

News Briefs

September 18, 2026

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New WHA Board of Directors Elected at 2026 Annual Meeting

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — The Wyoming Hospital Association is pleased to announce its newly elected Board of Directors for 2027, selected during the 2026 Wyoming Hospital Association/Wyoming Long Term Care Association Annual Meeting, held September 9-10, 2026. The incoming board will guide WHA's continued efforts to support Wyoming's hospitals and healthcare facilities in the year ahead.

Officers



Mike Phillips, CEO

Chair
Wyoming Behavioral Institute
Casper, WY



Matt Shahan, CEO

Chair-Elect
Campbell County Health
Gillette, WY



Tim Thornell, CEO

Past Chair
Cheyenne Regional Medical Center
Cheyenne, WY



Luke Senden, CEO

Secretary-Treasurer
Johnson County Healthcare
Buffalo, WY

WHA thanks all outgoing board members for their service and looks forward to another year of strong leadership on behalf of Wyoming's hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Directors



Dan Ordyna, CEO

Star Valley Health
Afton, WY



Lance Porter, CEO

Banner Wyoming Medical Center
Casper, WY



Jeff Sollis, CEO

St. John's Health
Jackson, WY

Ex-Officio Directors



Mike McCafferty

AHA Delegate
Sheridan Memorial Hospital
Sheridan, WY



Tim Thornell

AHA Delegate
Cheyenne Regional Medical Center
Cheyenne, WY



Eric Boley

President
Wyoming Hospital Association
Cheyenne, WY



Malek Receives Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence

Article Provided by Hot Springs Health

Katie Malek, RN, from Hot Springs Health, has received the Wyoming Hospital Association's 2026 Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence. Malek received her award last night at the Wyoming Hospital Association's annual meeting.

Established in 1983, this prestigious statewide honor is bestowed upon a single nurse in Wyoming who exemplifies extraordinary clinical expertise, profound compassion, professional leadership, and a lifelong dedication to advancing the nursing profession.

As an obstetrics nurse at HSH's teaching hospital, Malek consistently goes above and beyond as a true role model, making a meaningful difference in the lives of patients, peers, and medical learners alike.

"Katie consistently demonstrates a rare combination of clinical excellence, adaptability, compassion, and professionalism," said Bridget Truempler, director of nursing at HSH. "Receiving the Norman S. Holt Award affirms what her patients, peers, and leaders witness every day: she represents the very highest standards of healthcare excellence."

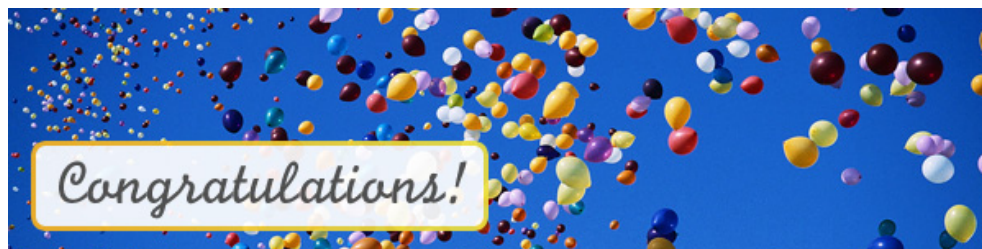
Patients and families frequently encounter Malek during some of life's most vulnerable and significant moments. Her calm demeanor, empathy, and clear communication create a reassuring environment that reduces anxiety and empowers patients to actively participate in their care. In addition to her core role in obstetrics, Malek is a highly skilled and versatile clinician who works as a medical-surgical nurse and frequently assists in the emergency department.

"I have been working with Katie for the last six years... Katie is very knowledgeable and experienced in taking care of routine and complicated patients," Dr. Hallie Bischoff said. "I am always happy to see her on the schedule and know that patients are going to be well taken care of." As a Certified Breastfeeding Specialist, she has strengthened maternal-child health education by providing evidence-based guidance and hands-on support that builds new mothers' confidence. Beyond the bedside, Malek is committed to shaping the future of healthcare delivery at HSH. She played an instrumental role in developing and implementing an obstetrical emergency simulation training program, which brought realistic scenarios to life to strengthen team preparedness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and patient safety.

Additionally, she helped pioneer processes enabling OB nurses to perform medical screening examinations, expanding the scope of nursing practice and strengthening access to timely patient assessment. As a respected charge nurse, she leads with integrity and ensures safe, efficient, and compassionate care delivery across her shift.

Malek serves as an exceptional educator, mentor, and preceptor. She plays a vital role in onboarding new nurses, guiding residents, and providing real-time bedside instruction that bridges theoretical knowledge with clinical practice.

"Katie is an amazing nurse with great work ethic, kindness, and knowledge," Dr. Josh Andrew, resident provider, said. "Working with her is always a joy and pleasure. She is also a great teacher and has been a big help with learners, including myself."



Wyoming Nurses Recognized as Norman S. Holt Award Nominees

Eleven nurses from hospitals and healthcare facilities across Wyoming were recognized as nominees for the Wyoming Hospital Association's Norman S. Holt Award for Nursing Excellence at the 2026 Wyoming Hospital Association/Wyoming Long Term Care Association Annual Meeting, held September 9–10, 2026.

While the award ultimately went to another honoree, WHA recognized all nominees for their outstanding contributions to the nursing profession and to patient care in their communities.

This year's nominees were:

Emma Marand, RN — SageWest Health Care

Megan Guess, MSN, RN — Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County

Nichole Gutierrez, RN — Powell Valley Healthcare

Elizabeth Gutzmann, BSN, RN — Banner Wyoming Medical Center

Deanna Starcer, BSN, RN — Star Valley Health

Rachel Larson, RN — Banner Washakie Medical Center

Janessa Mann, BSN — Memorial Hospital of Carbon County

Tara Leinart, RN, MSN — Cheyenne Regional Medical Center

Kelli Pierce, RN — Evanston Regional Hospital

Tamara Thomson, RN — Elkhorn Valley Rehabilitation Hospital

Katy Collins, RN — Sheridan Memorial Hospital

Each of these nurses was nominated by their facility in recognition of their dedication, skill, and impact on patients and colleagues. WHA congratulates all nominees on being recognized among the best in Wyoming's nursing profession.

Mike McCafferty Named Most Valuable PAC Player

Mike McCafferty, CEO of Sheridan Memorial Hospital, has been recognized as the Most Valuable PAC Player for his advocacy on behalf of Wyoming's hospitals and healthcare community.

The award recognizes McCafferty's leadership and engagement with the PAC, reflecting his commitment to advancing hospital advocacy efforts at the national level. McCafferty, who also serves as an AHA Delegate for the Wyoming Hospital Association, has been a consistent voice for Wyoming's healthcare priorities in Washington, D.C.

WHA congratulates Mike McCafferty on this well-deserved recognition and thanks him for his continued dedication to advocating for hospitals across Wyoming.



Mike Hunsaker Named AHA Grassroots Champion

Mike Hunsaker of Star Valley Health has been named a Grassroots Champion by the American Hospital Association (AHA), recognizing his advocacy efforts on behalf of hospitals and healthcare in Wyoming.

The AHA Grassroots Champion award honors individuals who go above and beyond in building relationships with elected officials and advancing hospital advocacy at the state and federal level. Hunsaker's efforts have helped ensure that Wyoming's healthcare priorities are heard by lawmakers, strengthening the voice of rural and community hospitals across the state.

The Wyoming Hospital Association congratulates Mike Hunsaker on this national recognition and thanks him for his continued commitment to advocating for Star Valley Health and hospitals throughout Wyoming.



Sandy Browne Named 2026 Volunteer of the Year

The Wyoming Hospital Association has named Sandy Browne, a longtime hospice volunteer at Sheridan Memorial Hospital, as the recipient of its 2026 Volunteer of the Year Award. The honor was announced at the 2026 Wyoming Hospital Association/Wyoming Long Term Care Association Annual Meeting, held September 9–10, 2026.

Browne was nominated by Kalista Sadler, MSW, PCSW, Hospice Social Worker and Hospice Volunteer Coordinator at Sheridan Memorial Hospital, who described Browne as "a steadfast, compassionate, and irreplaceable presence" within the hospital's hospice program since 1997 — nearly 30 years of service.

Drawing on her background as a nurse, Browne has spent decades reading to patients, holding hands, listening to stories, and providing companionship and dignity to individuals at the end of life. Her work extends beyond direct patient care: she provides respite for families, sits vigil in the hospital, and actively participates in the hospice bereavement program, including monthly grief groups and the semi-annual Remembrance Memorial. She has also played a mentorship role within the volunteer team, welcoming new volunteers and modeling best practices for hospice care.

"After nearly three decades, her compassion has not dimmed and her commitment has not wavered," Sadler wrote in her nomination letter. "She continues to show up with the same kindness, humility, and purpose that she brought on her very first day in 1997."

In presenting the award, WHA recognized Browne's extraordinary dedication and her profound impact on patients and families throughout her nearly 30 years of volunteer service — service that Sadler called reflective of "the best of Wyoming's values: community, generosity, and deep care for one another."



Cheyenne Regional Medical Center Volunteers Named 2026 WHA Outstanding Volunteer Program

The Wyoming Hospital Association has named the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (CRMC) Volunteers as the recipient of its 2026 Outstanding Volunteer Program Award. The honor was announced at the 2026 Wyoming Hospital Association/Wyoming Long Term Care Association Annual Meeting, held September 9–10, 2026.

The program was nominated by Brenna Heaton, Manager of Guest Services and Volunteer Coordinator at CRMC, who highlighted the scale and impact of the organization's volunteer force. In the 2025/2026 fiscal year, 88 volunteers contributed 17,722 hours to the hospital, guided by an elected Board of Directors that oversees fundraising, projects, and volunteer operations across the organization.

Beyond staffing key areas of the hospital — including the gift shop, surgical and emergency waiting areas, the cancer center, labor and delivery, and the main information desk — CRMC Volunteers give back financially to the organization and community. Through its grants and scholarship committees, the group distributed more than \$110,000 last year alone, including \$78,219.85 to 15 hospital departments and \$10,000 in scholarships to 10 Laramie County Community College students pursuing medical fields. Additional 2025 contributions included a \$12,000 donation to the CRMC ELF fund, \$20,000 in gift shop equipment upgrades, and funding for hand-sewn surgical pillows made by a dedicated team of 15 volunteers.

Much of this giving is powered by the group's own fundraising efforts — bake sales, jewelry and yard sales, raffles, and holiday gift wrapping raised more than \$18,000 last year — along with the volunteer-run Pink Boutique gift shop, which alone accounted for over 4,200 volunteer hours. The group also maintains a therapy dog program with 10 handlers contributing more than 300 hours, and volunteer-built amenities like the hospital's Healing Garden.

"They are truly a family," Heaton wrote in the nomination. "They are friends outside of the hospital, they take care of each other when someone is in need, and they support each other. This program makes our hospital, and our community, a better place."

ACHE Award Recipients



Robin Roling, FACHE
Chief Operating Officer
Cheyenne Regional Medical Center

**American College of Healthcare
Executives**



Jennifer Burrell
Associate Administrator
SageWest Health Care

**American College of Healthcare
Executives**

WHA Golf Tournament Results



Rage Geringer - Longest Drive in the Fairway - Men

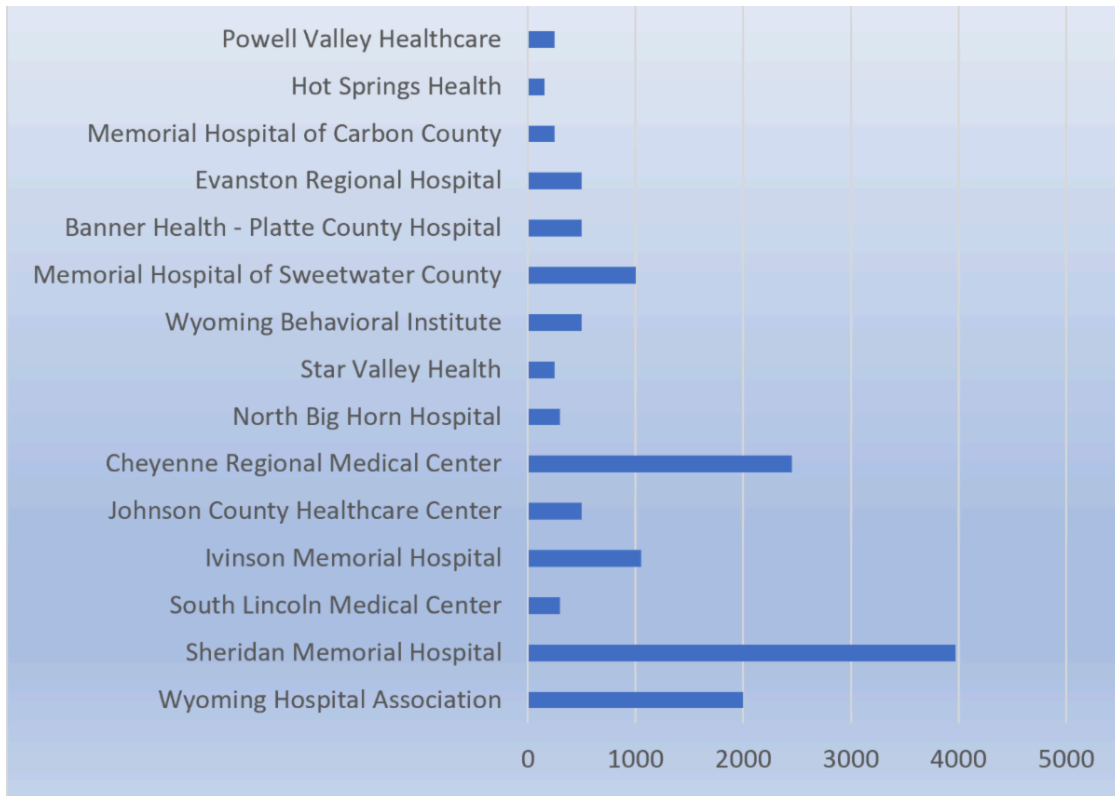
Ronda Meyer - Longest Drive in the Fairway - Women

David Bush - Closest to the Pin - Men



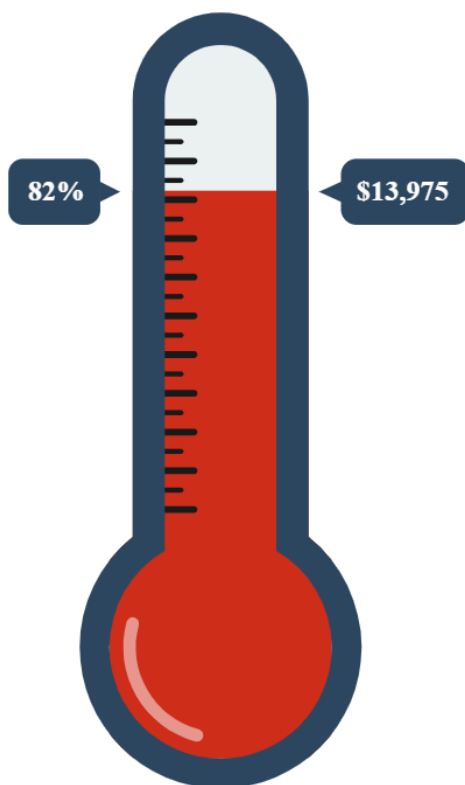
WHA PAC Goal for 2026

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
Scott Alwin
Amy Downing
Todd Sandberg
Erin Oetken



Wyoming Hospital Association | 2005 Warren Ave | Cheyenne, WY 82001-3725 US

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