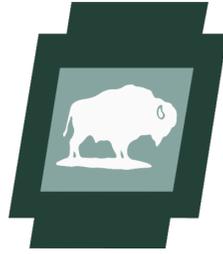


News Briefs

January 2, 2026

[Visit our Website](#)



Wyoming Hospital Association

In This Issue

- Editorial by Eric Boley
- Building Bridges to Recovery Webinar
- Cody Cancer Support Group
- New Office of Rural Health Transformation
- Grant for Patient Food Insecurities
- Events
- 2025 WHA PAC Goal



Eric Boley

A Critical Lifeline for Wyoming's Rural Hospitals

By Eric Boley, President, Wyoming Hospital Association

This week's announcement that Wyoming has been awarded \$205 million in first-year funding from the Rural Health Transformation Program represents a crucial turning point for our state's struggling rural healthcare system. As someone who has spent three decades working in Wyoming healthcare, I can tell you that this investment comes at a moment when many of our hospitals are fighting for survival.

Let me be clear about where we stand: A recent study showed only five of our 30 hospitals operating in the black. Of those in the red, seven are in jeopardy of immediate closure, and four have less than four days of cash on hand. This federal investment, while temporary, provides a critical window of opportunity to transform how we deliver healthcare across our vast rural landscape.

On behalf of the Wyoming Hospital Association and our member hospitals, I want to thank Governor Gordon, Department of Health Director Stefan Johansson, and the entire team that worked tirelessly to develop Wyoming's application. Their vision and dedication have secured resources that can help us address some of our most pressing challenges: keeping Critical Access Hospitals viable, sustaining emergency medical services, maintaining obstetric care in rural communities, and recruiting the workforce we desperately need.

I'm particularly grateful for Senator Barrasso and his leadership on this issue, along with our other members of Congress, who helped make these funds available. I'm also grateful to everyone who participated in the town halls and surveys across Wyoming, including every hospital in the state. Your input shaped this plan, and your voices reminded policymakers in Washington that rural healthcare isn't just a policy issue—it's about whether your neighbor can get care when they need it, whether expectant mothers have to travel hundreds of miles to deliver their babies, whether an ambulance will show up with trained staff when you dial 911 and whether our communities can attract and retain the doctors and nurses we need.

The next five years absolutely critical. We cannot simply use this money to maintain the status quo. We must use it to fundamentally transform how we deliver care—building sustainable models that can survive beyond 2030, investing in technology and innovation that improves efficiency, and creating partnerships that allow our small facilities to share resources and expertise.

Wyoming's hospitals face unique challenges. Our sparse population means we can't build the economies of scale that larger states enjoy. We have fixed costs in facilities that must be prepared to care for anyone who walks through the door, but we can't spread those expenses across large patient volumes. The alternative—no healthcare in our communities—is simply unacceptable.

The priorities outlined in Wyoming's application align with what we at WHA have been advocating for years: chronic disease prevention and behavioral health services, sustaining Critical Access Hospitals, maintaining obstetric care, innovative care delivery models, workforce development, strengthening EMS services and advancing healthcare technology. These aren't just line items in a grant application—they're lifelines for communities where the nearest alternative hospital might be 100 miles away on winter roads.

As we move forward with implementation, the way these funds are used with the devil being in the details, the Wyoming Hospital Association will work closely with Director Johansson and state officials to ensure these federal dollars reach the communities and providers who need them most and help advance the initiatives that will strengthen and improve healthcare in Wyoming. We'll advocate for transparency in how funds are allocated and accountability in how they're used. And we'll continue pushing for long-term solutions that extend beyond this five-year window.

To Wyoming's hospital leaders, frontline healthcare workers, and community members: This funding represents hope, but also responsibility. We have five years to prove that rural healthcare in Wyoming can be both excellent and sustainable. We have five years to build systems that will endure. And we have five years to show the nation what's possible when we invest in the communities that are the backbone of America.

We can't squander this once in a lifetime opportunity. Let's make every dollar count.

Eric Boley is President of the Wyoming Hospital Association, representing all hospitals across the state. He previously served as CEO of South Lincoln Medical Center in Kemmerer for 11 years.



Building Bridges to Recovery: Improving Emergency Department Management of Individuals Experiencing Substance Use Disorder



Jan. 15, 2026

Wyoming Hospital Association and Comagine Health invite you to join us for a webinar introducing a customized, three-tiered improvement program for management of substance use disorder in the emergency department setting.

Participation in the program is free of charge. The Wyoming Department of Health is supporting this program for participating Wyoming facilities.

The webinar is your opportunity to learn about this program designed to:

- Identify best practices for caring for individuals suffering from substance abuse disorder in the emergency department setting
- Improve access to SUD resources in your community
- Receive educational support for physicians and staff members
- Work with subject matter experts and receive direct technical assistance to develop processes designed to reduce recidivism and improve patient outcomes
- Create interventions customized to your location, size and structure

Who Should Join:

- Emergency department physicians
- Emergency department directors
- Administrators
- Quality directors
- Emergency services directors and staff

Register for the Webinar Here

Visit [Registration Link](#)
or scan the QR code below ▼



Reimagining health care,
together.

comagine.org

Registration Link - January 15, 2026 at Noon



Cody Regional Health Launches Monthly Cancer Support Lunch Series

Cody Regional Health is launching a new Cancer Support Lunch Series at the Big Horn Basin Cancer Center (BHBCC) to provide patients with education, connection, and emotional support close to home.

Beginning in January, the series will be held every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 12:00–1:00 PM at the Big Horn Basin Cancer Center, located at 1025 9th St, Cody, WY 82414. Patients are encouraged to bring their own lunch and join in a relaxed, supportive environment.

Each session will focus on a different topic relevant to cancer care and survivorship:

- January – Genetic Testing & Family History
- February – Managing Fatigue During Cancer Treatment
- March – Cancer Diets: Nutrition Support During Treatment
- April – Chair Yoga for Cancer
- May – Sexual Health During Cancer Treatment

“Our goal is to make sure no one walks through cancer alone,” said Karen Karres, LCSW at the BHBC, who is helping lead the series. “These sessions give patients a chance to ask questions, learn from trusted professionals, and connect with others who truly understand what they’re going through.” The series is open to current and recent patients of the Big Horn Basin Cancer Center and their loved ones.

CMS Creates Office of Rural Health Transformation

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services today **announced** the creation of the Office of Rural Health Transformation. The office will oversee management of the Rural Health Transformation Program and includes a Division of State Rural Engagement that will provide policy and operational guidance to states and other stakeholders. The office will monitor states’ implementation of the program’s initiatives to ensure compliance.

[Read more here](#)



Grant Will Help Cancer Center Meet Patient Food Insecurity Needs

The Memorial Hospital Foundation recently was awarded American Cancer Society funding for Sweetwater Regional Cancer Center to screen patients for food insecurities.

Addressing Food Insecurity in Cancer Care Learning Collaborative through the American Cancer Society will help increase the cancer center’s ability to screen cancer patients for food insecurity and/or refer and provide resources to meet that need, said Foundation Executive Director Kayla Mannikko. The cancer center team will learn from subject matter experts in food security, as well as from the experiences and interaction of others in the collaborative.

“We are excited about this opportunity to learn and provide more resources to our patients,” said Tasha Harris, Radiation Oncology Director.

Food insecurity poses unique challenges for individuals with cancer and survivors, as they may have specific nutritional needs and are vulnerable to the adverse effects of inadequate nutrition, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). Food insecurity can make it difficult for patients to adhere to their treatment plans, which can result in poorer outcomes.

The practice of oncology emphasizes whole-patient care, the reduction of disparities, and improvement in outcomes, and are dependent on being able to identify and address food insecurity, the ACS said. Once food insecurity is identified as an issue, busy care teams are often challenged by: (1) the ability to create programs to internally address this need; and/or (2) a lack of awareness of, or partnership with, community-based organizations who can help support their cancer patients. Harris said the cancer center team looks forward to working with the ACS in applying evidence-based practices, collective problem-solving, information sharing, and peer learning.

Learning objectives and topics include:

- Sharing resources available to help institute routine screening of patients, including validated screening tools and intervening when needed

- Creating sustainable access to food resources within the community such as creating a pantry, and/or navigating SNAP, WIC and other benefits.
- Learning the importance of partnerships to help address the food needs of cancer patients, and how to establish those partnerships
- Assessing readiness for implementation and learning how to move forward on that path
- Learning from the experience of others in the collaborative



2026 Wyoming Budget Session
February 9, 2026

WHA Trustee/CEO Spring Meeting
May 19, 2026
Best Western Sheridan Center,
Sheridan

WHA Annual Meeting
September 9-10, 2026
Little America, Cheyenne

WHA PAC Goal for 2025

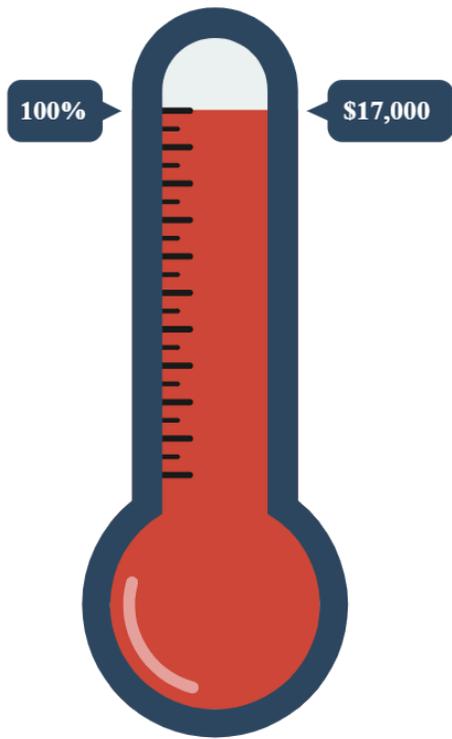
Contributors





WHA PAC

GOAL: \$17,000



WHA PAC
WYOMING HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

- Barry Burkart
- Eric Boley
- Eric Connell
- Tim Thornell
- Shelli Shelton
- Doug Faus
- Mike Hunsaker
- Ron Mischke
- Darcy Robertson
- Barbara Sowada
- Scott Alwin
- Luke Senden
- Dave Ryerse
- Shirley Coulter
- Gary Crum
- Joseph Steiner
- Kelly Lieb
- Terry Moss
- Irene Richardson
- Joe Wright
- Jenifer Shassetz
- Cathy Harshbarger
- Mike McCafferty
- Dan Ordyna
- Mike Phillips
- Bryan Opitz
- Ada Kirven
- Bob Moore
- Sandy Dugger
- Lance Porter
- Matt Shahan
- Hannah McRae
- Anthony Spiegelberg
- Bill Patten
- David Burnett
- Tonia Hoffman
- Kenda Tanner
- Kris Hinton
- Trevor Merritt
- Yvonne Wigington
- Tori Probst





Try email marketing for free today!