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HIP Membership Plaques

Members of the Health Industry Partnership (HIP) managed by Fremont County Board of Cooperative Education Services last month received membership plaques to display at their offices. "We are proud of your participation in this partnership and this is one way to let your clients know about your commitment to providing the best services available," said Kristen Benson, the FC BOCES Career and Technical Director. Each of the plaques lists the current membership of the Health Industry Partnership, with room for new partners to be added.

The group was updated on the current work of the HIP, including new mandatory orientation classes being conducted for the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. "We've had our first orientation session and everyone who showed up completed the sessions," Benson said. "We went to the Wyoming Life Resource Center in Lander and the Wind River Healthcare Center for the job shadowing part of the orientation."



John Wadda and Kristen Benson with an unopened membership plaque.

Benson said there is a waiting list for the next class and she said two former CNAs had called seeking information.

After the last HIP meeting earlier this year, Benson said the agenda for the orientation classes was established, which included various presentations. She said Kristin Davis from the WLRC provided information on what the candidates could expect during job shadowing followed by Benson's presentation on the Long Term Care industry. Roselyn Whitehawk talked about the challenges and rewards of being a CNA and the responsibilities of the position were covered by Chelsea Sabey. Other specifics, including costs, available tuitions and applications were explained by Burl Gies from the Wyoming Workforce Center and Benson.

"The presentations from the speakers were excellent," Benson said, "and they sparked many questions and answers. You could see the lights come on with these folks who want to help others," she said.



Kristen Benson holds the membership plaque.

HIP Profile: Shirley Stickels, WRMSO

(Riverton) – They have them for automobiles, home maintenance needs and grocery super centers; they even exist for folks who have fallen on hard times, but they have them for physicians, too? A one-stop center for docs? Who knew?

For starters, Shirley Stickels knows, as she directs the operation at Wind River Medical Services Organization in Riverton and has shepherded the growth of the WRMSO in Fremont County over the past 10.5 years.

Stated simply, the WRMSO provides all the support services and personnel a physician needs to open a practice. "We've had a doctor arrive in town on a Saturday pulling a trailer, unpack on Sunday, and start seeing patients on Monday," Stickels said. "We provide them with a turn-key office and they like it because they don't have to deal with personnel or paperwork. They do what they were trained to do and leave everything else to us."

The "everything else" includes a real mix of services, including processing the billing and deposits, filing insurance claims, handling collections and maintaining patient records. "We'll do the medical coding and auditing for them, and we train their personnel. And we're flexible, we can provide all or part of their staffing needs, whatever they want," she said. "We organize and provide all the staffing and services an independent physician would need. There were a lot of naysayers when we started, and we were told this would never work, but here we are, still growing after all these years," Stickels said.

WRMSO opened in 1996 with a roster of eight physicians. The roster today

includes three medical clinics in Riverton and one in Lander and 22 providers, with contracts pending for other doctors. "Oh, we also serve the hospitalist program at Riverton Memorial Hospital, plus Lowham Surgery in Lander and the Rose Lane Medical, Wind River Bone, Joint and Neuro and the Wind River Medical clinics in Riverton," Stickels said. "We manage the paperwork, file the insurance and provide staff and nurses for a mix of both employed and independent physicians."

Sitting in her spotless office deep inside the Wind River Medical Clinic, Stickels said WRMSO's current roster of physicians includes four general surgeons, six OB-GYN providers, two pediatricians, four internal medicine specialists, two hospitalists, and one orthopedic surgeon, one neurologist, one podiatrist and one pathologist.

Stickels explained that at one time, all physicians were employed by a hospital. "That was the trend then, the big hospital corporations all hired physicians. But that has now changed, especially in smaller communities," she said. "When recruiting physicians, hospitals found it increasingly harder to find personnel and office space for these new docs."

That was the origin of the WRMSO, which operates as a subsidiary of LifePoint Hospitals, the national firm that owns and operates the hospitals in Riverton and Lander. "LifePoint saw that we were really overcrowded in here and we had more physicians wanting to come in than could be accommodated, so they added the Rose Lane Medical Clinic four years ago," she said. As a subsidiary of LifePoint, Stickels answers to the CFO at Riverton Memorial Hospital.



Shirley Stickels

terms of patient numbers, Stickels said her staff handles over 32,000 face-to-face patient visits annually, with that number increasing. To manage it all, Stickels said she had the benefit of working "with a great staff."

WRMSO employs 38 people, including Assistant Practice Manager Sue Cress and Office Manger Erica Keel, both of whom have worked with Stickels for 10.5 and 7+ years respectively. Also on board are four coders, four office assistants, four receptionists, three patient service representatives, four health information specialists and 17 nursing staff.

"We are the only full service medical services operation in the entire state of Wyoming the only one in the Rocky Mountain Region with a mix of employed and independent physicals, Stickels said. "We are even unique in LifePoint."

Stickels said the WRMSO could not operate without its people. "I have a fabulous staff, and many have been with us for a number of years. It would not be possible to do all this without them," she said. Part of the longevity of the office staff is because everyone there is cross-trained so no operations cease when someone is gone. "This is also a fun place to work," Stickels said. She noted the staff get along well with each other and enjoy celebrating each upcoming holiday or staff birthday or any special event. The office is always decorated and Stickels said staff members always have homemade goodies and snacks to share.

Stickels' caring nature is also reflected on her office walls, decorated with photos of the rescued animals she cares for with husband Walt at their country home outside of Riverton. When the couple is not looking after their six horses and two dogs, they are the proud grandparents of six grand kids, "with another one on the way," she said.



Lowham Surgery in Lander.

The Longevity Project: Five (surprising) secrets to living longer

Marriage makes you happy. Stress kills. Right? Not necessarily. A new study finds that, in terms of longevity, men may derive more benefits from marriage than women.

Everybody wants to live a long, healthy life. In a new book, *The Longevity Project*, psychology professors Howard S. Friedman and Leslie Martin dig for clues in data collected by psychologist Lewis Terman for a study beginning in 1921 that tracked the lives of 1,500 people, from childhood to death. What do the study's findings tell us about living longer?

Here are five of the secrets to longevity the authors identified:

1. Be conscientious. There are "no magic potions" to guarantee living to a ripe old age, says Laura Landro at *The Wall Street Journal*. The closest thing might be "a quality best defined as conscientiousness." Subjects in the study who, as children, displayed what the authors described as "persistence, prudence, hard work," and a close involvement with



In terms of longevity, men may derive more benefits from marriage than do women.

others were less likely to develop dangerous habits. Such people are, in the authors' words, "somewhat obsessive and not at all carefree" — contradicting the notion that being relaxed is the secret to long life.

2. Find happiness in your marriage. The conventional wisdom says married people live longer. That's true — provided you're a man in a good marriage who has traits that make you well-suited to the institution, says Friedman, as quoted by *The Atlantic*. Meanwhile, "Women who got divorced often thrived," Friedman said, especially if they were getting "rid of troublesome husbands." But men who divorced and never remarried often wound up in an early grave.

3. Turn that smile upside down. "Cheerfulness can kill," says Emily Yoffe at *Slate*. Bright-eyed, optimistic children were more likely to be highly social, and "went to more parties where they smoke and drank, craving the buzz," Yoffe says. "They died from accidents." Or they remained happy when things were going their way, then crashed when confronted with the difficulties of life. Partly due to this inability to cope, "cheerfulness was as big a risk factor for premature death as elevated blood pressure and high cholesterol."

4. Hope your parents stay together. One of the most important factors in predicting longevity is (more or less) beyond your control — the success or failure of your parents' marriage. Broken families can have devastating effects on a child's long-term health. "Parental divorce during childhood emerged as the single strongest predictor of early death in adulthood," says Landro at the *Journal*.

5. Keep working. Many of the long-lived, successful professionals in the study worked, at least part time, well after they reached retirement age. We're conditioned to think that stress kills. And that held true for those who showed promise as boys but ended up in "low-status jobs — streetcar conductor, baker, porter." The frustration they endured made them less likely to live to 60 than their counterparts who ended up in high-status, high-pressure jobs. "Success, even in challenging jobs with demanding hours and responsibility, is a tonic," says Yoffe. And as Friedman puts it: "Fun can be overrated."

Sources: *The Atlantic, Wall Street Journal, Slate*

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Health Industry Partnership's Additional Efforts

New Class on billing and coding in the works

Coming soon to a classroom near you is a new class on gaining CBCCS National Certification for medical billing and coding. The class schedule hasn't been set yet, but it's in the works, said FC BOCES Career and Technical Director Kristen Benson.

"We've had a request for this class, especially among those now working in who want to do not yet have their national certification and this field to take a step up," Benson said. "The class would most likely be scheduled for nights and weekends so folks with jobs could attend."

Benson said the course consists of around 120 hours of instruction, and she said the tuition would be expensive. She said the class will be opened to high school students as an elective course with the option for them to qualify for national certification, if they are 18 years of age. "We are still working on the details and we'll keep you informed," she told the HIP members at the meeting.

Sustainability of HIP

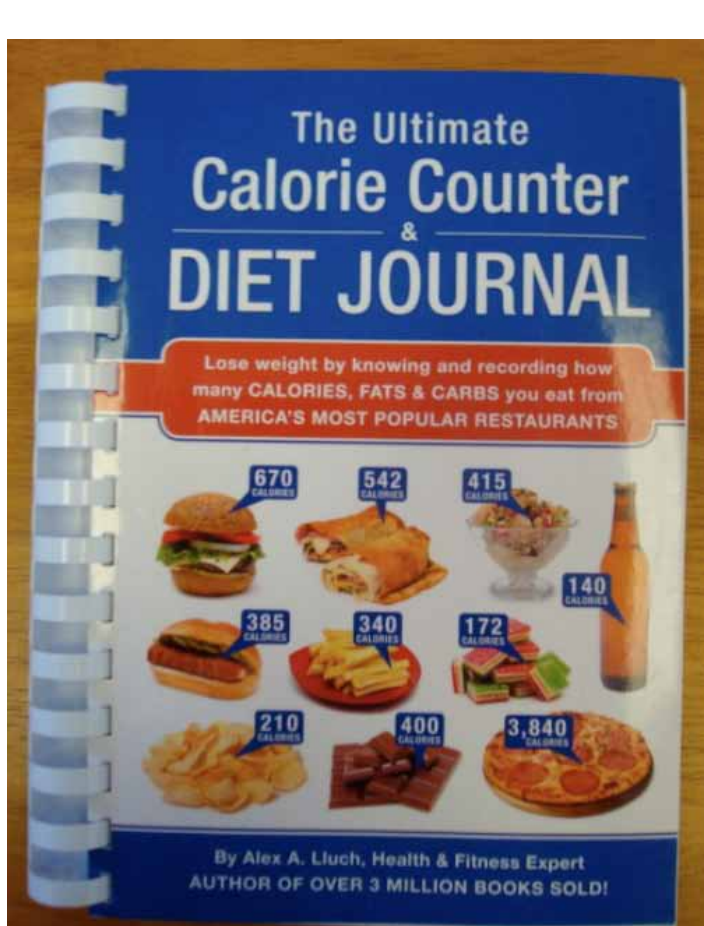
One item on the agenda for the March 24th HIP meeting was sustaining the work of the Partnership, once its grant goes away later this year.

"We want to keep this group going because of the positive benefits we've seen from it," said FC BOCES Career and Technical Director Kristen Benson.

Benson noted that several options could be explored, including annual minimum dues to cover the costs of programming and meetings and finding other grant funding.

Those in attendance at the March meeting to a consensus that annual dues might be the way to go, with invoices sent out for fiscal year 2011-12 participation.

Benson said that and other options would be explored and that she would report back at the next meeting.



Healthy Lifestyle and Life Changes

What is the hardest part of counting calories while on a diet? Well, one challenge is tracking the calorie counts of restaurant and fast food menu items.

What's a solution to meeting that challenge?

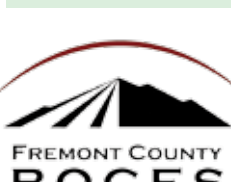
Why, it's the Ultimate Calorie Counter and Diet Journal, of course. Copies of the March-thick book were lent to HIP members at the meeting. The guide and log book is from WS Publishing Group of San Diego. It's author is Health and Fitness Expert Alex A. Lluch.

The book's cover proclaims "Lose weight by knowing and recording how many calories, fats and carbs you eat from America's most popular restaurants."

"This is really a great book, whether you are on a diet or just watching your calorie intake," said FC BOCES Career and Technical Coordinator Kristen Benson. "It contains the menus of the 200 most popular national restaurant and fast food chains with over 2,000 meal listings detailing each meal's calorie, fat and carb count noted." Quoting the author, Benson said the book "is an essential tool for anyone seeking to eat smart, lose weight and improve their overall well-being."

HIP Member Listing

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| Community Entry Services | Wind River Healthcare and Rehabilitation |
| Eastern Shoshone Tribe 477 Program | Wyoming Life Resource Center |
| Fremont Shoshone Tribe | Wyoming Department of Workforce Services |
| Fremont County BOCES | Riverton and Lander Workforce Services |
| Fremont Counseling Services | Wyoming Department of Vocational Rehabilitation |
| Northern Arapaho Tribe | |
| ReKam Healthcare Solutions | |
| Sinks Canyon Therapies, Inc. | |
| US Senator Mike Enzi's Office | |
| Wind River M.S.O. | |



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