

# what's up?

NEWS FOR WESTERN HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE



Steve Hubbard, Chief Financial Officer for Western Healthcare Alliance, accepts award on behalf of Healthcare Management for earning certification from the National Healthcare Collection Association.

## Healthcare Management earns certification from the National Healthcare Collection Association, Top Placement in Collection Performance for Clients

The National Healthcare Collection Association (NHCA) certified Healthcare Management (HCM), affiliated with Western Healthcare Alliance, as one of six agencies successfully completing a rigorous review of operations, policies and surveys. In addition, a survey of early-out self-pay billing and collection companies placed HCM as second in the nation for collection liquidity performance.

HCM has been a member of NHCA since 2010. NHCA's certification program requires that agencies meet specific best practice and regulatory compliance standards in the following categories: Collection Protocols, Technology, Human Resources, Policies & Procedures, Financial Performance, Client Services.

HCM began working toward certification in the second quarter of 2013 by forming a nine-member employee committee spearheaded by Brandi Payton, HCM's Manager of Systems & Implementation. This group submitted all documentation by October 2013 and the required onsite visit was completed by the NHCA president in January 2014. Certification was announced in April 2014.

HCM sends representatives to a yearly conference that focuses on operations and compliance and also participates in an annual comprehensive collection survey. NHCA also visits member sites each year.

An NHCA survey in 2013 indicated that HCM ranks second among more than 40 healthcare collection agencies surveyed in Bad Debt Liquidity. The same survey showed that HCM ranks third among those surveyed in Early-Out Self-Pay collections.

HCM's involvement in NHCA has led to a number of operational improvements for better performance for clients. Dedicated customer service resources, improved dialing technologies, and enhanced communication for self-pay billing and bad-debt collection clients has led to more cash collections for clients. Thank you to our hospital owners and clients for your continued support and part in our performance.

*“We congratulate HCM and its employees for such significant accomplishments and faithfully continuing efforts to improve operations and to maintain such high standards in the industry.”*

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Western  
Healthcare  
Alliance

**25**  
Celebrating  
Years!

## Rural Hospitals Weigh Independence against Need for Computer Help

One of the biggest challenges American hospitals face right now is moving to electronic medical records from old-fashioned paper files. The switch is costing tens of billions of dollars, eating up tons of staff time, and it's especially tough for the country's 2,000 rural and small-town hospitals.

Rural hospitals are typically short on cash and people with information technology skills. So a lot of small hospitals are turning to bigger hospitals for help, and giving up some independence in exchange. The 10-bed Beartooth Billings Clinic in Red Lodge, Montana, is one hospital that did.

However, while affiliating with a big network often has benefits and can improve the care available in small towns, hospitals give up some, or maybe all, control of their operations.

Sharing electronic records sounds simple. But for a lot of little hospitals, doing that while meeting new federal digital standards means coming up with \$1 million or more up front. That's a tall order when the average rural hospital runs at a financial loss of 8% per year. So the Red Lodge hospital became part of the bigger Billings Clinic system, in part to get help with IT.

Red Lodge is a historic mining town just outside Yellowstone National Park. When the weather is inclement, getting in and out of town can be a real problem, as Dr. Billy Oley knows. He lives just a few miles from Beartooth Billings Clinic. On those days Oley and his patients are particularly grateful for his hospital's electronic medical records. He can share patient information instantly and securely with the big hospital in Billings and get expert advice whenever he needs it.



*Dr. Billy Oley (left) talks with Dr. William George in the Beartooth Billings Clinic in Red Lodge, Montana. The hospital became part of the Billings Clinic system in exchange for help with its digital medical records.*

Whether rural hospitals choose to do their digital upgrade independently, or partner with a bigger system, it's important they have a conscious digital strategy, says Brock Slabach, senior vice president for member services with the National Rural Health Association. Time to take advantage of federal help is running out. Starting this October, hospitals not meeting digital records standards will be hit with financial penalties, which would make the digital leap even harder to pull off.

*Excerpted from NPR story by Eric Whitney*

Members of Western Healthcare Alliance have resources available to them through the WHA Shared IT Collaborative when weighing their options for improving IT infrastructure. Programs and services include EMR selection, shared HIS systems, department management solutions, and other programs customized for the individual hospital needs.



WHA partners with Inland Northwest Health Services (INHS) for shared IT services.

For more information about these services contact **Tom Northey** at **866-986-3657** or **Tom.Northey@wha1.org**.

## Gunnison Valley Health Receives Accreditation from the Joint Commission

Congratulations to Gunnison Valley Health in Gunnison, Colorado for receiving their accreditation from The Joint Commission! An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 20,500 healthcare organizations and programs in the United States. Joint Commission accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards.

Learn more at [jointcommission.org](http://jointcommission.org) and [gvh-colorado.org](http://gvh-colorado.org).

***Congratulations Gunnison Valley Health!***



*Gunnison Valley Health*



GUNNISON VALLEY HEALTH

## WHA Bulletin Board

### **Craig Deehring Wins Colorado Managed Care Collaborative's Board Member of the Year**

Craig Deehring, Director of Network Services for WHA, was recently honored by the Colorado Managed Care Collaborative (CMCC) as Board Member of the Year for serving three years as Membership and Marketing/Collaboration Chair. Craig also received the highest recognition as Program Chair for "All Payor Day" conferences for five years running, including participation with AAHAM and HFMA. Congratulations, Craig, for your continued accomplishments in the healthcare communities you serve, and for representing WHA so well!

### **Ken Singer Earns ACA Fellow Designation**

We are happy to announce that Ken Singer, Esq., one of our A-1 Collections staff attorneys, 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, Ken, on your continued dedication to your profession!

### **Brandi Payton Celebrates 13 Years with Healthcare Management**

Brandi Payton, Manager of Systems & Implementation for Healthcare Management, recently celebrated her 13th anniversary with HCM. Hired after graduating from college, Brandi has been a significant part of all our success and growth. Congratulations, Brandi, for your continuing contributions to the company. We also congratulate you on being a new first-time mom, with the recent birth of your son Gatlin!



**Operational Efficiencies**

**P3**

**GVH Receives  
Accreditation**

# Upcoming Events

<p><b>LSN Peer Network Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday, June 3rd</b>  <b>Western Healthcare Alliance</b> 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction            10:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>
<p><b>PFS Peer Network Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, June 11th</b>  <b>Western Healthcare Alliance</b> 715 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction            10:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>
<p><b>Rehab Peer Network Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Wednesday, July 23rd</b>  <b>Location TBD</b>            10:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>
<p><b>CNO/QIRM Peer Network Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Thursday, July 31st</b>  <b>Delta County Memorial Hospital</b> Delta            10:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>

For more details regarding the **WHA Peer Network Meetings**, contact **Tracy Luster** at [tracy.luster@wha1.org](mailto:tracy.luster@wha1.org) or **866.986.3585**



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- Strategic Leadership**
- Financial Strength**
- Operational Efficiencies**
- Clinical Excellence**
- Workforce Development**

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

**P4**  
 Upcoming Events

**888.828.0011** **wha1.org**