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WHA Statement on Legislation to Protect Frontline Health Care Workers

Madison, Wis., Feb. 3, 2022—WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding issued the following statement in response to legislation circulated today by Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg), Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), Senator Wanggaard (R-Racine) and Representative Magnafici (R-Dresser) to protect frontline health care workers from battery and threats of violence.

“The committed providers and staff working in our hospitals take care of patients during the worst moments in their lives. In addition to diagnosing and treating physical ailments, these health care professionals provide emotional support to patients and their families.

Unfortunately, providers and staff in our hospitals are reaching their limits. Growing threats being made against them and their families are forcing them to prioritize their personal safety over the increasing danger they face doing what they love. Sadly, health care workers are leaving their jobs at an alarming rate, exacerbating a workforce shortage in our state that predated today’s challenging environment. This unacceptable situation has prompted the Wisconsin Hospital Association to act on behalf of our members and the workers they employ who are so devoted to the health and safety of their communities.

Over the past decade, levels of violence and threats of violence towards staff in hospitals have reached an all-time high. These workers answered a calling to care for their neighbors. They now need us to care for them. The introduction of this legislation by Majority Leader LeMahieu, Speaker Vos, Senator Wanggaard and Representative Magnafici clarifies in state law that threats of violence against health care workers are not tolerated in Wisconsin. We thank them for their partnership on this critical issue.”

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ABOUT THE WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) advocates on behalf of its 130-plus member hospitals and health systems to enable the delivery of high-quality, high-value care to the citizens of Wisconsin. Learn more at wha.org.