

what's up?

NEWS FOR WESTERN HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

Friend of WHA Wins the President's Award from NRHA

We offer our most sincere congratulations to Terry Hill, who was recently honored with the National Rural Health Association's (NRHA) 2014 Presidential Award at the Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Terry is a long-time friend of Western Healthcare Alliance (WHA) and Carolyn Bruce, CEO of WHA. He is currently Senior Advisor for Rural Health Leadership and Policy for the National Rural Health Resource Center (The Center) in Duluth, Minnesota.

Presented by NRHA President Dr. Ray Christensen, the Presidential Award was given for Terry's decades of work and leadership in rural health. Christensen said, "Terry was tenacious and kept us on track, developing the first solid regional EMS system in Minnesota." He is the founding and Executive Director of the Northern Lakes Health Consortium, subsequently the Minnesota Center for Rural Health, and the current National Rural Resource Center.

Terry is the former Executive Director of The Center, where he managed contracts and grants with the Health Resources and Services Administration's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, the Office of Rural Health Policy, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Veterans Administration, the Federal Communications Commission's Rural Health Corporation, the National Rural Health Association, and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health. He also worked with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Area Foundation.

He led numerous Health and Human Services-funded rural health initiatives, including the Technical Assistance and Services Center (TASC) for the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (Flex) Program, the National Rural Health Information Technology Coalition, and the Mississippi Delta Rural Hospital Performance Improvement (RHPI) Project.

Carolyn and Terry have been friends and collaborators for years, and Carolyn serves on the Board of Directors for RHI. Thanks to that, Terry's vast expertise is available to members through an agreement between WHA and RHI. Contact **Scot Mitchell** at scot.mitchell@wha1.org, or **877.683.5227** for more information about how RHI and Terry can support your facility.

“Terry is a leading champion of improvement for rural health. We are thrilled to see him recognized for his dedication and contributions to thousands upon thousands of patients who live in rural communities.”

— Carolyn Bruce, CEO of WHA

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Western
Healthcare
Alliance

Celebrating
25
Years!

Western Healthcare Alliance Members Part of a National Trend of Expanding Health Networks

Hospitals and healthcare organizations are joining networks like Western Healthcare Alliance as part of their strategy to remain independent instead of joining or selling their facility to a health system.

“Networking, a shift toward new structures not based on asset consolidation, supports the benefit of combined effort without giving up ownership,” writes Dan Beckham in a recent issue of H&HN Daily, a periodical published by the American Hospital Association.

Consolidation, once seen as the preeminent trend in the industry, is giving way to other models for healthcare organizations to collaborate and gain efficiency in their operations. A network can be defined as a membership organization with a formal commitment by members to collectively address issues and contribute to the financial and operational success of the whole of the group.

Western Healthcare Alliance (WHA), celebrating 25 years of operations, was one of the pioneering organizations in the nation and considered a best practice model in success and value for health networks. Today, WHA programs generate more than \$2 million in equity distributions and an ROI of more than 49:1 on member dues. WHA employs more than 75 people in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Networks have the ability to generate greater long-term sustainability for a hospital. Through the addition of members and programs, high volumes can significantly increase the value for all members. The network offers potential to mix capabilities, experience, talent, and diversity. At WHA, membership consists of 27 organizations in Colorado, over 200 clients across the



The Memorial Hospital in Craig, Colorado

country, and affiliations with other networks for a total of 483 organizations collaborating in more than 50 programs and services.

Flagship programs include insurance coverage, IT solutions, and billing and collections – with about 50 employees devoted to those activities for members. The WHA Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) program is a high-value program that illustrates the power of a hospital network. Through a partnership with Premier GPO, members can access the same high-discount level purchasing tier as hospitals with quadruple the materials budgets. Because of the depth and size of the program, WHA is able to staff the program full time with a hospital executive, Tom Lake, dedicated to the operations of the program.

For physician clinics, WHA provides a regional forum with hospitals and other healthcare organizations. Collaborating on a variety of issues, member Mesa County Independent Physicians Association has opportunities four times a year to sit at the table with Health Information Exchange Quality Health Network, payer Rocky Mountain Health Plans, as well as tertiary and community hospitals to ensure the continuation and quality of care for patients.

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**More Hospitals
Join Networks**

Visit wha1.org or contact **Jessica Taylor** at Jessica.Taylor@wha1.org, or **970.250.7670** for more information about the programs and services available through Western Healthcare Alliance.

ICD-10 Deadline Delayed to 2015 – WHA Program Helps Hospitals and Clinics

With the delay of ICD-10 to October 2015, the healthcare industry has one more year to get ready for the switch to updated diagnostic and procedural code sets. The new date gives 18 more months and eases some minds, but the eventual transition to ICD-10 is still a complex challenge for many providers. The switch requires considerable investment in personnel and technology. The good news is that now is the ideal time to put a plan in place.

“There are a number of things a hospital and physician clinic can do now to take advantage of the delay,” states Sandy Fuller, MA, RHIA, FAHIMA, Vice President of eCatalyst and WHA’s partner for ICD-10 preparedness.

Ms. Fuller recommends taking time now in the following areas to develop or evaluate your conversion plan:

- Determine personnel on your ICD-10 conversion team with right blend of leadership, clinicians and end users in your business office
- Allocate ICD-10 conversion preparation in FY 2015 Budget
- Identify which information systems will be impacted
- Plan clinical documentation improvement measures
- Document projected financial impact scenarios
- Develop your facility ICD-10 training plan for clinicians & operations staff
- Schedule payer testing
- Process forms and reports remediation
- Identify outside resources needed

The extension brings up lot of questions about the conversion. Will EHR/practice management systems vendors be able to deliver updated systems in enough time? Would they be able to remain compliant with health plans and claims clearinghouses? Will the revenue cycle be disrupted

because both commercial insurers and the government might not be ready to adequately process claims and payments in a timely manner? Will hospital credit ratings be impacted?

Based on member feedback, WHA has a program in place to help members in the conversion process through Preferred Corporate Partner eCatalyst Health. The options available through eCatalyst include preparedness assessments, interim coding staffing, training, revenue impact evaluations, and project management.

Contact **Craig Deehring** at WHA for more information about the program, or to schedule a 30-minute readiness assessment of your facility at **720-839-7605** or craig.deehring@wha1.org.

“I was extremely satisfied with the project results that were provided and the recommended changes we need to implement.”

— Member project evaluation



WHA Bulletin Board

Noah Earns ACA Fellow Designation

We are happy to announce that Noah, Manager of our Accelerated Recovery Department, has earned the American Collectors Association highest honor: ACA Fellow. Earning this designation required years of commitment to education and training. Congratulations and thank you, Noah, on your continued dedication to your profession!



Operational Efficiencies

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**WHA ICD-10 Program
Ready for 2015**

Upcoming Events

CFO Peer Network Meeting	Thursday, May 1st Western Healthcare Alliance 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
WHA/HCM Board Meeting	Thursday, May 8th Western Healthcare Alliance 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction 10:00 am – 2:30 pm
HR Peer Network Meeting	Friday, May 16th Moab Regional Hospital 450 West Williams Way, Moab 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
MM Peer Network Meeting	Friday, May 16th Family Health West 300 West Ottley Avenue, Fruita 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
IT Peer Network Meeting	Tuesday, May 20th Grand River Health 501 Airport Road, Rifle 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Rehab Peer Network Meeting	Thursday, May 22nd Western Healthcare Alliance 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
LSN Peer Network Meeting	Tuesday, June 3rd Western Healthcare Alliance 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
PFS Peer Network Meeting	Wednesday, June 11th Western Healthcare Alliance 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

For more details regarding the **WHA Peer Network Meetings**, contact **Tracy Luster** at tracy.luster@wha1.org or **866.986.3585**



Strategic Leadership



Financial Strength



Operational Efficiencies



Clinical Excellence



Workforce Development

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Upcoming Events

**Collaborating to Support and Sustain
Quality Healthcare in All Our Communities**

888.828.0011 **wha1.org**