



Not Just Politics:

Wyoming Medical Society offers members connections and support

BY KRISTOPHER SCHAMBER, MD



Established in 1903, the Wyoming Medical Society is celebrating 120 years of physician advocacy efforts. I am proud of the work WMS is doing on behalf of our profession, but I must admit, it has sometimes been an onerous time to be in advocacy. With the increasing politicization of medicine and healthcare, the policy environment presents plenty of challenges to our society. While it certainly feels like a good majority of our time has been spent on our legislative efforts, it would be an oversimplification of our work to not also highlight the time, energy, and resources our board of trustees and staff have dedicated to important *non-legislative physician support*. This is work that I am honored to be a part of, and I'd like to take this opportunity to detail a number of those different efforts.

Connecting our members

In 2017 WMS created the Wyoming Leaders in Medicine Physician Leadership Academy. Since that time 67 physicians and PAs have graduated from the program. This program has been a tremendous accomplishment for WMS, and one of the things we are most proud of. Plans are underway to kick off the seventh cohort in 2024. If you have not yet experienced this program, I personally encourage you to apply. It is an experience that will impact you for years to come.

WMS has long supported medical education in our state, and in Wyoming this means the WWAMI medical school and the UW Family Medicine Residency programs in Casper and Cheyenne. At every opportunity, WMS will go above and beyond to help encourage homegrown and locally cultivated medical education, because we know the future of Wyoming healthcare depends on it. In 2022 WMS highlighted the WWAMI program with a celebratory gala event, and in 2023 we created a "speed dating" event for medical students to meet with local physicians from a wide range of specialties. In the last two years, both WWAMI students and UW residents have had the opportunity to present at poster session events at WMS annual meetings, and both programs have benefitted from WMS seeking scholarship and grants for their participation in these events. We work with leadership from each organization

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to seek new and different ways to support medical education and foster relationships between our members and students.

WMS has partnered with the Wyoming Women in Medicine group to help support the unique challenges that come with being a woman practicing medicine, particularly in a rural state like Wyoming. This group, led by WWAMI medical students each year, hosts virtual and in-person events to connect female peers from across the state and gathers at the WMS Annual Meeting each year. Contact WMS if you are interested in participating.

WMS actively seeks to be involved with specialty societies and county medical societies from around the state. We partner with these organizations to share information, promote events, and help create member engagement opportunities. Whether it's helping to plan a specialty society conference or a county medical society barbecue, the WMS staff is eager to serve the needs of these organizations. Creating a culture of participation, engagement, and connection is a top WMS priority.

Partnership connections

In the past few years, if not longer, many members have expressed concern with some of the questions found in the Wyoming licensure applications, specifically regarding questions and wording around mental health and impairment. It turns out this is an expansive issue across the country, and a number of states have already changed their licensure applications. WMS Executive Director Sheila Bush has worked with the Wyoming Board of Medicine Director Kevin Bohnenblust and Chair-Elect of the American College of Physicians Board of Regents Eileen Barrett, MD, a nationally recognized leader on this topic, to help direct a change in language for our applications. Thanks to the willingness of the Wyoming Board of Medicine to partner on this important issue, we are confident that 2024 will bring meaningful updates to the physician and PA application forms.

You have probably also heard, or are at least aware, of the heartbreaking story of the Casper woman who was sexually assaulted by a Wyoming physician. WMS, in partnership with the Wyoming Board of Medicine, Wyoming Nurses Association,

Wyoming State Board of Nursing, and the Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault convened a working group to develop patient education on sexual misconduct and patient rights in the clinical space. With patient safety in mind, this coalition created two brochures that can be displayed in clinics around the state and handed out to empower, support, and protect vulnerable patients, while still safeguarding the physician practice from unnecessary and burdensome government interference.

Technology connections


WMS has been working diligently to create and maintain technology connection opportunities to meet you where you are. Not only can you find WMS information on our member website, in our magazine or via email, but you can also find us on the WMS app, THE WIRE platform, social media (Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube), the WMS patient facing website, and our online learning calendar. Keep reading below to learn about all of the ways we're connecting with our members.

The WMS Benefit Marketplace gives you access to hundreds of discounts

Within the last year WMS created an app that houses information from our website, and it also serves as an all-inclusive digital resource during the annual meeting. While the conference is taking place you can find schedules, maps, event details, and more. Additionally, both the app and WMS website allow members to access the WMS Benefit Marketplace, an exclusive members-only portal. This portal gives you access to hundreds of discounts for virtually every type of practice service you could imagine. Visit the WMS website or download the WMS app in your preferred app store to get started.

Finally, in the past two years, WMS developed a member engagement tool called THE WIRE, the purpose of which is to

allow any member to propose a piece of legislation or internal policy/procedure change, or elicit feedback on any other topic of importance. Ideally, this provides a safe space for colleagues to discuss important topics with substantive discussion. WMS made a significant investment in this technology platform in hopes that it would enhance the member experience and allow physicians from all over Wyoming to feel better connected to the way WMS represents them across the state. THE WIRE is only as meaningful as we make it, so please join THE WIRE conversation on the WMS website or app today.

It's exciting to see the efforts being made at WMS to engage our members, protect our practice, and leverage technology to keep our membership informed. We hope you will take advantage of all your WMS membership has to offer. It is YOUR voice we want to hear, so please take a few moments to connect with WMS! *Our ability to represent YOU depends on it!* 



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