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GOVERNOR APPOINTS LARAMIE NURSE TO HEALTHCARE COMMISSION

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Gov. Dave Freudenthal has appointed a nurse with a long history of patient advocacy to the Wyoming Healthcare Commission.

Lorraine Saulino-Klein of Laramie has dedicated herself to nursing communities and families for 34 years. A significant share of her time, money and energy are invested in nonprofit causes. Saulino-Klein, 56, volunteers as a doula, assisting with labor and delivery, and is known in Laramie as "the foot nurse," delivering foot care to the homebound, particularly diabetics, for little compensation. She recently agreed to launch the Albany County School District's certified nursing assistant education program to promote nursing in allied health professions among high school students and to provide entry level training prior to graduation for teens.

"My interest is always in healthcare, the poor and rural medicine," said Saulino-Klein, a Democrat. "All these years I've seen lots of people fall though the cracks. There have to be better solutions. This state is small enough and full of decent people, who, working together, surely can come up with solutions."

Widowed last year when her husband, Laramie and Rawlins internist Dan Klein, M.D., died, Saulino-Klein said she finds herself among those paying enormous amounts for health care.

"I'm stuck in that situation now myself," she said. "When we start to deal with healthcare and the poor, the disenfranchised, and the underinsured, then we're doing something for people. People live longer when they have good healthcare."

Saulino-Klein graduated from Kings County Hospital Center School of Nursing in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1970, and was licensed that year as a registered nurse. She began working as an RN in Wyoming in 1976. She completed her bachelor of science in nursing at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, in 1995.

"Lorraine has dedicated much of her life to patient service and advocacy," Freudenthal said. "I think she'll bring a unique perspective to the Healthcare Commission, and I'm glad that she agreed to take on this appointment."

Saulino-Klein has also been a leader in the Wyoming Nurses Association and Albany County Family Planning. Within state government, she was on the Wyoming State Retirement Board for 10 years and served as chair of its disability committee. At the local level, she was on the Carbon County Mental Health Board for 10 years. Abroad, she investigated inpatient and outpatient medical teaching and services, including military and self-help organizations, in Central America, Mexico, Hungary and Russia. She also ministers to people through music, at the Newman Center in Laramie.

Saulino-Klein will fill one of two seats added to the now 11-member Healthcare Commission by the Wyoming Legislature during its 2004 session. The commission was created during the 2003 session. It is charged with developing strategies for improving and lowering the cost of health care. Broad issues under examination include affordability, accessibility, disease prevention, workforce shortages and cost-shifting.

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