

# A Message from the WHA Council on Workforce Development Chair

As chief executive officer of a Wisconsin hospital and chair of the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Council on Workforce Development, I have been part of the unprecedented experience the COVID-19 pandemic created for health care in 2020.

COVID-19 magnified the issues our health care workforce has faced through the second decade of the 21st century. An aging workforce was caring for an



**Debra Rudquist**

aging population hit hard by this novel virus, and worker shortages were further exacerbated by a rapidly escalating surge of COVID-19 patients needing care in the closing months of the year. Underlying issues were brought to the forefront, as health care providers became the last line of defense for an overwhelmed public health and social support system fighting the spread of this virus. The health care workforce stepped up not just to provide COVID care, but to ensure that hospitals remained safe places for Wisconsin's health care needs and strong partners for the communities they serve.

*Our Wisconsin health care workforce rose to the challenge of delivering the high-quality, high-value health care that Wisconsin is nationally known for amidst the COVID-19 crisis. As hospital and health system leaders, we saw not only the resilience of our hospital workforce, but also the importance of protecting, promoting and supporting this workforce.*

WHA has long been recognized as a leader in health care workforce development. This 2021 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report is WHA's 17th annual report. These workforce reports utilize national and state data and studies, reports from other associations and findings in the field to provide analysis and offer recommendations for action.

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health system leaders, we saw not only the resilience of our hospital workforce, but also the importance of protecting, promoting and supporting this workforce.

I am confident my fellow health care leaders, along with Wisconsin's fine educational institutions, dedicated elected officials and policymakers will remain committed to growing, utilizing and supporting the health care workforce needed to meet this current crisis and the challenges that lie ahead.

Debra Rudquist

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Rudquist".

CEO, Amery Hospital & Clinic, Amery  
Chair, WHA Council on Workforce Development