Opportunities for Improved Health Service Delivery
Healthcare Commission Ideas for Governor Freudenthal
June 29, 2005

Funding Physician Training

1. What is the Problem?

a) Wyoming needs a strong residency program with an excellent national reputation in order to recruit and retain primary care providers.
b) The greatest indicator of a physician's practice-site selection is the location of their residency training.[1]
c) The Association of American Medical Colleges reports that nationally, fewer than 3% of U.S. medical school graduates say they want to practice in rural areas. Those who do go to rural areas don't stay long -- just seven years on average.[1]
d) Both of Wyoming's residency programs were evaluated by the Residency Assistance Program in September 2004, and both were considered under funded for their educational missions.[2] Funding for Wyoming's residency programs must be both adequate and secure.
e) Faculty salaries for physicians in the Residency Programs have recently increased, but need close monitoring.
f) Increased funding for residency program support staff, equipment and facilities needs to be seriously considered in order for the Family Practice Residence Program to regain its national reputation.
g) Budgets for the WICHE and WWAMI programs also need to be part of the public policy debate as long as there is a shortage of physicians in the state.

2. Describe your ideas.

a) Create a separate line item in the budget for WICHE, WWAMI and the residency programs (as opposed to being part of the College of Health Sciences budget) so the state can have a policy debate about how much money should be allocated to these programs. Currently that debate happens only within the University.
b) Ensure that faculty and resident salaries remain competitive in the market.
c) Provide adequate funding for residency program support staff, equipment and facilities.
d) Hire an experienced residency program director to oversee both residency programs and improve the quality of the educational experience.
e) Level the playing field between the WICHE and WWAMI programs by instituting a "pay-back" provision for WICHE students similar to the provisions in the WWAMI program.

3. Who are your partners?

a) WICHE program administrators and trustees, who must agree to institute a pay-back provision.
b) The University of Wyoming, who must still oversee both the WWAMI and the residency program budget.
c) The Residency Program administrators, who must work to recruit and retain residency faculty, support staff and medical students.

4. Please provide supporting evidence and data for the proposal.

a) The greatest indicator of a physician's practice site selection is the location of their residency training.[1]

5. What funding or staffing is needed?

a) Additional salary needs for Residency Programs to be determined as part of the University of Wyoming budgeting process – preliminary figures are expected in September.

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6. Who will be better off and how can you measure the improvement?

a) Communities would benefit from an increase in providers that would practice in Wyoming. This can be monitored through the Health Professional Tracking System.

7. Could this proposal be included in the Children and Families Initiative?

a) By improving the supply of physicians, this proposal increases access to care throughout the state.

8. Potential drawbacks and political considerations.

a) Increased funding for the residency program may mean other important programs do not receive the level of funding they seek. There is likely to be an important policy discussion about the value of the residency program relative to other state funded programs.

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[11] Croasdale, Myrtle. "Admissions Process Aims to Boost Rural Doctors." *amednews.com*. February 9, 2005.

[2] "Report on Medical Education, University of Wyoming." Required by 2004 Special Session Original House Bill 1008. December 1, 2004.