

## **WYOMING HOSPITAL PRICING UNVEILED**

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The Wyoming Hospital Association launched a website this week that allows residents to look up the cost of procedures in hospitals around the state.

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CHEYENNE -- Ever wonder how much it costs to have a baby at Cheyenne Regional Medical Center?

Or what you'll pay if you have a heart attack or need a hip replaced while vacationing in Jackson?

The Wyoming Hospital Association launched a website Monday that may help you find answers.

[Wyopricepoint.com](http://Wyopricepoint.com) allows Wyoming residents to search the prices of procedures at their local hospital and compare them to other hospitals around the state.

"Hospital charges are such a complicated and complex arena that we wanted to launch a website that would help our consumers," WHA President Dan Perdue said. "Many states require their hospitals to report charge information, but with PricePoint, our hospitals are voluntarily and proactively providing that information to the people of Wyoming."

Perdue said the Hospital Association has been looking into the PricePoint program for a couple of years as a way to let the public know some of the prices for hospital procedures.

"It's like comparison shopping, so that they can have a better idea of what a procedure costs at our hospitals," he said. "We just felt that it was something that would benefit consumers when they make their health-care choices."

In the first phase of the website, residents can select a hospital and condition and then compare the number of discharges, length of stay, average charge, average charge per day and the median charge for the selected hospital and hospitals with similar patient volumes.

Purdue said the association will monitor website usage and then look to add procedures and make other improvements. The data will be refreshed every six months.

"Each hospital has a unique mixture of not only payers, but patients, and also a unique array of services that they offer," he said. "So charges are complex because

not all of the patient volumes and the array of charges are the same. So that's why you get some variation in charges from one hospital to the next."

Kimberly Webb, CRMC chief financial officer, said the hospital participated in the development of the PricePoint project and is supportive of price transparency.

"We really think it's important for our consumers to know what prices are and be able to compare," she said. "We would really encourage folks to reach out and get more information."

Hospital pricing can be very complex and full of variables, depending on the patient's needs, she said. So a patient may come in for a procedure but require a number of tests and procedures to get to the root of the problem.

"You don't always know when a patient comes into the hospital clearly what's going to happen," Webb said.

So, it's important to realize that the prices listed are a starting point and to call the hospital with more specific questions.

"I think that hopefully it will create some awareness and some ability to reach out further to understand," she said.

For more information on inpatient procedure pricing at CRMC, call the hospital's main line at 634-2273.

"I would encourage anyone who had additional questions to reach out to us if they don't understand something," Webb said. "We are always here willing and ready to help."