

Wyoming Flex Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Significant Accomplishments, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned

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Program Area 1: Critical Access Hospital Quality Improvement

The Wyoming Flex Program assists critical access hospitals (CAHs) with federal funds for education, training, and professional development. Education opportunities occur through online training, in-person classes, educational credits earned at conferences and professional seminars. Annual surveys provide additional data for decision-making on cohort activities. The combination of individual scholarships, CAH-specific improvement, and cohort participation in activities benefit healthcare in rural Wyoming. The Wyoming Flex Program's quality improvement (QI) initiatives are all data-driven and include a process of engaging all teams, providing targeted technical assistance (TA) as needed, and then building program activities towards improvement. They continue to use this approach for the antibiotic stewardship program (ASP).

The Wyoming Flex Program provided scholarships for training, education, and professional development. Crucial Conversations is another training the Wyoming Flex Program supports. Over the last four years, around fifty people from Wyoming CAHs have participated in six Crucial Conversations training.

Lessons learned during this project include:

The Wyoming Flex Program's QI initiatives are all data-driven and include a process of engaging all teams, providing targeted TA as needed, and then building program activities towards improvement. They continue to use this approach for ASP.

Area Custom Learning Solutions (CLS) supports several hospitals with the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) Breakthrough Leadership Series. In FY19, the Wyoming Flex Program funded four people from Weston County Health Services to attend the conference. Although data are not available for outcomes associated with the entire 2019-2020 grant

period, data trends, as well as 3Q2019 HCAHPS data, give a strong indication of the impact of ongoing efforts and their impact.

Improvement in HCAHPS requires ongoing activities impacting processes and people throughout the entire CAH. Additionally, like Wyoming and CAHs nationally improve, so must Wyoming Flex Program objectives and data analysis to best understand both impacts and needs. Therefore, the Wyoming Flex Program will continue to address HCAHPS using a multi-pronged approach while also focusing on the unique needs of each CAH.

Regular contact with CAH QI team members as changes occur and checking in with CAHs directly to confirm staff are on board and trained makes for a smoother transition and stable and ongoing improvement.

The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program benefits CAHs in small, rural communities. Building relationships that engage partners in the health of the community is a core competency for the program. Continuation of support through national partners and cohorts is a necessity for the success of the program.

Program Area 2: CAH Operational and Financial Improvements

In the fiscal year (FY) 18 Wyoming Flex Assessment, several CAHs requested Six Sigma Lean Training. Sigma Med Solutions developed and presented two webinars and one face-to-face training. Lean improvement projects began within three months of the training. The Lean Projects included nurse-to-nurse communication from the care center to the clinic, outpatient surgical procedures, and the opportunity to decrease MRI costs within the organization.

This activity's impact increases financial and operational stability and sustainability, and a well-educated staff on process improvement increases efficiency. Additional financial support for chargemaster reviews, cost reports, and education add value to the hospital's economic sustainability.

Lessons learned during this project include:

A lesson learned is budgeting Flex Program funds to meet the CAH demand for financial and operational improvement activities. A best practice is to continue to provide scholarships and training around strategic planning, Lean process improvement, and financial coding and billing training.

Program Area 3: CAH Population Health

Community Interpreter International training, taught by Ingrid Oseguera, was held in person at Memorial Hospital of Carbon County. Nine people completed the certification program for community interpreters. The Wyoming Flex Program partnered with the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) to conduct community health needs assessments (CHNA) in four counties. This activity's results are

delayed due to the pandemic but continue through the FY20 Flex Program year. Flex partnered with Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) to conduct community health needs assessment in four counties. The impact of this activity is better healthcare for people who are not fluent in English. Certified interpreters provide a resource for CAHs to provide services to everyone every time.

Lessons learned during this project include:

An important lesson is to open up the registration for certification to everyone at the CAHs. One participant worked with the food service of the hospitals and expressed an interest in the training. This person completed the movement and is now available at the hospital to interpret when needed and add this skill for the person they otherwise did not have.

Program Area 4: Rural Emergency Medical Services Improvement

The Wyoming Flex Program assisted rural emergency medical services (EMS) funding for a Ventilator Course, Certified Ambulance Coder, Certified Ambulance Documentation Specialist, and Emergency Medical Technician Advanced Refresher Course. The Wyoming Flex Program is currently supporting five people with scholarships for community paramedicine certification.

The Wyoming Flex Program assisted Western Wyoming College with a training platform for three EMS courses and two paramedic courses. Roughly 69 students will use the platform in various stages of the course work. Almost 50% of graduates consider continuing education in community paramedicine.

The impact of this activity is a well-trained EMS. The federal funds assist with training, education, and professional development of people working in rural Wyoming EMS. This activity results in better care provided in rural areas by EMS.

Lessons learned during this project include:

The program area has consistent requests through the Wyoming Flex Program budget. The lesson learned is to fine-tune the scholarship request to a more specific training like community paramedicine. The best practice is to recognize the value of rural EMS and to continue to support them.