado Technical University, CSPD certifications through Healthcare Sterile Processing Association (HSPA) and holds national licensure as a registered safety officer (RSO). She has worked as a professor, developing formal curriculum for AST and CSPD programs and has written national testing material for HSPA. The last 13 years of her professional career have been devoted to providing and developing educational opportunities and ensuring excellence in patient safety to the communities she has served.

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## Doug McMillan and Jeff Sollis Make 110 Rural Hospital CEOs to Know in 2024

Beckers Hospital Review

Rural hospitals allow patients from remote areas to receive care without traveling long distances or sacrificing quality. The CEOs leading these necessary institutions take on a variety of responsibilities to ensure rural communities have access to top-tier healthcare.

The executives featured are committed to expanding hospital service lines, renovating and improving their facilities, and hiring talented team members. Although many rural hospitals have struggled due to Covid-19 and national staffing shortages in recent years, these leaders have created sustainable models for continued success.

Wyoming has the honor of having two CEOs make the list this year. Doug McMillan, CEO of Cody Regional Health and Jeff Sollis, CEO of St. John's Health.

**Doug McMillan. CEO of Cody Regional Health (Cody, Wyo.)** . Mr. McMillan has been with Cody Regional Health for nearly 30 years and has been a rural hospital CEO for nearly 40 years. The health system's leadership team received the American Hospital Association Rural Health Leadership team award in 2020. In part due to Mr. McMillan's efforts, Cody Regional Health achieved outstanding clinical outcomes, including patient satisfaction rates of more than 92% and a wound healing rate of at least 92% within 28 median days to heal.

**Jeff Sollis. CEO of St. John's Health (Jackson, Wyo.)** . St. John's Health welcomed Mr. Sollis as its CEO in January 2023. Mr. Sollis brings 17 years of healthcare leadership experience to his role. Prior to joining St. John's, he served as CEO for Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Idaho Falls.



[Register for CEO/Trustee Meeting Here](#)

**March 14, 2024 - 5:30 -8:00 p.m.**

Public Officer Training

**Calendar Invite has been sent to all WHA member CEOs and CFOs**

**May 9, 2024**

CEO/Trustee Spring Meeting

Cody, Wyoming

**August 26, 2024**

WHA Golf Tournament

Three Crowns Golf Club, Casper, Wyoming

**August 27-28, 2024**

Annual Meeting

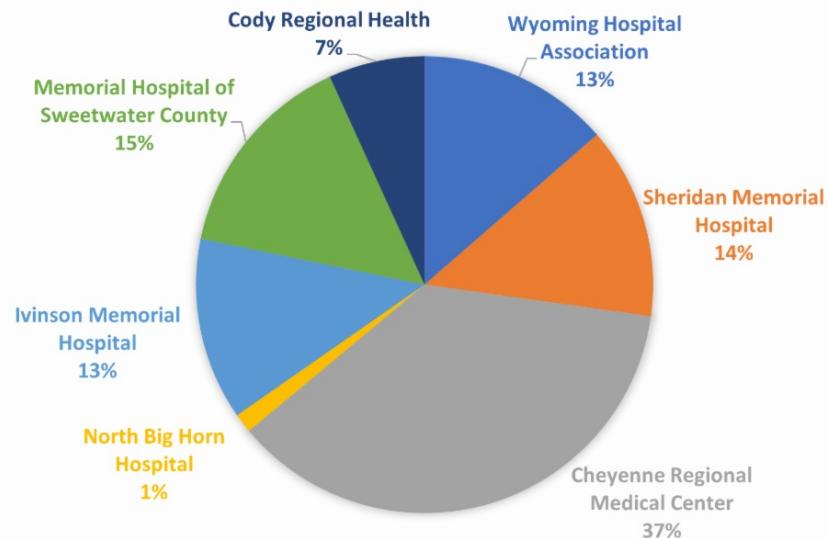
Best Western Downtown

Casper, Wyoming

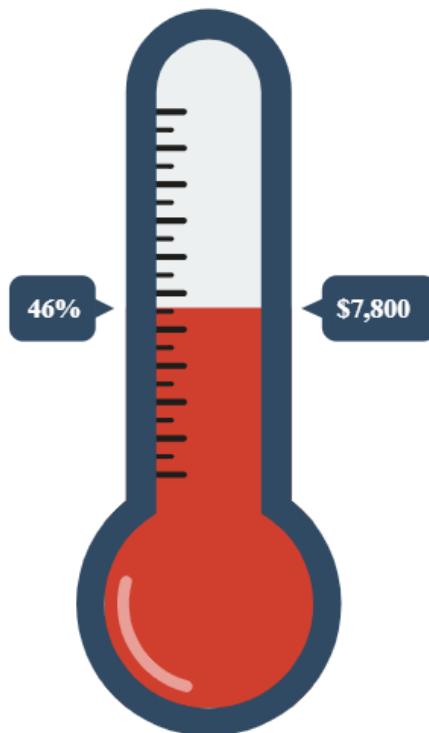
# WHA PAC Goal for 2024

## Contributors

### WHA PAC CONTRIBUTIONS



**GOAL: \$17,000**



WHA PAC

**Barry Burkart  
Eric Boley  
Mike McCafferty  
Robin Roling  
Tim Thornell  
Eric Connell  
Doug Faus  
Ron Mischke  
Joanna Vilos  
Josh Hannes  
Joe Steiner  
Barbara Sowada  
Yvonne Wigington  
Terry Moss  
Irene Richardson  
Doug McMillan**



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