

# News Briefs

October 31, 2025

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## Wyoming Hospital Association

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## Rural Health Matters

National Rural Health Day  
Thursday, Nov. 20



## November 20th is National Rural Health Day!

- One in seven Americans live in rural areas, meaning they face greater challenges in accessing health care.
- Rural hospitals face unique challenges in providing care to our communities.
- Despite the challenges facing rural health care, we continue to provide high quality care for the communities in our area.
- Did you know rural hospitals provide \$220 billion in economic activity annually? Rural hospitals support 1 in 12 jobs in the U.S. — but many are in danger of closing. Learn more about the federal support necessary to keep hospitals open and their workers employed: <https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2023/02/infographic-rural-hospitals-community-cornerstones-facing-perilous-threats-to-care-infographic.pdf>
- Rural hospitals do more than just treat patients — they provide employment, buy goods and services from local businesses, and generate local and state tax income.

- Workforce recruitment and retention is a persistent challenge for rural hospitals



## The Power of Rural Cybersecurity

National Rural Health Day's webinar on November 20th from 12-1p.

The webinar, titled "Connected and Protected: The Power of Rural Cybersecurity" will be hosted by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, and facilitated by the Center for Long-Term Cybersecurity.

[Click here for more information and to register for the event](#)



## New Approach to Behavioral Healthcare Offers Hope

In rural communities like those in Sheridan and Johnson counties, wide-open spaces and long dirt roads can make help feel far away, but a new behavioral health outpatient clinic at Sheridan Memorial Hospital has spent its first year proving that care can be both close to home and deeply personal.

Since opening in November 2024, the Behavioral Health Clinic at Sheridan Memorial Hospital has taken a systematic approach to breaking down barriers to mental health care. The clinic has helped clarify diagnoses, connect patients with community resources and reduce the number of involuntary holds related to mental health crises. These improvements are the result of specialized behavioral health expertise and strong partnerships with Sheridan Memorial Hospital's primary care, emergency and hospitalist teams — alongside close collaboration with local mental health providers and law enforcement.

The small team — currently comprised of one psychiatrist, a licensed clinical social worker, medical administrative assistant and director — has seen more than 400 patients and has served as a resource for inpatient teams caring for patients in other areas of the hospital, including the Emergency Department. Those efforts have resulted in many success stories, including examples of individuals proactively reaching out when they are struggling or “graduating” out of their need for direct care from psychiatrist Dr. Michael Kinney. “We see a lot of chronic stress — people who can’t remember the last time they felt truly well,” psychiatrist Dr. Michael Kinney said. “PTSD, major depression and anxiety are common here, but they often show up as sleeplessness, pain, GI issues — a mystery that isn’t a belly problem so much as a brain problem.”

Early data suggests the team's approach to caring for community members' behavioral health needs is working. A review of the first year shows a 24 percent decrease in involuntary holds under Title 25 and a 46 percent decrease in the number of days behavioral health patients have been in the hospital at SMH. This data indicates individuals are receiving the right care at the right time to match their needs.

“The decrease in involuntary holds is a clear reflection of Sheridan Memorial Hospital's culture and our commitment to improving behavioral health care,” said Brittany Goodvin, SMH director of behavioral health. “Patients are building trust in our team by having the opportunity to remain in Sheridan for their care. This progress comes from the collaborative efforts of our medical staff and leadership team, who have worked together to make the most of new resources in psychiatry and care coordination.”

The team has also supported patients' journeys in voluntarily choosing other paths for care including outpatient plans, community support or, in some cases, inpatient behavioral health

facilities. As more patients reach out proactively and community curiosity about the clinic and the services offered continues to increase, the SMH Behavioral Health team is hopeful it will continue to turn the tide in normalizing behavioral healthcare as just another, standard part of healthcare. Gaps in care remain, though. Wyoming lacks inpatient options for adolescents, residential programs for adults with severe mental illness and providers who specialize in different areas of psychiatry — for example, eating disorders or other issues. In addition, insurance nuances can complicate placements for those needing care.

Still, the Behavioral Health team at SMH credits the communities' therapists and others willing to step up and offer things like rent or utility assistance, food and toiletries, etc. The network that has grown and strengthened in the last year is closing the distance to personalized behavioral healthcare when that distance once felt insurmountable.

While data has shown the early successes of the program, the opening of a new Behavioral Health facility at SMH will further the efforts already underway. Set to open in the fall of 2026, the Behavioral Health facility at SMH will include four levels of care — an outpatient clinic, behavioral health urgent care, crisis stabilization and inpatient care. Additional staffing, too, will ensure more care coordinators are available to see patients through their behavioral health journey and more support is available in our communities.

## **Exclusive Member Webinar: The Fact and Fiction of International Recruitment**

Medical Solutions, a WHA Resources endorsed vendor, will be holding an exclusive webinar on December 9<sup>th</sup> from 12-1 p.m. CST: "The Fact and Fiction of International Recruitment"

Healthcare organizations nationwide are facing ongoing workforce challenges, making it more important than ever to build sustainable, reliable care teams. Join Ron Hoppe, CEO of WorldWide HealthStaff Solutions, a Medical Solutions company, for an exclusive webinar that cuts through common myths about international recruitment. Drawing on more than 25 years of experience, Ron will share practical, data-driven insights on how international recruitment can be a strategic, long-term approach to strengthening your workforce, enhancing diversity, and improving patient care outcomes.

[Reserve Your Spot Here](#)

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Solutions**™



**AHA Toolkit Includes  
Resources to Promote 2026  
Open Enrollment**



The AHA has released a **social media toolkit** with sample posts and graphics encouraging people to sign up for 2026 health coverage via the Health Insurance Marketplaces or through Medicare. Open enrollment through the Health Insurance Marketplaces begins Nov. 1 and ends Jan. 15; open enrollment for Medicare began Oct. 16 and ends Dec. 7.

### Social Media Toolkit for Open Enrollment

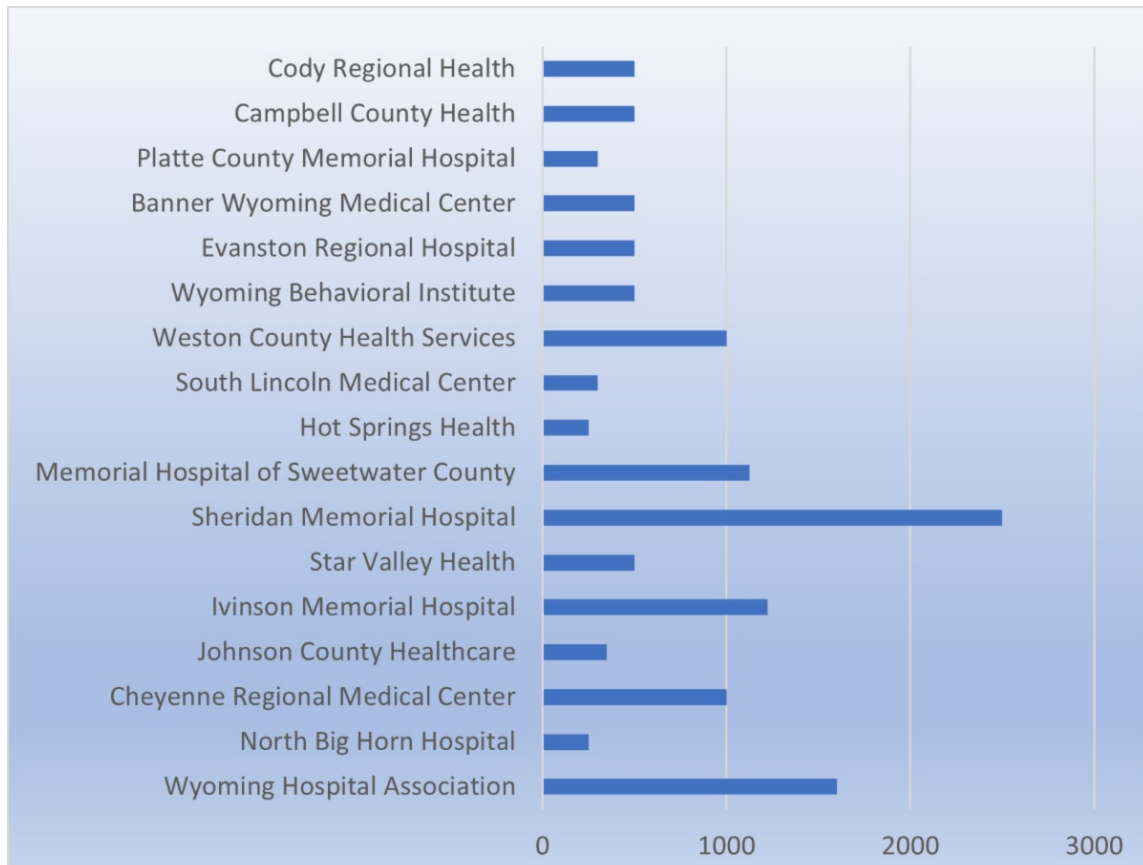


**2026 Wyoming Budget Session**  
**February 9, 2026**

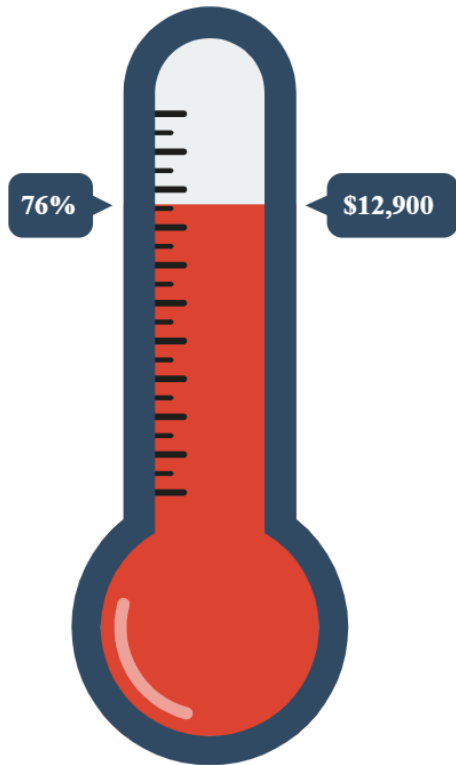
**WHA Annual Meeting**  
**September 9-10, 2026**  
**Little America, Cheyenne**

## WHA PAC Goal for 2025

### Contributors



**GOAL: \$17,000**



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