

WYOMING HEALTHCARE COMMISSION
March 20, 2006
Meeting Minutes
Casper

ATTENDANCE:

Dixie Roberts, Chairman; Rod Barton, Barbara Cohee, Jack Glode, M.D., Carol Jenkins, Steve Mossbrook, Barb Rea, Commissioners; Lee Clabots, Deputy Director of Administration Wyoming Department of Health; Susan Anderson, Executive Director and Keith Hageman, Administrative Assistant, WHCC staff.

GUESTS:

Lora Huston, Dan Neil, Tom Gallagher, Barbara Nordby, Linda Harris, Carol Crump, Bill McDowell, Barb Watters and Lynn Whalen, Julie Briggs.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Roberts

INTRODUCTIONS

The new Executive Director for the Wyoming Healthcare Commission (WHCC), Susan Anderson was introduced to the commission. Prior to her appointment as the Executive Director of the Wyoming Healthcare Commission (WHCC), Susan was a Legislative Liaison and Policy Analyst for the Governor's Office. Susan has also been the editor of the Casper Journal, worked in Public Television and has an extensive media background.

Susan Anderson gave her perspective on the 2006 Budget Session. She commented that there was a great deal of discussion as to what the WHCC does. Overall, she said, the WHCC is viewed by a majority of the state legislators as a credible organization that provides unbiased information and valid recommendations to the State Legislature. She also commented that it is important to keep the state legislators abreast of the issues that the WHCC is dealing with prior to the legislative sessions so that they are well informed at the start of the session.

Several commissioners commented that the WHCC as a body needs to determine what needs to be done in order to be better heard by the State Legislature. Chairman Roberts commented that the Governor's Office encourages commissioners to talk with legislators.

Susie Pouliot from the Wyoming Medical Society and Dan Perdue from the Wyoming Hospital Association were unable to attend the meeting due to bad weather. They were both scheduled to talk with the commission about the Specialty Hospital issue.

REVIEW OF ENABLING LEGISLATION

Medicaid Benefit Structure Study

The new enabling legislation contains a mandate for the WHCC to conduct a study of the redesign of the Medicaid Benefit structure. The WHCC can work together with the Joint, Labor, Health & Social Services Committee and also with the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH).

There have been federal changes (i.e., the Deficit Reduction Act) that are going to affect Medicaid. The WHCC needs to be in contact with policy makers familiar

with what is going on at the federal level.

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) will be looking at a statewide waiver plan. The WHCC was advised to use Greg Gruman, the State Medicaid Director, as the contact person regarding the WDH's statewide waiver.

There was comment that the commissioners need to receive a copy of the report and recommendations done by the WDH that was conducted in accordance with Chapter 182, 2005 Session Laws of Wyoming, which is referred to in the enabling legislation addressing the Medicaid Benefit structure study.

It was also noted that the WHCC needs to look at the whole picture of the Wyoming Medicaid Program (not just outpatients, women and children.) The WHCC needs to look at nursing home patients and chronically ill patients as well.

There was comment that at the next WHCC meeting there needs to be time devoted to going over Medicaid costs allocation.

Budget

The WHCC received a budget of almost \$2.1 million. The budget for the six (6) projects that the WHCC will be conducting was reviewed as well as the revised WHCC Budget.

Health Care Access, Quality & Cost

This has been one of the main priorities of the WHCC and this will continue to be.

Nursing Study

The nursing study is not spelled out in enabling legislation but is included in the budget. There is \$150,000.00 allocated for the nursing study.

Specialty Medical Hospitals Study

The WHCC will be conducting a study of the effects, both actual and potential, of medical specialty centers and new general hospitals on the state's health care system. This study is much bigger and broader than originally anticipated.

BREAKOUT SESSION

The commission broke into two groups for 45 minutes to discuss what questions should be asked before the WHCC can put out a scope of work for the specialty hospitals study.

SEN. CHARLES SCOTT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

The WHCC's enabling legislation has a new sunset date of July 1, 2009. The two-month report was changed to a six-month report. By Nov. 10, 2006, the WHCC should provide a preliminary report to the Joint Labor, Health & Social Services Committee regarding the uninsured and reducing the cost of private health insurance. The final report is due October 1, 2007. The WHCC is also charged with a study on the redesign of the Medicaid benefit structure. At some point in the future it is going to have to be revamped and the State Legislature needs information on what the best way to do that would be.

There is also a provision in the enabling legislation for the creation of sub-committees that was specifically intended to be used for the Medicaid issue as well as other issues. The idea is that the sub-committee drafts the plan and then it is brought back to the entire WHCC body as a whole for consideration.

Sen. Scott commented that in nursing homes there is an opportunity to cut back expenses with the support of the client group. WHCC needs to find a cost-effective way for the developmentally disabled population and the elderly population to get out of the nursing home because those two groups would support the cuts.

SF58 Child Health Insurance Program Amendments passed.

SF98 Health Insurance-Small Employer Carrier Reinsurance passed.

Sen. Scott commented that there is a window of opportunity. The WHCC needs to come up with a new Medicaid benefit structure and that needs to be done by the 2007 General Session.

LUNCH

SEN. CHARLES SCOTT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:
(CONTINUED)

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Legislation

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Insurance Parity bills (SF14 and SF54) both failed. Small Group and Individual insurance plans have mental health provision but they are limited. Determination of how much treatment is effective is a factor.

Legislation was passed for Mental Health & Substance Abuse (HB91).

Sen. Scott went over the Joint Interim Committee Plans:

Prevailing Wage (Construction/ Labor)

Study in EMT System: level of training, funding for equipment and reliability for rural areas and overall strains on system that is currently heavily dependant on volunteers

Dental Care Study (Expanding dental provisions in Medicaid)

List of Reports (including WHCC recommendations)

Court System / Workers Comp (Labor)

Technical corrections (Look at legislation regarding community colleges expanding enrollment in nursing. What is the result of the prior legislation and does it need to be corrected or changed? How hard is it to return into the nursing profession? Wages?)

The Health Information Technology (SF50) bill failed. Sen. Scott commented that the IT bill cost too much money and that is why it did not pass. It ran into Appropriation Committee opposition.

The Tobacco Tax Increase bill failed.

Specialty Hospitals:

Focus needs to be on what is good for the consumer. Not as concerned with interest of providers involved. Legislature is in the frame of mind not to

discourage competition. The real question is how are we going to regulate specialty hospitals?

Sen. Scott provided several areas to consider:

- Posting of prices and full disclosure of prices
- Public disclosure of quality
- Equalization of burden/discrepancy between public and private hospitals (offer emergency care and do not offer emergency care)
- cost- shifting
- compatible IT system, ability to share information
- conflict of interest with physicians and facility (financial interest in facility)
- prohibition on community hospital denying privileges to physicians outside

WYHIO BOARD UPDATE FROM LEE CLABOTS:

WyHIO is pursuing funding and building constituency. WyHIO doesn't want to reinvent the wheel. The WyHIO is looking at what has already been done to set forth a game plan for administration and legislation to let them know what they believe needs to be done next.

Chairman Roberts commented that the WHCC is currently not doing anything with IT. It is in the hands of the WyHIO.

WRAP-UP

Before sub-committee groups are formed Chairman Roberts and Executive Director Susan Anderson are going to look at existing studies and see if they can be used as a starting point. That should be accomplished by the next meeting.

Chairman Roberts briefly went over the National Governor's Association material. She pointed out that if people were generally healthier, health care cost would be less. Chairman Roberts also commented that there are a lot of statistics that show that today's children are not expected to live as long as their parents do. There are initiatives throughout the country to get people to live healthier lives and this is something the WHCC can also be looking at.

The next WHCC meeting will be April 10, 2006, in Casper.

There is no funding for advance directives so it will be tabled.

The WHCC needs to have a plan for medical specialty centers by April.

MEETING ADJOURNED