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Sen. Schachtner Discusses Virtual Autopsy Imaging, Drug Abuse and Health Care Workforce Issues

Senator joins WHA's West Central Region meeting in Menomonie



Sen. Patty Schachtner speaking at WHA's West Central Region Meeting May 22, 2018

WHA's West Central Region welcomed special guest State Senator Patty Schachtner at its recent meeting in Menomonie.

Alison Paige, CEO of Western Wisconsin Health in Baldwin, introduced the western Wisconsin native who currently serves as the chief medical examiner for St. Croix County. Senator Schachtner noted she joined the Legislature to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

As a legislator and medical examiner, Schachtner serves as a resource for her community. She said the 10th Senate district is fortunate to have several hospitals within the district, and believes it is crucial to maintain access to health care and insurance.

Schachtner and members of the West Central Region discussed several key items:

- **Virtual autopsy imaging:** Schachtner noted an initiative she is working on within the medical examiner's office that can be beneficial to hospitals: introduction of a Lodox system. Lodox is a virtual autopsy imaging machine. Among other uses, it can speed up full body x-ray imaging in autopsies and can help identify accident and murder victims.
- **Drug abuse deaths:** This is an increasing problem in St. Croix County. Schachtner noted there were 300 drug overdoses in St. Croix County in 2017, nearly double the 2016 rate. More children are being placed in the foster care system due to parent methamphetamine abuse, and while more people are able to get the emergency opioid overdose treatment of Narcan, there is a lack of information about where the Narcan is coming from. Schachtner said these trends point to a need for more drug abuse education and prevention efforts.
- **Health care workforce legislation:** Members noted the Legislature could continue addressing challenges in all areas of the health care

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Register for the 2018 Wisconsin Rural Health Conference: June 27-29 at The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake. This annual event is *the* statewide forum to examine issues that impact small and rural hospitals, network and collaborate with colleagues, and bond with your team of senior staff and members of your hospital board of trustees.

Make attendance at this year's conference a priority by registering today. The full conference agenda and online registration are available [online](#).

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workforce, especially in key shortage areas of nursing, psychiatrists and dentists. Kyle O'Brien, WHA senior vice president, government relations, spent time talking about the WHA-led graduate medical education grant program, which was increased in the last state budget. This program has created 134 new residency training slots in Wisconsin and funded two new family medicine residency programs in the West Central Region—one at Health Partners and the other at Mayo.

Schachtner shared a positive example of addressing workforce shortages by local high schools who are starting health care academies. She said this provides health care career ladders for students who are thinking about entering the health care profession.

Schachtner was elected to represent the 10th State Senate district, which encompasses much of the West Central Region, in a special election January 16, 2018. In addition to her legislative responsibilities, she serves on the Board of Directors for Turning Point Wisconsin, a center for victims of sexual and domestic violence, and is also involved with mental health awareness advocacy and is a co-founder of the Suicide Prevention Task Force of St. Croix County. Schachtner previously served as a school board member, an EMT, and an EMT instructor at the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

WHA thanks Steve Lindberg of Mayo Health System-Red Cedar for hosting the meeting and Sen. Schachtner for spending time with our West Central Region members.

Member News: Dr. Jonathan Jaffery Appointed to MedPAC

The U.S. Government Accountability Office announced Jonathan Jaffery, MD, MS, MMM, and Professor of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, has been appointed to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). His term will expire in April 2021.

Congress established MedPAC in 1997 to analyze and advise the Legislature on a variety of issues including access to care, cost and quality of care, and other key issues affecting Medicare, including provider payments for Medicare's traditional fee-for-service program. The Comptroller General is responsible for naming new commission members.



Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center

11,000+ Surgeries Performed In 2017 for Malignant Skin Cancer Removal
Stay safe in the sun this summer

The arrival of sunny days and warmer temperatures means summer fun will be in full swing! But, too much sun can be dangerous. According to data gathered by the WHA Information Center, Wisconsin hospitals performed 11,566 surgeries in 2017 in Wisconsin hospitals or free-standing ambulatory surgery centers for malignant skin cancer removal.

Use sunscreen and wear a hat to help prevent overexposure. The Centers for Disease Control offers good advice for [sun safety](#) as you enjoy your summer.

Data provided by the [WHA Information Center \(WHAIC\)](#). WHAIC is dedicated to collecting, analyzing and disseminating complete, accurate and timely data and reports about charges, utilization, quality and efficiency provided by Wisconsin hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers and other health care providers.