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2026 ANNUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9-10

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Building Innovative Healthcare Teams Through LEGO® Serious Play® and Human-Centered Design

The Wyoming Hospital Association/Wyoming Long Term Care Association annual meeting is just around the corner. We have a new, innovative program designed for healthcare workers.

Healthcare organizations face increasing pressure to solve complex challenges while fostering collaboration, adaptability, and innovation. In this highly interactive workshop, Garret Westlake introduces participants to LEGO® Serious Play® and human-centered design—approaches used by leading health systems, Fortune 500 companies, and innovation teams to generate new ideas, align stakeholders, and accelerate problem solving.

Through hands-on exercises, participants will learn the fundamentals of design thinking, explore emerging healthcare challenges, and use LEGO® models to uncover insights, strengthen communication, and develop creative solutions. Working in teams, attendees will transform ideas into actionable concepts and strategic “superstories” that can be applied within their own organizations.

Participants will leave with practical tools and techniques to improve collaboration, drive innovation, and create meaningful change in healthcare settings.

Garret Westlake, PhD

Dr. Garret Westlake is the inaugural Vice Provost for Innovation and Strategic Design at Virginia Commonwealth University and a professor of product and healthcare innovation in the VCU School of Business. A Fulbright Specialist, Google Higher Education Faculty AI Fellow, Fast Company Impact Council member, and award-winning LEGO® Serious Play® master facilitator, he helps universities, health systems, companies, and communities turn complex challenges into measurable innovation outcomes.

Rural Health Transformation Program Application Portal Now Open; August 2 Deadline Approaches

The application portal for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Request for Applications is officially open, giving eligible organizations a limited window to prepare and submit their materials. All applications must be completed and submitted by August 2.

With the deadline fast approaching, applicants are strongly encouraged to begin working on their applications now rather than waiting for additional guidance.

Additional guidance for applicants with questions is expected to be shared as it becomes available.

[RHTP Information](#)

[Portal to submit application](#)

2026 Workforce Summit

Shaping the Future Healthcare Workforce – A Leadership Forum

MUST REGISTER BY JULY 20, 2026

The Wyoming Hospital Association is pleased to announce that registration is now open for our **2026 Workforce Summit: *Shaping the Future Healthcare Workforce – A Leadership Forum***, taking place on **Tuesday, August 4, 2026**, at the **Hilton Garden Inn in Casper**.

This leadership forum brings together healthcare executives, HR leaders, and clinical decision-makers to explore today's most pressing workforce challenges, including shortages, burnout, financial pressures, and shifting care delivery models.

Discussions will focus on:

- Moving beyond reactive staffing toward strategic, data-driven solutions
- Strengthening culture, trust, collaboration, and long-term workforce resilience
- Examining operational alignment, technology, governance, allied health shortages, state-specific insights, and peer-led strategies

Together, these discussions will help leaders improve recruitment, retention, patient flow, and sustainable organizational performance.

Information has been sent to all WHA member hospitals. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelsey Prestesater at kelsey@wyohospitals.com.



Hospital Launches TeleNICU Program

In an effort to keep more newborns here at home, Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County has teamed up with the University of Utah Health's TeleNICU program. MHSC's Labor & Delivery nurses, Respiratory Therapists, Pediatricians, and Emergency Department staff recently participated in two days of TeleNICU training focused on strengthening the care MHSC provides to its most vulnerable patients.

"TeleNICU connects our team with neonatal specialists at the University of Utah Health, allowing us to collaborate in real time when a newborn requires advanced support," said Megan Guess, Labor & Delivery Director. "Looking ahead, our goal is to reduce the need for newborn transfers to larger hospitals by expanding the level of care we can provide within our community," she said. "Keeping babies close to home allows families to remain together during a critical time while still

receiving exceptional care. This program has lowered the transfer rate of every hospital U of U Health has partnered with.”

In 2025, the hospital welcomed 409 newborns into the world. Of those, 25 were transferred to larger hospitals for various reasons including prematurity, respiratory or cardiac concerns, and surgical issues. “Through continued training, hands-on skills development, and simulation exercises, we are working toward the long-term goal of becoming a Level II Nursery, further enhancing the services available to families in our region,” Guess said.

This partnership provides more than expert consultation — it creates opportunities for ongoing education, skill development, and additional support during emergent situations, Guess said. By working closely with the NICU team at University of Utah Health, MHSC obstetrics and clinical staff can continue to advance their knowledge and confidence while ensuring newborns and their families receive safe, high-quality care close to home.

HRSA to Issue Grants For Rural Hospitals

The Health Resources and Services Administration has announced new funding available to healthcare providers in rural areas through the **Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Program**. Up to 20 grantees may be awarded up to \$250,000 each to providers, such as critical access hospitals, rural health clinics or networks of small rural providers, to build programs that collect and use clinical data and evidence-based approaches to improve healthcare quality, particularly focused on improving chronic disease outcomes. The grant also is intended to be used to strengthen the skills and collaboration of the billing and coding staff in coordination with the front-line clinical staff. Applications must be submitted by Aug. 6, 2026.

[More information can be found here](#)

DataGen Quality Webinar Series

DataGen will host a complimentary 2-part quality webinar series on August 11th and 18th to review three Medicare quality programs: Value Based Purchasing, Readmission Reduction Program, and Hospital Acquired Condition Reduction Program.

These webinars will include an overview of each program, a deep dive into the methodology, a review of the DataGen reports available to you as part of your membership with Wyoming Hospital Association, and state specific impacts.

Links to each session are below:

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 – Session 1: [DataGen Overview of Medicare's Value-Based Purchasing Program & Analysis for WHA](#)

Tuesday, August 18, 2026 – Session 2: [DataGen Overview of Medicare's RRP/HAC Programs & Analyses for WHA](#)

[Register for August 11 Webinar](#)

[Register for August 18 Webinar](#)

WYOMING HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar · 2026

SEP
8

GOLF

WHA Golf Tournament

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Cheyenne Country Club

SEP
9-10

ANNUAL

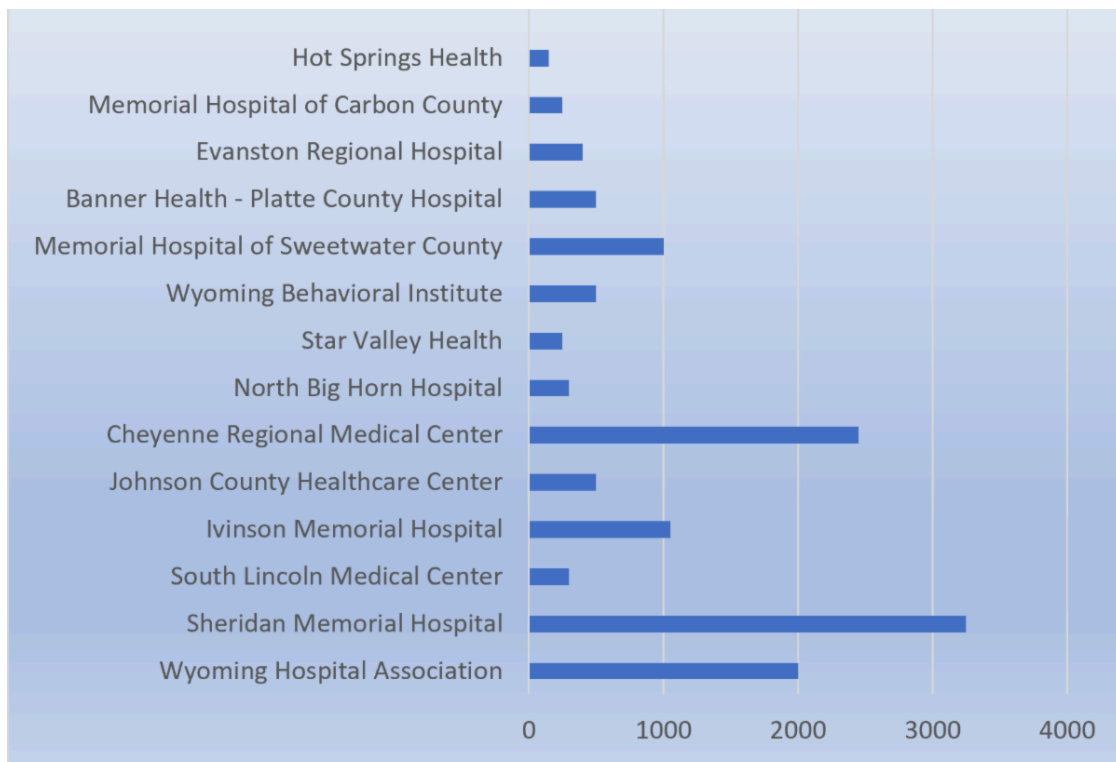
WHA Annual Meeting

Wednesday-Thursday, Sep 9-10, 2026

Little America Hotel & Resort, Cheyenne

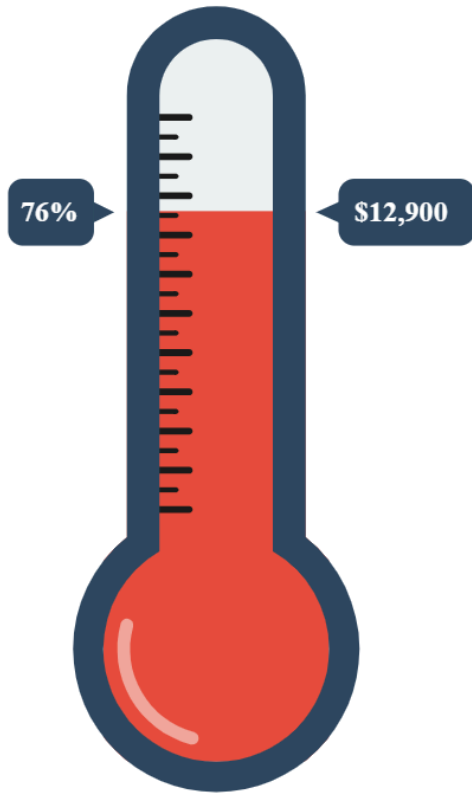
[Annual Meeting Information Can be Found Here](#)

WHA PAC Goal for 2026 Contributors



WHA PAC

GOAL: \$17,000



Barry Burkart
Eric Boley
Kelsey Prestesater
Jenifer Shassetz
Dave Ryerse
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
Cody Sinclair
Kristen Czaban
Liz Dearcorn
Bryan Opitz
Kelly Lieb
Sierra Gross, MD
Jon Smith
Mary Armijo
Kerry Ashment
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