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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, July 12, 2018 1:33:44 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, July 12, 2018 2:37:02 PM
Time Spent: 01:03:18
IP Address: 65.38.129.82

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Q1 What is your name and Candidate Committee name?

First and Last Name: Dan Kirkbride
House/Senate District: HD04
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Q2 What is the role of state government in healthcare issues in Wyoming? Describe your top three priorities for improving the healthcare delivery system in the state?

1. **Lowering the cost of hospitalization (and a resulting decline in insurance rates)**
2. **Increasing opportunities for wellness clinics resulting in increased preventative medicine**
3. **Continuing efforts to make as many procedures available in smaller local hospitals as is practical**

Q3 Wyoming's tobacco tax rate of \$.60 per pack ranks 8th lowest in the nation. The national average is \$1.72 per pack. Given the state's declining revenue and Wyoming's low tobacco tax, is increasing the tobacco tax a subject you feel worthy of consideration in the coming biennium? If you do support the tax increase is it primarily based in an interest to generate state revenue or as a method to de-incentivize tobacco use, or both?

Yes I support increasing the tobacco tax.

Please Explain:

I have spoken on the floor in support of the raise in the past though I feel the increase in revenue (around \$7 million) is a drop in the bucket compared to the size of our deficit. I heard a Tax Foundation speaker say actually it will generate even less than that because of the decline in tobacco purchasing or people finding ways around purchasing in Wyoming. More important to me would be a decline in consumption and the resulting freedom for some now addicted to the habit.

Q4 Physicians in Wyoming are required to attend continuing medical education (CME) to maintain their licensure in the State. Many physicians are now also taking part in maintenance of certification (MOC) programs to maintain board certification. MOC programs include more stringent continuing education requirements often at a higher cost, and generally involve high-stakes testing in order to maintain certifications. Wyoming physicians support continuing education requirements, but oppose mandates to maintain board certification. Do you support tying a physician's employment, reimbursement, or licensure to their participation in MOC activities?

No, physician board certification should not be allowed to be tied to state licensure, employment, hospital privileging, and/or reimbursement.

Please explain.:

If physicians can remain competent to deal with the public short of board certification, it seems reasonable that the board certification should not be required (or at least not administered in this all or nothing manner).

Q5 With 32 percent of Wyoming's population being covered by public payers (Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, Federal programs, etc), and current projected budget shortfalls, how would you prioritize reimbursement to physicians? Please explain.

First of all, I don't take responsibility for federal government shortcomings. We have enough of our own. On the state level we're dealing with dozens of entities (education, mental health, corrections, DOT, etc.) caught in the squeeze of tight budgeting, almost all of which are worthwhile. My approach is to tackle the state budget as a whole with a review of our tax structure to allow our state to continue to function effectively given the new normal of reduced revenue from minerals.

Q6 WMS supports physician-led healthcare teams with each licensed provider practicing at the top of their scope. Do you support licensed healthcare professionals expanding their scope of practice or increasing the specific tasks they can perform, such as psychologists prescribing or optometrists performing eye surgery, through rule making or legislation without proof of adequate expanded education, training and curriculum changes?

No, healthcare providers should only expand scope of practice when done through increased education, curriculum changes in training programs and stringent testing to determine proficiency.

Please explain:

This question seems in conflict with Question 4. #4 seems to advocated less stringent training for a physician to maintain his edge--this question swings the pendulum back towards advocacy of more stringent requirements for a physician in any particular field.

Q7 The demand for mental health services in Wyoming is on the rise with involuntary hospitalizations increasing at alarming rates. Suicide also remains a concern with Wyoming ranking as the fourth-highest state in the nation. Between the increase in demand for state mental health services and recent overages in the state budget for Title 25 costs, what do you believe can be done to positively impact these trends?

Again, I advocate for a restructuring of the tax system to help stop the bleeding, but that's an unpopular position in a Republican state that wants to continue to find cuts and live off savings. I follow the lead of the Labor and Health Committee on Title 25 strategies. I think efforts to make laymen more aware of the warning signs of mental health/suicide problems have all been positive.

Q8 Would you support legislation to resolve the professional liability crisis in Wyoming? Specifically, would you support a cap on non-economic damages? Would you support other remedies such as adoption of the English rule, no-fault medical liability insurance or other such reforms?

I support investigating all avenues to bringing meaningful liability reform to the state including capping non-economic damages.

Agree

Q9 WMS advocates for physicians to practice evidence-based medicine grounded in the latest research and safety standards. WMS opposes any legislation that attempts to unnecessarily insert government within the relationship between physicians and their patients as it hinders the ability for doctors to administer the most recent, evidence based, practices in medicine. Do you oppose legislation that unnecessarily inserts government between a physician and a patient?

No, I think that state government has a strong role to play in guiding how physicians practice medicine and how they care for Wyoming patients.

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Please explain:

I'd have liked more options for answers on this one. I don't think state government has a strong role to play in these matters, but if we're referring to abortion related discussions, I have voted for options that encourage, not mandate, a look at the pro-life perspective.

Q10 Do you support expanding Medicaid to provide state-based insurance to uninsured Wyomingites for 10% of the cost to the State of Wyoming?

No,
Please explain:

I'm sympathetic to individuals who would benefit from the access to care, but I view Medicaid as a monster that wants either to gobble up the state's budget or the federal budget. I'm not sure we can count on the 10% figure though obviously in the short-term that is appealing.

Q11 Please send me additional information about the following topics:

I'd be happy to hear more about the WMS position on any of the topics. Certainly, I'd count on hearing a more detailed discussion on almost any of these items before I cast a vote. I'd observe that they don't all seem to come up at once in any given session.

Q12 Does your candidate committee accept Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions?

Yes. Contributions aside, I appreciate the work of the physician community and recognize how blessed we are to have access to the medical care available.