

July 3, 2018

Volume 62, Issue 27

Be Connected to Patients, Community and Each Other

Key messages heard at the 2018 Rural Health Care Conference

This year's Rural Health Care Conference brought together more than 400 WHA members who heard these main messages from the keynote speakers: be connected to your patients, community, and each other. See through the eyes of your patient with kindness and compassion.



Attendees at the 2018 Wisconsin Rural Health Conference

An Ethical Case for Excellence In Healthcare Delivery

Seeing through the eyes of the patient



WHA President Eric Borgerding; Keynote Speaker Benjamin Anderson; WHA Council on Rural Health Chair Charisse Oland.

Thursday kicked off with Benjamin Anderson, CEO for Kearny County Hospital in Lakin, Kansas. The Washington Post calls Lakin the 10th most remote town in the U.S.,

and Anderson says it's also the most racially and ethnically diverse in Kearny County.

The mission of Anderson's Kearny County hospital is, "enriching the lives of our families, friends and neighbors." In sharing his thoughts about a CEO's role in caring for patients, Anderson told a story

about his newborn daughter, Naomi, who was close to death when she was 34 days old.

Naomi was admitted to Ashland Health Center with an elevated heart rate of 200+ beats per minute. As her health declined, she was med-flighted to Wichita for care closer to home. For nearly 10 hours, Anderson said he received little to no information from the pediatric cardiologist or other hospital staff in Wichita. He did not know about Naomi's state of care until a physician friend came in and told him, "Your daughter is very sick! Her life is in danger. Were you aware of this?"

At that point, Anderson made a judgment call to move Naomi to Children's Hospital in Colorado. Problem: it was the middle of winter, the airport runway wasn't cleared, and the plane didn't have the life-support equipment necessary for transport. This lesson taught him that CEOs play a crucial role in developing partnerships that help support the safety and welfare of the patient.

When the runway was finally clear, Anderson moved ahead with the transfer. He was greeted by hospital staff in Colorado who involved him in the decisions surrounding Naomi's health care. Pediatric Cardiologist Dr. Shannon Buckvold explained what was going to be needed to help save Naomi, and stopped to ask Anderson the critical question: "Are you alright with this?"

It was the first time throughout the 15-plus hour ordeal that someone had stopped to involve Anderson in the care of his child. "Every parent of a child deserves to be involved in their plan of care," he said. The Denver hospital created a culture where everyone sees and values their role in patient health care – from physicians to the housekeeping staff. *(continued on page 2)*

Anderson's take-aways from the experience:

- Patients / parents should be involved in making decisions. This communication makes a difference about how the patient feels about their care.
- Every person working in a health care delivery system plays a role in saving and improving the care of the patient.
- When a patient discharges, we should ask them, "How are you? What are your barriers to wellness?" Anderson noted that patients may have issues such as transportation to appointments, or need to choose between food or their prescriptions.

The State of Health Care in Wisconsin



Tim Size and Eric Borgerding

The day continued with a presentation by Eric Borgerding, WHA President/CEO, and Tim Size, Executive Director of Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC), about the state of rural health care in our state.

In his remarks, Size noted the top issues facing rural health care including equitable Medicare/Medicaid funding, challenges with health plans and networks, and other items related to the consolidation of large payers and providers. Workforce is also a priority concern for RWHC, which is working closely with WHA and others to implement various public policy related solutions around physicians, nurses, and allied health professions. As more care is being delivered in the home by family members, RWHC continues to view engagement with family members as a key, yet underappreciated and under-resourced, pool of caregivers.

Size also discussed the importance of emphasizing what all rural and urban hospitals have in common, especially as part of the "volume to value" (V2V) transition. The V2V mantra is improving patients' outcomes and experiences while minimizing associated costs, but it is important that in the drive for value, we do not lose track of the patient-provider connection. Size acknowledged the strong relationship between RWHC, WHA, and their respective leaders.

Jerry Worrick Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award



Tim Size, Jerry Worrick, Eric Borgerding

President and CEO of Door County Medical Center, Gerald "Jerry" Worrick, was honored with WHA's Lifetime Achievement Award at the conference. Door County Medical Center is a critical access facility serving approximately 29,000 people from Door and Kewaunee counties year-round. That number explodes when more than 1.25 million visitors descend upon Door County every summer.

Worrick received the award in recognition of his leadership, service, and partnership with WHA in advocating for better health care for Wisconsin communities—serving a combined 45 years for WHA. He served on the WHA Board for eight years, including serving as chair in 2003. Worrick has been part of the Nominating and Awards, Council on Public Policy, the Property, Financial Solutions and Advocacy committees—and last but certainly not least, on the Council on Rural Health for 14 years.

"Jerry has been a friend to many on the WHA team, past and present, for many of his over 30 years in Wisconsin," Borgerding said. "He is trusted and admired by his colleagues, looked up to by the many of us he has in some way influenced, impacted or mentored, whether he knew he was doing so or not. I speak not only for myself, but for my predecessor Steve Brenton and many of the WHA staff, in saying thank you, Jerry, for being at our side; we have been privileged to be by yours."

Breakout Sessions

Thursday afternoon included a host of compelling breakout sessions—from UW-Madison professors and doctors discussing how to implement opioid prescribing guidelines to provider mental health by Dr. Christine Moutier, who recently co-anchored a CNN town hall with Anderson Cooper. There was a variety of physician, CEO and trustee topics to choose from. See [photos from the breakout sessions](#).

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WHA Members Consider Ways to Improve Telehealth Access Under Medicaid

Telemedicine Work Group continues to help WHA develop its advocacy agenda



WHA's Telemedicine Work Group meeting June 25, 2018.

As WHA continues to develop and refine its telehealth advocacy agenda, the WHA Telemedicine Work Group met last week to provide input to WHA on strategies for expanding Medicaid enrollee access to high-value health care delivered through telehealth.

At a previous Work Group meeting, WHA and the Work Group had identified Medicaid regulatory and reimbursement barriers that prevent hospitals and health systems from maximizing use of telehealth. At last week's meeting, the Work Group discussed strategies for addressing such barriers and improving Medicaid access to telehealth-delivered health care. Among such Medicaid strategies discussed by the Work Group are the following:

- Adding Medicare covered telehealth services to the list of telehealth services covered under Medicaid.
- Permitting payment for targeted telehealth services when such services are delivered in the patient's home. According to the Work Group, enabling payment for telehealth to the home can increase care plan adherence, avoid more expensive emergency department visits and hospitalizations, and remove transportation-based barriers to health care access.
- Removing distinctions between how Medicaid covers and pays for telehealth services compared to how Medicaid covers and pays for analogous in-person services.

WHA's Telemedicine Work Group will continue to meet throughout 2018 to assist WHA in developing its telehealth advocacy agenda, which is broadly aimed at expanding access to telehealth services by facilitating sustainable telehealth reimbursement within Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance and by removing regulatory barriers that unnecessarily impede the delivery of health care services via telehealth.

For more information, contact Andrew Brenton, WHA assistant general counsel, at abrenton@wha.org or 608-274-1820.

Nationally-Recognized Pollster Provides Exclusive Wisconsin Elections Briefing

Hospital and health care advocates received an exclusive briefing from Marquette University Law School Poll Executive Director Charles Franklin last week during a webinar hosted by the Wisconsin Hospitals State PAC & Conduit. Franklin walked through his most recent poll, released June 20, highlighting the most competitive statewide races in Wisconsin and providing insight into voter sentiment on health care issues.

Franklin provided an in-depth, hour-long briefing to webinar attendees, as well as additional bonus material to those in attendance via email. For more information on how you can have access to this exclusive material, contact WHA Vice President, Advocacy [Kari Hofer](#).



WHA President Eric Borgerding and Charles Franklin

State Board of Nursing Seeks Applicants

The Wisconsin Board of Nursing (BON), the regulatory body overseeing nursing practice in Wisconsin, is seeking additional board members.

The members of the BON are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature to serve four-year terms. The Board consists of five registered nurse (RN) members, one licensed practical nurse (LPN member), one LPN *or* RN member and two public members. The duties of the Board include program approval for schools of nursing, licensure of nurses and nurse midwives, disciplinary investigations and proceedings, certification of advanced practice nurses to issue prescriptions, and participation in the multi-state nurse licensure compact and the coordinated licensure information system.

Sheryl Krause, BON chair, notes "The investment of time is more than balanced by the incredible learning opportunity." Krause adds, "While it is a huge responsibility, there are so many resources to support you along the way, both from the State and through the National Council of State Boards of Nursing."

Applications are available [online](#).

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Friday Keynote Speakers Shine at Rural Health Care Conference

“I Am an Ambassador for Goodness”

That was the message from Tom Thibodeau of Viterbo University to kick off Friday morning at the 2018 Rural Health Care conference. Thibodeau’s humor and passion were clear as he discussed the Positive Power of Servant Leadership.



Tom Thibodeau

He noted that everything we have is predicated on the service of another individual. Thibodeau encouraged leaders to “be close enough to the work” of their employees and pay attention to the good, because you “get more of whatever you pay attention to.”

“Service is love made visible.”

- Tom Thibodeau

- Experience joy, laugh with your employees. Leaders can create healthy environments for people with their words and presence.
- Bring your employees a sense of peace and comfort. Thibodeau noted that “frenzy is a contemporary form of violence.” Instead of being distracted or anxious when talking or meeting with employees, be intentional, deliberate, and focused. And when it comes to matters of the heart, take your time.
- Remind people how good they are. Employees want to stay – acknowledge and sincerely thank them for their service.

“Leadership is the ability to influence and inspire every day. If we are good, kind and compassionate, it comes back to us.”

- Tom Thibodeau

Five Steps to Making the Impossible Possible

Ben Nemtin, author and co-star of MTV’s *The Buried Life*, wrapped up the conference with his inspiring story of overcoming anxiety and depression.

Nemtin told the story of how he began a downward spiral into despair while at college. His grades began to suffer, and he was ultimately forced to drop out of school. Nemtin articulated the frustration he felt when

he searched for helpful resources for teens suffering from mental health issues, especially men who are taught socially to “suck it up—be a man.”



Ben Nemtin

After reading the poem *The Buried Life* by Matthew Arnold, which expresses frustration and sadness about the human condition and unlocking the human spirit, Nemtin and three of his friends created a bucket list of “100 things to do before you die.” For every item they accomplished, they vowed to help a stranger complete a bucket list item of their own. They called their adventures “*The Buried Life*” in homage to the poem that inspired the bucket list in the first place.

“The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.”

- Mark Twain

The group of friends had lofty goals ahead of themselves, from singing the national anthem to a packed stadium to playing basketball with the President, Nemtin noted there will always be doubters, but you have to move forward.

“By doing what you love, you inspire others to do what they love,” said Nemtin. Nemtin encouraged the WHA audience to make bucket lists of their own to help identify what’s important in their lives.

From there, he laid out the five steps to making the impossible possible:

1. **Write.** Write down your goal – it makes the idea real and tangible, gives it a foundation to grow.
2. **Share.** Share your goal so someone can help you.
3. **Persist.** Consistency of effort creates a quality product.
4. **Moonshots.** Aim high – most people are afraid to aim for the moon, so “there’s more competition among mediocrity.” Go for those seemingly impossible goals – aim high and be persistent.
5. **Give.** Give back – help others achieve their dreams and goals.

Nemtin’s Suggested Resources

Facetheissue.com: Tools to begin the difficult conversations about mood, eating and neurotic disorders

Crisis Text Line: Text “home” to 741741. Teens and others can text 24/7 to receive support during an emotional crisis. All conversations are monitored and operators can deploy local resources, if needed.