

‘Chloe’s Law’ becomes law July 1

by Joseph Beaudet
The Sheridan Press
Via Wyoming News Exchange

SHERIDAN—Starting July 1, gender-affirming care for minors will be banned in Wyoming.

While signing the bill, Gov. Mark Gordon was critical because the bill may contradict other bills passed by the Legislature to enhance parental rights in education.

“I signed SF99 because I support the protections this bill includes for children, however it is my belief that the government is straying into the personal affairs of families,” Gordon said in a statement. “Our legislature needs to sort out its intentions with regard to parental rights. While it inserts governmental prerogative in some places, it affirms parental rights in others.”

Dr. Michael Sanderson, a local pediatrician and Wyoming chapter president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the ban will present a challenge to Wyoming families, albeit a small number.

“There is a very small number of minor patients in Wyoming (whose) families will be forced to either move out of state to continue their treatment or to drive to Colorado on a regular basis to both see their prescribing physician and get their prescriptions from

an out of state pharmacy,” Sanderson said in an email to The Sheridan Press.

Sanderson also said there are no gender-affirming surgeries occurring in Wyoming and “the standard of care from the reputable professional physician societies was to NOT offer these surgeries to minors,” so the number of those surgeries will remain unchanged.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Wyoming was critical of the bill becoming law and had remained opposed throughout the legislative process. ACLU of Wyoming said in a statement the bill “undermines the fundamental rights of parents,” and violates constitutional rights to equal protection and due process.

“By signing this bill into law, Gov. Gordon has put the government in charge of making vital decisions traditionally reserved for parents in Wyoming. This ban won’t stop Wyomingites from being trans, but it will deny them critical support that helps struggling transgender youth grow up to become thriving transgender adults,” Libby Skarin, acting executive director for the ACLU of Wyoming, said in a statement released shortly after Gordon signed the bill.

According to The Trevor Project 2023 national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people, trans and nonbinary

people are less likely to attempt or consider suicide when they have access to gender-affirming care and environments.

When asked whether Sheridan Memorial Hospital offers gender-affirming care to its patients, CEO Mike McCafferty said the hospital does not perform gender-affirming surgery. McCafferty said the bill becoming law wouldn’t change the way SMH takes care of its patients and the relationships between patients and physicians.

Sanderson’s clinic does not expressly treat gender dysphoria — when someone feels their body does not align with their gender — because the physicians do not have the necessary expertise, he said.

“The treatment of gender dysphoria is quite specialized and neither I nor my partners feel we have the expertise or experience to initiate care such as puberty blockers or hormone replacement therapy, and so at this point when we are approached by families interested in this care, we have referred these families to treatment centers,” Sanderson said. “It goes without saying that we do NOT recommend to patients or refer patients out to receive surgical treatment for gender dysphoria.”

A clinic in Casper, a roughly two-hour drive from Sheridan, offers gender-affirming care to its patients.

A provision in the bill went into effect immediately after Gordon signed it; the provision requires the Department of Health, State Board of Medicine and State Board of Pharmacy to establish rules to implement the law. The remaining provisions of the bill will go into effect July 1.

Wyoming will be the 24th state to have a ban on gender-affirming care for minors on its books. Court injunctions in Florida, Idaho and Montana have blocked those states’ bans for the time being. A federal court struck down a ban in Arkansas, saying it was unconstitutional. Lawsuits are currently in progress in 12 other states.

Sen. Anthony Bouchard, R-Cheyenne, sponsored Senate File 99 because of Chloe Cole’s story. Cole is an activist from California who lived as a transgender boy for several years before detransitioning. Cole visited the Wyoming Capitol during the 2024 budget session, testifying in support of the bill and urging lawmakers to act quickly on the bill.

The bill hit Gordon’s desk in the closing days of the session and he signed it into law March 22. The bill bans gender-affirming surgeries and prescribed hormone therapy.

The bill includes protection of mental health treatment as long as that treatment does not include hormone therapy.

Hospital board hears update on clinic expansion project

by Jurri Schenck

At the March Hot Springs Health board meeting held in the conference room, Scott Alwin gave the CEO report and said, “The walk-through for the clinic expansion project was held on March 13. We have bid submissions for the project that are due April 25, so we look forward to having them come in this month.”

Alwin added, “We have a couple of providers who will be out late March through mid-May due to medical leave and parental leave, and we’re thankful that Tara Blumenshine has agreed to offer her assistance. She used to work for us as a nurse practitioner in

our Riverton clinic up until last September, and she’s offered to help us out a few days a week to help ensure that our continuity of care can continue.”

Additionally, Alwin said they are conducting interviews for the Director of Facilities position with two strong candidates. John Dobbins offered his resignation and will be heading back to Idaho. Alwin said, “We do want to wish Dobbins all the best. We’re sad to see him go, but we know this is an opportunity for growth for him.”

Alwin continued and said, “The Helmsley Charitable Trust Grant announcement was held last

week on the 21st.” The grant was to enhance diagnostic testing capability in all the clinics and was a gift of \$346,794 for point-of-care ultrasound units.

Dr. Mattson Matthey gave the medical staff report and said they have a match for their next resident. Josh Andrews will arrive in the fall of 2025. He comes from a medical college of Osteopathic Medicine. Franklin Powell from the University of Washington will be part of their rotation and will be at HSH until August. Dr. Matthey said, “Every year we get at the beginning of their clinical rotations, and so they spend six months with us

and dive into the clinical side of medicine. He’s originally from Jackson and we had him for a month last year... He’s a great fit for us. We’re excited for him to be back here a little bit longer.”

Interim CFO Gregory Brickner gave the financial report and said, “For February, we had a net loss of \$121,000 from net operating revenue of \$2.9 million. Volumes were very weak in the month of February. Fiscal year to date, that brings us to a net surplus of \$150,000 from operating revenue of \$24.2 million. As I mentioned in the prior month, our outpatient was declining 19.1%. Growth in the Emergency Department

continues at 15.9%.”

In the Quality/Risk/Compliance report, Nina Landis said as of March 14 they are through 50% of each department report in. They have three months left and are on track to meet their goal.

Dominic Symes, EVP of Staffing Solutions and Chief Revenue Officer of Health Tech discussed their ongoing search for a permanent CFO. They have received 11 applicants that have been narrowed down to eight and have interviewed three candidates. Symes added, “We know we need to continue the search. We don’t feel like we have a candidate strong enough yet to put in

front of you. So the search process from our side needs to continue. I have absolute confidence that we will have a bunch of potential applicants by the next board meeting.”

Symes also held a discussion about cybersecurity and the importance of having a playbook should a cyber event attack happen. The playbook is for the CEO, IT, and executive to know what to do should this happen. Symes said that the methods for infiltrating their computer systems have not really changed over time. The main two methods are password integrity issues and email phishing schemes.

News briefs from around the state of Wyoming

From Wyoming News Exchange newspapers

Cheyenne police investigating fatal shooting late Saturday

CHEYENNE (WNE) — A man was found dead Saturday night, an “apparent victim of multiple gunshot wounds,” the Cheyenne Police Department announced on Facebook Sunday morning.

The identities of the victim and the suspect have yet to be released; however, in a news release sent out Monday morning, the decedent was identified as a 38-year-old male.

“The preliminary investigation shows that a loud physical and verbal disturbance occurred between the 38-year-old man and a woman at the apartment earlier in the evening,” Monday’s news release read. “According to statements, the shooter, an upstairs tenant, heard yelling in the unit below. He armed himself with a handgun and went downstairs to intervene. While in the stairwell between both apartments, a disturbance occurred that resulted in the decedent being fatally shot.”

The release said other people were “in proximity of the gunfire,” but that no other injuries were reported.

CPD announced in the aforementioned social media post that a male suspect was detained in connection with the incident, but an official with CPD clarified that nobody had been arrested in connection with the incident as of

Monday morning.

The incident occurred in the 1700 block of Oxford Drive, where CPD officers responded to a report of a domestic disturbance around 11 p.m. on Saturday. Officers administered first aid to the victim; he was ultimately pronounced dead at the scene.

The CPD’s detective bureau is continuing to investigate the matter, the agency said, and information would be forwarded to the Laramie County District Attorney’s office for charging decisions.

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Jury convicts Colorado trucker of killing Gillette family

GILLETTE (WNE) — A Denver truck driver has been convicted of causing a June 2022 crash on Interstate 25 in Colorado, killing five members of a Gillette family.

Jesus Puebla, who was 26 at the time of the crash, was convicted by a Weld County jury last week on five counts of vehicular homicide, as well as five additional counts which included vehicular assault, reckless driving and not having a valid driver’s license, KUSA-TV reported.

The trial began March 19, and he was found guilty of all 10 counts Wednesday, March 27.

Puebla’s sentencing is scheduled for June 21. Halie Everts, Aaron Godinez and their 3-month-old daughter Tessleigh died in the

crash June 13, 2022, along with Aaron’s parents Emiliano and Christina Godines, while they drove north back to Gillette after a weekend in Denver.

Puebla, behind the wheel of a truck carrying mail for the United States Postal Service, drove about 76 mph when he collided into a Ford Edge carrying the family, while the family moved at about 6 mph as traffic had backed up on the interstate, the Colorado news outlet reported.

His attorney blamed the crash on Caminantes Trucking, the company that owned the truck Puebla drove. Investigators with Colorado State Patrol determined that the truck was without working brakes.

Puebla drove recklessly miles before the crash and didn’t attempt to brake until ramming into the family’s vehicle, prosecutors argued.

“He did not brake until he hit this family,” said prosecutor Yvette Guthrie, KUSA-TV reported. “We know when he braked because there are skid marks. It’s that simple.”

Prosecutors also argued that Puebla’s commercial driver’s license had expired, and that he would have known the truck was unsafe to drive had he done a proper inspection.

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Larry the Cable Guy named Stampede Parade grand marshal

POWELL (WNE) — Comedian, actor and

former radio personality Larry the Cable Guy will be the star of the July 3-4 Cody Stampede Parades this year.

Nebraska native Daniel Lawrence Whitney, who has long gone by Larry the Cable Guy, his professional moniker first popularized as part of the Blue Collar Comedy Tour, was announced as this year’s parade grand marshal by the Cody Stampede Parade Committee along with the Cody Stampede Board.

Parade committee President Debbie Herman credited Ed Bednarz, general manager of the Cody Stampede Board, with roping in Whitney to come back to Cody.

“He’s been here in Cody before and he loves Cody,” Herman said, adding that when Whitney last came, he attended a rodeo and struck up a friendship with Bednarz.

“He was excited to come and be the grand marshal,” she said.

In fitting fashion, this year’s Stampede Parade theme is “Git – R – Done, in Western Style.”

Herman said while Larry the Cable Guy will ride in a wagon from Paradise Carriages pulled by draft horses, committee members are working on finding a vehicle like the tow truck from Whitney’s character Tow Mater in the “Cars” movies for the Kiddie Parade.

The parades run during the five-day rodeo extravaganza at the Cody rodeo grounds that is the annual Xtreme Bulls June 30 and then the Cody Stampede Rodeo July 1-4.

Public notices

STATE OF) IN THE
WYOMING) DISTRICT COURT
) ss.
COUNTY OF) FIFTH JUDICIAL
HOT SPRINGS) DISTRICT

No. C2024-6

IN THE MATTER)
OF THE ESTATE OF)
))
))
SHERRY DEE WHEELER,)
also known as)
SHERRY D. WHEELER,)
))
))
Deceased.)
NOTICE OF PROBATE)
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN)
SAID ESTATE:)

You are hereby notified that on the 4th day of March, 2024, the Last Will and Testament of decedent was admitted to probate by the above-named court, and that Dana Michele McDermott was appointed Personal Representative thereof. Any action to set aside the Will shall be filed in the Court within three months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons

indebted to the decedent or to decedent’s estate are requested to make immediate payment to the Estate of Sherry Dee Wheeler, c/o Williams Law Office, 339 Arapahoe Street, Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443.

Creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate are required to file them in duplicate with the necessary vouchers, in the Office of the Clerk of said Court, on or before three months after the date of the first publication of this notice, and if such claims are not so filed, unless otherwise allowed or paid, they will be forever barred.

DATED this 13th day of March, 2024.

Dana M. McDermott
Personal Representative

Pub. March 21, 28 & April 4, 2024
No. 1573

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Hospital Clinic Addition
and Renovation

Requested by:

Hot Springs County Hospital
District
150 E Arapahoe Street

Thermopolis, WY 82443
307-864-3121

The deadline for proposals received has been extended to Thursday, April 25, 2024, 5:00 PM MST.

A mandatory walkthrough of the building will be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 5:00 PM MST.

Proposals must be received at Hot Springs Health, 150 E. Arapahoe Street, Thermopolis, WY 82443.

Hot Springs County Hospital District hereby invites interested firms (Professional Service Providers) to submit a response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) for General Contractor services in support of a hospital clinic addition located in Thermopolis, WY.

It is intended that this project will be limited to the construction portion only.

The purpose of this RFP is to assist with our selection of a General Contracting firm via written submittal. Based upon the proposals received, HSCHD will invite a “short list” of respondents to make presentations to determine final selection.

To request the complete RFP and con-

struction documents, please contact:

Scott Alwin, CEO
Hot Springs Health
scott.alwin@mail.hscmh.org

Pub. April 4, 2024 No. 1580

NOTICE
The Hot Springs County Board of Commissioners is asking Hot Springs County Residents to apply to serve on the following Hot Springs County Board:

Land Use Planning Commission, (Term May 1st thru April 30, 2027) Two Members

Residents of Hot Springs County interested in applying to serve on a Board or position should submit their County Board Application (available on the County website www.hscounty.com or at the County Clerk’s Office) to the Hot Springs County Clerk’s Office no later than 5:00 p.m. April 11, 2024. Applications will be considered and appointments made at the Hot Springs County Commissioners meeting April 16, 2024.

Becky Kersten
Hot Springs County Clerk

Pub. March 28 & April 4, 2024 No. 1578