



Sen. Jeff Wasserburger with his children, Nurse of the Day Hayley Anderson, RN and Doctor of the Day Jory Wasserburger, MD, at the Capitol on Feb. 10.

# Doc of the Day

Family reunites on the first day of the legislative session.

BY RACHEL GIRT

Jory Wasserburger, MD, stood in the back of the House Chamber, watching as Gov. Mark Gordon gave his State of the State address on the first day of the 2020 legislative session.

“Serving as the doctor of the day is a great honor for me,” Dr. Wasserburger explained.

When given the opportunity, he flew up for a quick two-day turnaround trip from the University of New Mexico, where he is finishing year four of a five-year orthopedic surgery residency. His sister Hayley Anderson, RN also joined him as the nurse of the day.

The Wasserburger siblings are no stranger to the legislature. Their father, Sen. Jeff Wasserburger, R-Gillette, has served in both the Senate and House since 1995. Both have visited their

father numerous times at the Capitol while growing up.

“Coming back now as a physician and seeing the senators and representatives who I have met while my father served in the legislature gives me a good feeling,” Dr. Wasserburger said. “They have helped raise me in many ways, and now I am here for them if they need me.”

For several decades, the Doctor and PA of the Day program has been helping to ensure the health and safety of the legislators during the session. The Wyoming Medical Society (WMS) organizes the program, providing the medicine and medical equipment, recruiting volunteers, planning the volunteer schedule and coordinating with the Legislative Service Office.

“This program allows the doctors and legislators the opportunity to get to know one another and connect in a way that



The Kelly Walsh A Cappella Choir performed at the opening ceremony for the Wyoming Senate.

they probably wouldn’t have otherwise,” explained Whitney Harmon, WMS communications director. She added that lobbying is not allowed.

Harmon explained that the program ensures that legislators have immediate care in the event of a medical emergency. In most cases, they provide over-the-counter medications and get legislators back on their feet if they’re suffering from a migraine, upset stomach, cold, etc.

In the event more medical care is needed than what the doc of the day is there to provide, they will be sent to the emergency room or an outside clinic, Harmon added. “There have been some more extreme cases of care, with this year’s knee injury being quite the story on its own, but they’re not super common thank goodness!”

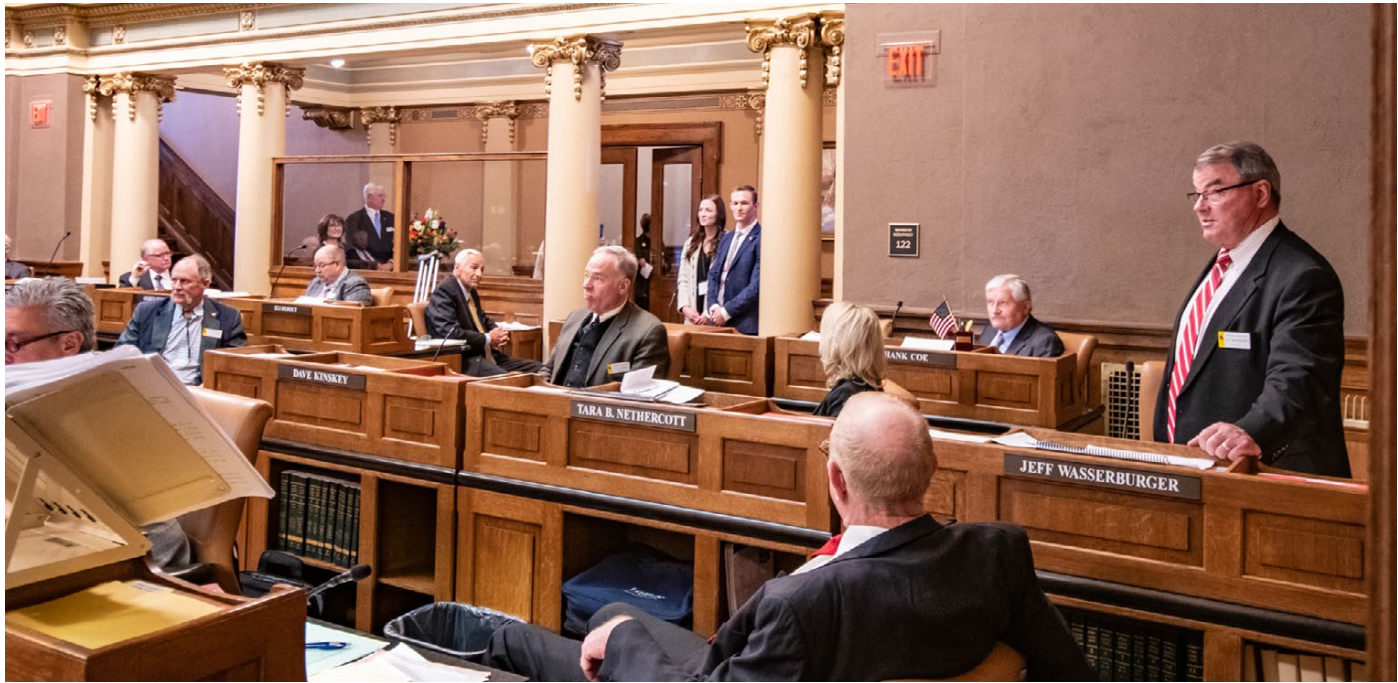
This year’s doc of the day program experienced changes as the legislature returned to the renovated Capitol with no medical aid station, so WMS improvised with a backpack filled with medical supplies. The Capitol renovation project had removed the medical aid station, which used to be located in the newly restored two-story historic Supreme Court Chamber.

Dr. Wasserburger described the backpack as being similar to what he would have on the sidelines of a football game. “Mostly, though, I have wandered and talked to people,” he added.

Sen. Wasserburger enjoys having a nurse and a doctor of the day, and tries to meet them all, he said.

“Every now and then, we have an emergency situation, and the doctor and nurse of the day are the first responders,” Sen. Wasserburger said. “Over the years, they have handled each and every situation with great care.”

Another doctor of the day is Dr. Larry Kirven, who is the as-



Sen. Jeff Wasserburger, right, at his desk in the Senate.





Gov. Mark Gordon gave the State of the State address in the House Chamber at the Capitol on Feb. 10.

sistant dean of the Wyoming WWAMI medical education program at the University of Wyoming.


“I can usually ask him about how the program is going, and he sees the future of health care in Wyoming,” Sen. Wasserburger explained. “He has been such an asset to the WWAMI program and has helped hundreds of doctors come back to Wyoming.”

This year Sen. Wasserburger said introducing his children and his wife Tracy, who is a neonatal nurse practitioner, to the Senate and House was “a neat moment for them and me.”

“One of the things that I have always tried to teach my children is the importance of education and work ethic in achieving your goals,” Sen. Wasserburger said.

His daughter, nurse of the day Hayley Anderson, was a student in the Bachelors Reach for Accelerated Nursing Degree (BRAND) program at the University of Wyoming and is currently working to earn a master’s degree in nursing from Wyoming. She is working full time in the ICU at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center.

Dr. Wasserburger has had 14 years of formal education since he graduated from high school in Gillette, Sen. Wasserburger explained. “He has prepared himself to be a doctor through hard work and has used the WWAMI program to achieve his dreams of providing quality health care to the citizens of Wyoming.”

“The Wyoming Medical Society is proud to facilitate this volunteer program for our state’s legislators each year. The impacts of the doc of the day program reaches far beyond a volunteer being there to lend a helping hand, it builds a bridge between the medical community and our state’s lawmakers during a time that is inherently about sorting through ideological differences,” Harmon said, “We understand the magnitude of bringing these leaders together, and this is an honor and privilege that we take very seriously.” 



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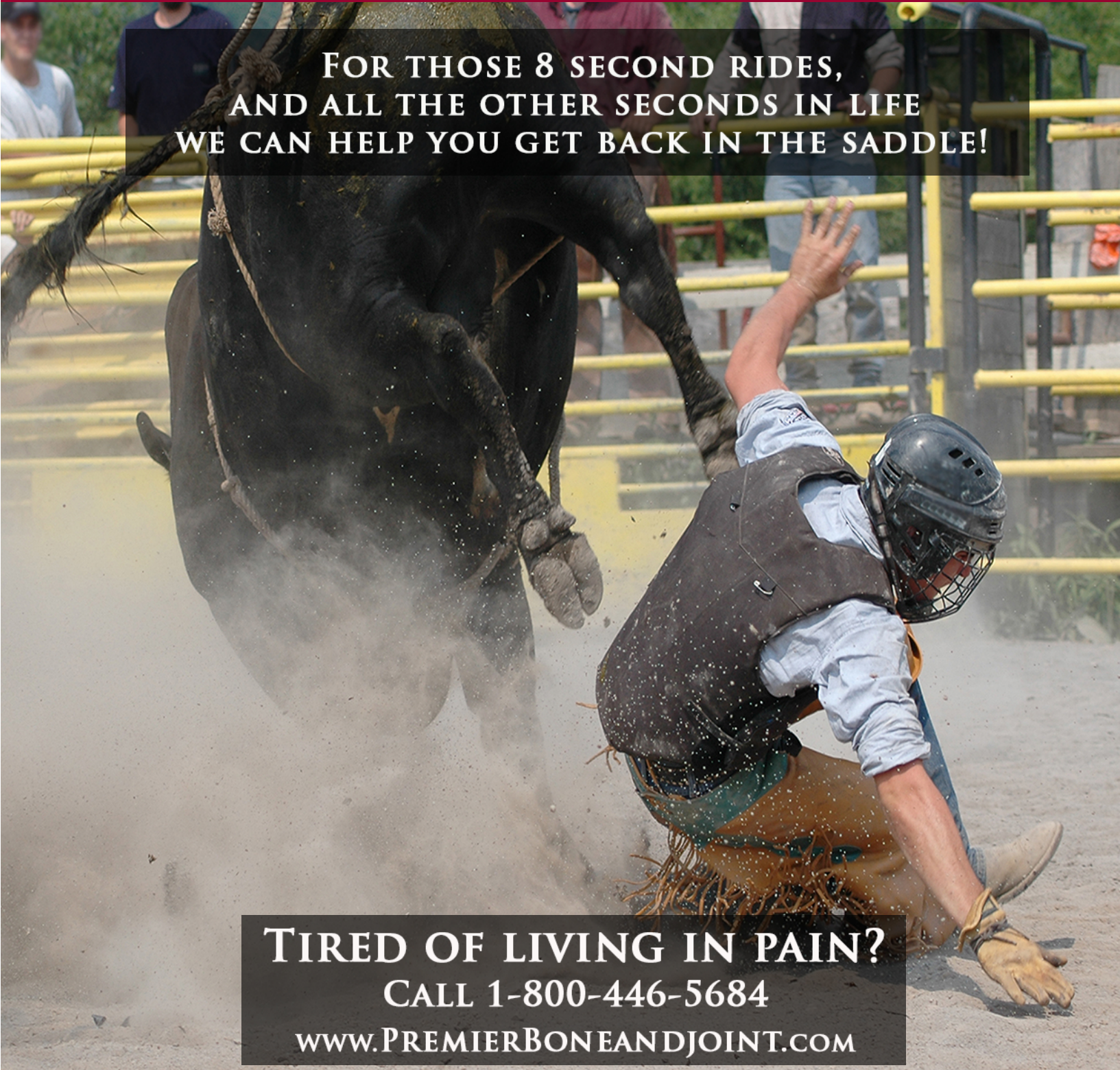
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