

**Wyoming Healthcare Commission**  
**January 12, 2009**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Herschler Building**  
**Cheyenne, WY**

**Commissioners:** Larry Kirven, Co-chairman; Rod Barton; Barbara Cohee; Cathy Guschewsky; Barb Rea; Lorraine Saulino-Klein; Brent Sherard and Ken Vines.

**Legislators:** Sen. Cale Case; Rep. Kathy Davison; Rep. Mary Hales; Rep. Timothy Hallinan; Jr.; Rep. Elaine Harvey; Rep. Jack Landon, Sen. Mike Massie; Sen. John Schiffer; Sen. Charles Scott; Rep. Jeb Steward; Rep. Dave Zwonitzer.

**Guests:** Sharla Allen; Steve Bahmer; Larry Biggio; Daryl Bindschadler; Sheila Bush; JM Calkins; Wendy Curran; Jan Drury; Stacie Dunn; Laci Garst; Marguerite Herman; Dan Lex; John McBride; Susan Menghini; Dan Perdue; Lloyd Wilder;.

**Staff:** Susie Scott, Executive Director; Beth Worthen, Assistant Director; Fran Cadez, Facilitator; Barb Robinson, Database Project Manager; Keith Hageman, Administrative Assistant.

**10:35 a.m. Co-chairman Larry Kirven called the meeting to order.**

**I. Update on meeting with Governor Freudenthal**

Co-chairman Larry Kirven, Commissioner Cathy Guschewsky and Commissioner Rod Barton met with Governor Freudenthal at 9:30 a.m. this morning, prior to today's Wyoming Healthcare Commission meeting. They shared with Governor Freudenthal the Commission's support for the Healthcare Demonstration Pilot (Senate File 24) and expressed that the Access Design piece (Senate File 43) and the Healthcare Demonstration Pilot piece are complimentary to one another. They also articulated the Commission's interest in developing a plan for a Health Policy Board.

After the update on the meeting with Governor Freudenthal the Commission discussed developing a plan for a Health Policy Board. The overall feeling is that developing a plan for a Health Policy Board would be a worthwhile pursuit for the Commission. However, the need for and the value of such an entity must be clearly demonstrated. Also, the composition of such an entity is important.

**II. Rep. Jack Landon's bill to extend Healthcare Commission**

Rep. Jack Landon briefly discussed a bill he has been working on. Representative Landon has drafted a bill that extends the life of the Wyoming Healthcare Commission. It has not been assigned a bill number yet and will probably not receive one until next week. The bill has three essential elements besides extending the life of the commission:

1. It assigns 4 liaisons (2 from the House and 2 from the Senate);

2. It would require the commission to report on priorities in healthcare; and
3. It would allow a legislative committee to consider those priorities and assign the commission research topics that the legislature deems worthy of pursuit.

Representative Landon commented that this would be the first time that liaisons have been written into statute and it may be difficult to do.

### **III. Carbon County Pilot Update**

Executive Director Susie Scott gave a brief update on the Carbon County Pilot Project to the Commission. At the last Carbon County Stakeholder's meeting they continued their work on the three priorities they have established: 1. Emergency Medical Services (EMS), 2. Physician Recruitment and 3. Twenty-four/Seven (24/7) care. They are in the process of shoring up what they need to implement the EMS piece.

The Carbon County Stakeholder's will be asking the Wyoming Healthcare Commission to fund on the ground assistance from SafeTech Solutions for the implementation phase of the project. SafeTech Solutions previously conducted the EMS System Assessment in Carbon County, also funded by the WHCC. With the Healthcare Commission scheduled to sunset in June 2009, the involvement of the WHCC in the Carbon County project will become more limited.

### **IV. Patient Safety Update**

Fran Cadez, the Wyoming Healthcare Commission's patient safety consultant, gave the Commission an update on Patient Safety.

Executive Director Susie Scott and Fran Cadez met with the Wyoming Business Council last Friday (January 9, 2009). The Wyoming Business Council recently finished developing their strategic planning for the year and is interested in developing a plan to address healthcare issues for people, communities and business. The development of a Patient Safety Organization could assist in those areas. A draft of the PSO business plan that the Wyoming Healthcare Commission's Patient Safety Task Force has been working on will be sent to the Wyoming Business Council today (January 12, 2009) for their review. The Wyoming Business Council may be able to assist with setting up a Patient Safety Organization (PSO) in Wyoming.

Commissioner Jack Glode and Fran Cadez went to a Patient Safety Update Workshop in Nashville for an update on what is being done at the federal level. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is moving quickly to get things in place for PSO certification. At the federal level they would like to have PSOs using uniform reporting systems and then create a network of training derived from the data that is gathered.

Commissioner Jack Glode and Fran Cadez had another conference call with the Maryland Patient Safety Center and worked on getting numbers and information on the cost to

participate with some of the services Maryland offers. A needs analysis regarding what facilities are currently doing needs to be done.

The Wyoming Healthcare Commission's Patient Safety Task Force also had a conference call recently. They have the stakeholders involved and now need to get the dollars. No legislation is necessary. The PSO needs to be independent and therefore cannot be funded through the legislature.

## **V. Legislator Review of Select Legislation for 2009 Session**

### **1. Sen. Mike Massie- Accelerated Nursing Degree Repayment Program (Senate File 23)**

Sen. Mike Massie gave the Commission a brief overview of the Accelerated Nursing Degree Repayment Program bill (Senate File 23). The bill is intended to help the state deal with the present and future shortages in nursing. It encourages students who already have a bachelor's degree to go into nursing by offering a deferred loan repayment program of \$25,000 per student. The student is required to work as a nurse in Wyoming for two (2) years after graduating from the program. The curriculum already exists. Students are required to pay back the loan if they do not complete the program. The program is for obtaining a bachelor's in nursing and not an advanced practice nursing degree.

### **2. Sen. Mike Massie- Child Health Insurance Program (Senate File 39)**

Sen. Mike Massie gave the Commission a brief overview of the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) bill (Senate File 39). The bill basically does the following:

1. It expands the eligibility of the program, increasing the maximum income level from not more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 300% and provides that state funds (using a sliding fee scale) can be used to provide the coverage if the federal government does not.
2. It allows families whose incomes are above the 300% FPL to enroll their children (purchase coverage) at the same rate as the state's.

The bill also identifies a maximum number of children that can participate as a cost control safety. The benefits are not in the legislation. The existing benefit committee will determine the benefits.

### **3. Rep. Jeb Steward- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Sustainability Trust (House Bill)**

Rep. Jeb Steward gave the Commission an overview of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Sustainability Trust bill. This bill is a result of the Carbon County Pilot Project that the Wyoming Healthcare Commission funded. The bill sets up an

emergency medical services sustainability trust account. The income from the trust account will be used to provide grants to improve EMS. The bill establishes a grant process for needs analysis/assessment for EMS and for master plan implementation. One of the intents of the bill is to have a more coordinated and integrated approach to the EMS system. Currently there is a statewide trauma system in place that is legislatively mandated. This bill enhances the transportation component. Some trauma centers are being burdened by transporting the trauma patients at their own expense.

**4. Rep. Dave Zwonitzer- State Employees and Officials Group Insurance (House Bill 40)**

Rep. Dave Zwonitzer gave the Commission a brief overview of the State Employees and Officials Group Insurance bill. The goal of this bill is to get the discussion started concerning offering some kind of health insurance to legislators. It was noted that Wyoming and New Mexico are the only two legislatures in the United States that don't offer anything to their state legislature. This bill will allow the legislature to at least look into the possibilities.

**5. Sen. Cale Case- Small Group Insurance (Senate File 50)**

Sen. Cale Case gave the Commission a brief overview of the Small Group Insurance bill (Senate File 50). Group policies are currently very expensive. The number of group policies in Wyoming is going down. This bill amends the Small Employer Health Insurance Availability Act to exclude the applicability of the act to employers who have not offered any health benefit plan in the previous 18 months. The intent of this bill is to allow more people coverage.

**6. Rep. Timothy Hallinan- Tort Reform Bill (House Bill)**

Representative Timothy Hallinan informed the Commission that he will be bringing a tort reform bill this session and he would appreciate any support.

**LUNCH 12:00 Noon**

**VI. Healthcare Legislation**

Executive Director Susie Scott and Assistant Director Beth Worthen went over a handout that summarized selected healthcare legislation for the 2009 Session with the Commission. Commissioners were provided with a copy of the document.

**VII. Discretionary Clause Prohibition Act (Senate File 62)**

Jan Drury from the American Heart Association and Marguerite Herman from the Wyoming League of Women Voters gave a brief presentation on the Discretionary Clause Prohibition Act (Senate File 62) that is being considered this session. This bill eliminates the discretionary clause that insurance

companies currently have. The intent of this bill is to protect consumers and improve the ability to collect claims. There is another bill being introduced this session that goes hand and glove with the discretionary clause prohibition but it does not have a number yet, that bill is concerned with a medical necessity review procedure.

#### **VIII. Primary Care Policy Brief**

Assistant Director Beth Worthen gave the Commission a brief overview of the Primary Care Policy Brief that was conducted by the University of Washington. Commissioners were provided with a copy of the brief. Mark Doescher, M.D., Director and Sue Skillman, Deputy Director, of the Center for Health Workforce Studies and Rural Health Research Center at the University of Washington were on the line to answer any questions concerning the brief.

The brief reaffirms that there is a primary care physician shortage in Wyoming and underscores the high degree to which Wyoming relies on advanced practice nurses and physician assistants for primary care. The brief also points out that the majority of those who are practicing primary care in Wyoming are individuals who grew up in a rural area, like Wyoming, and/or went to school in Wyoming. Mark Doescher, M.D., pointed out that attrition with retirement is something that needs to be considered as well and is brought out in the brief.

It is important that this primary care policy brief be shared with legislators. It may be necessary to use a format for the brief that is streamlined for legislators.

Project Manager Barb Robinson asked Commissioners to let her know if there is any additional data that Commissioners need. Commissioner Rod Barton commented that it would be interesting to know the sites in the state where medical students are rotating through. Co-chairman Larry Kirven commented that there is some room to improve current programs that bring medical students into rural areas in the state (housing stipends, etc.).

**VOTE-** Commissioner Lorrain Saulino-Klein motioned that the primary care policy brief be approved by the Commission. Commissioner John Vandell seconded the motion. The primary care policy brief was approved by the Commission unanimously.

#### **IX. Bill Support**

Commissioner Cathy Guschewsky asked if the Commission is going to offer formal support for the bills that the legislators presented today. After discussion it was determined that the Commission will not give resolutions of support for any of the bills as this has not been done in the past. Commissioners were encouraged to speak with legislators as individual citizens.

**X. Wrap up**

Executive Director Susie Scott announced that February's meeting will more than likely be in Cheyenne.

**Meeting adjourned 2:00 p.m.**