

A Message from the WHA Council on Workforce Development Chair



Allen Ericson

As an executive for a health system that spans rural and urban Wisconsin, and chair of the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Council on Workforce Development, I have been part of my organization's and WHA's efforts to support, sustain and grow the health care workforce essential to performing our mission of meeting the health care needs of the communities we serve.

WHA has long been recognized as a leader in health care workforce analysis and advocacy. This 2023 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report is WHA's 19th annual report. WHA's workforce reports utilize state and national data, expert reports, and the experience and expertise of hospital leaders to provide analysis and offer recommendations for action.

The last three years have challenged health care leaders like never before. COVID was just one of many disruptive influences on hospitals and health systems and the health care workforce. We're contending with sustained workforce shortages even as demand continues to rise, a nursing home bottleneck that has caused patient backups all the way to the emergency department, and rising costs to deliver care that are compounding reimbursement and financial pressures.

It's been a challenge, but I am not surprised that hospitals and health systems, and our valued partners in education and government, have also used this crisis as an opportunity to best support our workforce, rapidly pilot team-based care and technologic solutions within our organizations, and take advantage of pandemic-driven regulatory reform through state and federal waivers.

State and federal policymakers, educators and hospital and health system leaders created urgent solutions in a time of crisis. We must leverage this work, and the efforts we started before the pandemic, for long-term strategies that will grow, recruit, retain and sustain the health care workforce needed to create the high-quality health care so essential to keeping Wisconsin a great place to live and work.

I am confident my fellow health care leaders, along with Wisconsin's fine educational institutions and dedicated elected officials and policymakers, will take these urgent solutions and lessons learned to refine Wisconsin's long-range strategies to grow and sustain the health care workforce needed to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Allen Ericson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allen Ericson', written in a cursive style.

President, Froedtert West Bend, Community Hospital Division, Froedtert Community Hospital
Chair, WHA Council on Workforce Development