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May 6 and July 22, 2019
WHA Antimicrobial Stewardship Journal Club
Two-Part Webinar Series

June 12-14, 2019
Wisconsin Rural Health Conference
Wisconsin Dells, WI

WHA 2019 Advocacy Day Sends a Strong Message



Nearly 1,000 health care professionals, advocates and volunteers traveled from across the state to learn more about important health care issues facing Wisconsin at WHA's 2019 Advocacy Day on April 17 in Madison. Attendees represented nearly every hospital and health system at this annual premier health care advocacy event.

About 500 of those supporters took what they heard and met with legislators in the Capitol that afternoon. WHA's members and volunteers are the voice of our communities, and they were able to share what high-quality, high-value health care means to our families and neighbors as they advocated for health care priorities in the upcoming state biennial budget.



Attendees at WHA's 2019 Advocacy Day

Speaker Lineup. There was a powerhouse speaker roster at Advocacy Day again this year, including:

- Damond Boatwright, WHA 2019 Board Chair
- WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding
- Former Governor Tommy Thompson
- Governor Tony Evers
- Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee)
- Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green)
- Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette)
- Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee)
- Kyle O'Brien, WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations



Former WI Gov. Tommy Thompson; WHA 2019 Board Chair and Regional President of Operations for SSM Health-Wisconsin Damond Boatwright; WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding

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Advocacy Day would not be possible without our corporate sponsors, and WHA appreciates their continued support at our annual Advocacy Day event.



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Keep in touch! WHA asks that you share your photos from Advocacy Day, including tagging WHA when you post on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn using **#WHAAdvocacyDay**. Remember to follow WHA for your health care news.



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View our 2019 Advocacy Day Photo Album online at www.wha.org/AdvocacyDay

Governor Thompson Empowers Hospital Advocates to Be a Bipartisan Bridge in Today's Divided Government

Finding compromise and common ground was the running theme of former Governor Tommy G. Thompson's remarks at WHA's Advocacy Day on April 17, 2019. Thompson was the morning keynote for the event formatted in discussion style, moderated by WHA President & CEO Eric Borgerding.

Borgerding welcomed Thompson, praising him for his commitment to health care. "You've been a great champion of health care, a great advocate in every way, especially in the state of Wisconsin. We have a lot to be proud of in the state."

Thompson shared many past experiences of nearly 40 years in public life and ways he bridged the political divide to accomplish major public policy. Thompson was most proud of two notable accomplishments: BadgerCare and Medicare Part D. Both are health care policies and pieces of legislation where Thompson took the lead and successfully passed with bipartisan support, a point he stressed throughout the conversation.

"When you work with big policies that move society, like social security, welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment, income taxes—all big items—there has always been a bipartisan vote," said Thompson.

Drawing upon his experiences, Thompson shared how he sought after bipartisanship through the appointment of then Democrat Majority Leader Tim Cullen to his cabinet, and in meeting with members of both parties to push toward compromise.

"We would sit down and figure out how far the Democrats could go, how far the Republicans [could go]," said Thompson. "I would get them together, and then we would go out and be successful," Thompson continued.

Thompson offered perspective on how to navigate today's challenging and polarizing political environment. "If you get people together and give them an opportunity to participate with their ideas, it's amazing how far you can go. And that's what bipartisan is all about."

He continued, drawing applause from the crowd, "There's no such thing as a Republican idea. There's no such thing as a Democrat idea. Everybody has good ideas. Let's compromise and get it done."

Borgerding acknowledged Thompson's contributions to public health in the wake of 9/11.

"Hospitals are a community safety net, and not just for our high-quality health care, but also for state and local economies in times of emergency," said Borgerding. "You were HHS Secretary during one of our most trying times in this country, during 9/11."

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Thompson shared, in detail, his memory of that day and the measures he took to deliver much needed medical equipment, including declaring a medical emergency and getting a plane to fly 100 tons of medical supplies when all air traffic was grounded. This experience enlightened Thompson of the ill-equipped public health system at the time, and led him to refund and rebuild the system.

“It took a disaster, a catastrophe, to wake up America that our public health system needs to be rebuilt and revitalized and continue to grow,” said Thompson.

Thompson left attendees with encouragement. “You’re here at the right time, during the budget debate. You have the Governor here this afternoon, and you are visiting the Legislature this afternoon. You can bring them together and be the heroes. And on top of that, accomplish good health care and good hospitals.”

Bipartisan Legislative Panel Talks Medicaid Expansion, Dental Access, and Opioid Addiction Treatment at WHA’s Advocacy Day



Four Wisconsin lawmakers participated in a panel during WHA’s 2019 Advocacy Day on April 17. The panel, moderated by WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding, included a bipartisan group of lawmakers: Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee), Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette), Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee), and Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green). All panelists serve on the Legislature’s powerful budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance.

WHA’s 2019 Advocacy Day Legislative Panel, from left: WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding (moderator); Sen. LaTonya Johnson; Sen. Howard Marklein; Rep. John Nygren; Rep. Evan Goyke

Borgerding tied the panel’s conversation around three major issues currently facing the Legislature: Medicaid expansion and Governor Evers’ budget, dental access, and opioid abuse.

Mixed thoughts on Medicaid expansion for Wisconsin

Governor Evers’ budget and Medicaid expansion—a topic that has received a lot of attention during the existing budget debate—received broad support from Democrats on the panel, because of the investments that can be made through additional state savings, while Republicans raised concerns with the impact that proposal would have on the private-sector due to shifting 40,000 people from commercial insurance coverage to Medicaid.

“I do support Medicaid expansion because it will cover the individuals in my district, which is extremely imperative for the lower income families in my district,” said Sen. LaTonya Johnson.

On the other hand, Sen. Howard Marklein believes there is more learning to be done on expansion’s possible impacts on hospitals in his rural district, but also on the state.

“Some people have made up their minds on whether to take it or not, but I am keeping an open mind. A lot is going to be dependent on the economics both at a state level and at a local level,” Marklein said.



Sen. Howard Marklein

Rep. Nygren responded with more skepticism for expansion, drawing on the current Medicaid cost-shift and its growing impact on hospitals if more individuals are covered with Medicaid reimbursement rates.

“About 40,000 people already have subsidized care that is reimbursed at private insurance rates. With expansion, you would be taking them off of private insurance and putting them on Medicaid, which under reimburses for costs,” Nygren said. “I believe the estimate is about \$1 billion a year in shift that takes place. So that has to be part of the conversation.” *(continued on page 4)*



Rep. Evan Goyke joined Johnson in supporting Medicaid expansion using the significant investment in health care, proposed under Evers' budget, as the driving factor for his position.

"Under the Governor's proposed budget, \$324 million of general purpose revenue that is saved is reinvested back into our health care system in a way that leverages an additional 1.6 billion dollars." Goyke continued, "We do not reach that level of reinvestment without expansion. We do not have the dollars in our general fund to leverage that amount of money to be reinvested into Wisconsin health care without expansion."

Democrats stand firm on their positions, but open to seeing a "Plan B" for Medicaid expansion

Borgerding asked the panel, starting with the Democrats, whether they would consider a "Plan B" to Medicaid expansion, an alternative. Goyke stood firm on his position, "Medicaid expansion finances the enormous new investment in health care in Wisconsin."

He continued to explain that the investment is not just for rural and urban hospital reimbursement, but also programs that address population health, calling Medicaid expansion the foundation to addressing these challenges.

Johnson reacted similarly, expanding on Goyke's remarks to talk about how Medicaid expansion provides better access to primary care providers addressing the state's health disparities.

"Because those individuals are not able to seek primary care or preventative care, they're being seen in urgent care and in the emergency rooms, which is significantly more expensive," Johnson said.

Borgerding then turned to the Republicans on the panel, asking them what it means for health care if they reject Medicaid expansion, as presented in Evers' budget and if they would be open to discussing a "Plan B."



Marklein reassured attendees that health care is a priority for him and members of the Joint Finance Committee; however, without Medicaid expansion, prioritizing dollars could be a challenge.

"It will be a matter of if we don't take Medicaid expansion, prioritizing those things where we'll get the most bang for our buck and are good policy choices," said Marklein. "I think in the end, if there is a 'Plan B', health care will still be a priority either way."

Nygren reiterated his concerns with expanding Medicaid but was open to an alternative. He said, "If there is a 'Plan B,' we all have to agree there are positives for increasing reimbursement, but at the same time, understand it's not equal across the board and there are going to be losses in many situations."

Nygren added, "I think there is a middle ground we can get to, but we are not there yet."

Panelists' top health care items in Evers' Budget, common ground in mental health

Borgerding asked the panel to share their top items in Evers' budget, as it relates to health care. Both Johnson and Nygren reported mental health.

"Mental health is a huge piece, as well as funding for mental health in our schools," Johnson said.

Nygren agreed with Johnson on mental health, but also added dental health. He said, "Wisconsin has some of the best health care in the nation, but our dental access is one of the worst."

Marklein named reimbursement calling out several items, including increases for nursing homes, personal care workers, and DSH payments. "Some of our hospitals have a very, very high proportion of Medicaid patients. And whether it's through DSH payments or some other reimbursement balancing formula, we have got to make sure that we recognize the financial obligation and compensate for the additional costs."

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Goyke brought it back to Medicaid expansion, but specifically named a small portion of funding for addressing social determinants of health. “We’ve got to have a better understanding of how our environments and how poverty affects our health outcomes.”

Panel agrees on dental access need, but has hesitations for dental therapist licensure bill

Borgerding then asked the panel to share their thoughts on an upcoming bill that creates a license for dental therapists to serve as midlevel providers, with the goal of increasing access to primary and restorative dental care for Medicaid patients.

Nygren, a sponsor of the bill, believes access to dental care, especially for people on Medicaid is a growing problem and sees the dental therapist bill as one solution. “Being 50th in dental access is just no longer and never should have been acceptable to us and our state government.”

Goyke acknowledged the need but expressed reservations with the bill’s level of training. He said, “Before I go back to my community and say that I support this, I need to be assured that it will be as good or better care than somebody who has private insurance is able to access. I won’t support and settle for something that is lesser than, simply because I represent a community in poverty.”

Johnson reiterated Goyke’s position saying, “We want our impoverished families to have access to quality care. I’m not saying that I am against dental therapists, but we want to make sure that the people we are allowing to treat our low-income families have the qualifications that those families deserve.”

Marklein also responded with hesitations, but related to its ability to bring dental access to rural communities of Wisconsin. “Dental therapists go to where the people are, and there are not a lot of people in rural communities. I am not that convinced that a lot of dental therapist are going to end up in rural Wisconsin, where I think we need it,” said Marklein.

Progress made in addressing opioid addiction, but more needs to be done

Borgerding’s final topic for the panel was on opioids. He praised the group for progresses made due to bipartisan legislation that addressed the ongoing epidemic in the state. He began with Nygren, as he has been a leader on this issue, asking him what is next and how Wisconsin continues to do better.



Nygren said, “We need to expand access within our current structure. The implementation of the hub and spoke commission, which WHA and others were involved in, is one way we can do better.” He called out the shortage of providers as one area of focus, but continued to other areas, such as housing and employment.

Goyke agreed with Nygren on the shortage of providers. He sees a pathway for bipartisanship, saying “Abuse and poverty overlay and there are a lot of things we can do directly in the health care system. I think it would be bipartisan, but there is a more macroeconomic issue that is going on in both very rural and very urban parts of the state that we need to address.”

Johnson drew on access to services as a top way to combat the issue. “Access to resources is extremely important and making sure those dollars are there,” Johnson said.

Marklein ended the session by praising Nygren for his work and stressed the importance of continuing to address it. “There was a day when providers were rewarded for managing pain and if you didn’t, you’d be dinged on your reimbursement. That didn’t make a whole lot of sense, but fortunately we don’t have that today. We are moving away from that, and we just need to keep making progress.”

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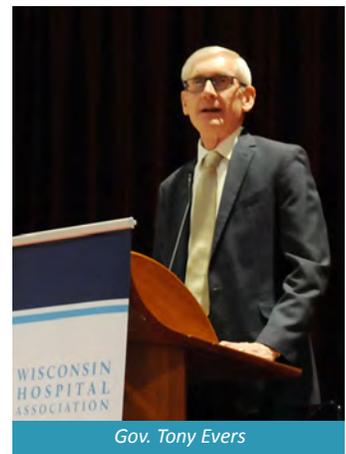
Governor Evers Addresses Nearly 1,000 Health Care Advocates at Advocacy Day

Governor Tony Evers addressed nearly 1,000 health care advocates at his first WHA Advocacy Day on April 17, 2019. Evers' remarks focused on his proposed state budget and the investments the Governor's budget creates for health care in Wisconsin.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding welcomed Evers by saying, "Governor Evers' background is in public education, but you wouldn't know that from his budget. [His budget] is one of the strongest for health care I've seen in years."

Evers began his remarks by sharing how his budget came to be so strong for health care. Along with Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, Evers said he traveled the state and held listening sessions with Wisconsinites to listen to their concerns and priorities for the state budget. While on the road, they learned "clearly health care was a top priority."

Evers called his budget a "watershed moment" for health care. "This budget proposes to increase hospital reimbursement by \$367 million over the biennium," said Evers. "Not only is it going to give better care to people, but it's going to foster economic growth and stability to the state, supporting those critical community anchors."



Gov. Tony Evers



L to R: WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding; UW Health CEO Alan Kaplan, MD; Gov. Tony Evers; Black River Memorial Hospital CEO Mary Beth White-Jacobs; WHA 2019 Board Chair Damond Boatwright; Reedsburg Area Medical Center President/CEO Bob Van Meeteren

Evers continued, "The budget covers more individuals who lack insurance, will reduce uncompensated care costs, and help prevent medical bankruptcies."

Governor Evers emphasized how his budget plans to reinvest all state savings from an enhanced federal match rate resulting from Medicaid expansion toward investments in health care in Wisconsin.

"This budget will generate an additional \$324.5 million which will be reinvested back into the health care system, not going elsewhere," Evers said.

Evers' budget proposal, submitted to the Legislature at the end of February, is currently with the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance for changes before heading back to the Governor's desk.

Senator Janis Ringhand Receives 2019 Health Care Advocate of the Year Award



President/CEO of Beloit Health System Tim McKeveitt presents WHA's 2019 Health Care Advocate Award to Sen. Janis Ringhand

In recognition of her support for public policies that enable delivery of high-quality, high-value health care, State Senator Janis Ringhand (D-Evansville) was honored with WHA's annual *Health Care Advocate of the Year* award.

Tim McKeveitt, WHA Board member and Beloit Health System President and CEO, presented this year's award saying, "We are grateful to have such a strong supporter of hospitals in the Wisconsin State Senate. Janis' common-sense approach to policymaking has made her an important partner with the Wisconsin Hospital Association and someone I have enjoyed working with over the years. We commend and thank Janis for her leadership on health care policy and strong partnership with Wisconsin hospitals."

During her tenure in the Legislature, Ringhand has supported important health care policies including:

- Co-authoring legislation to address concerns regarding the process for transporting patients in mental health crisis from a hospital emergency department to another care setting. The legislation received bipartisan support in the state Legislature and was signed into law last spring as 2017 Wisconsin Act 140.

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- Advancing Wisconsin health care workforce training programs for rural communities, reimbursement increases for high-Medicaid hospitals and innovative care delivery pilot programs to better utilize Medicaid resources.
- Joining a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers to support a very important piece of legislation clarifying Wisconsin’s informed consent standard for physicians while in the State Assembly.

Reedsburg Area Medical Center Takes Home *Advocacy All-Star Award*

Each year, WHA recognizes one hospital or health care system that exemplifies dedication to grassroots advocacy in partnership with WHA. The 2019 *Advocacy All-Star Award* went to Reedsburg Area Medical Center (RAMC) at the event, and RAMC President and CEO and 2018 WHA Board of Directors Chair Bob Van Meeteren, accepted the award.

RAMC actively:

- Participates on WHA’s Board, councils and work groups;
- Attends advocacy events in Madison and Washington, D.C.;
- Engages directly with state and federal lawmakers back in their districts; and,
- Continues to grow the number of new Hospitals Education & Advocacy Team (HEAT) members—a statewide network designed to facilitate grassroots involvement on state and federal issues that impact Wisconsin’s hospitals.

“Reedsburg Area Medical Center has been an outstanding advocacy partner with WHA,” said Eric Borgerding, WHA President and CEO. “We are a successful advocacy organization because of proactive policy development, effective lobbying, and actively engaged members like Reedsburg Area Medical Center.”



WHA Members from Reedsburg Area Medical Center with the *Advocacy All-Star Award*; Bob Van Meeteren is pictured second from the right in the first row.

Van Meeteren acknowledged the support of RAMC’s Board of Directors and senior administrative team in making the organization’s advocacy work possible. Several members of the board and senior team were in attendance.

“When I was told Reedsburg Area Medical Center would be receiving this award, I thought about everything that goes into advocacy. The fact that we have 1,000 people that attend this event each year, the many productive trips to Washington, D.C., the times we have hosted the Governor or legislators at our WHA meetings, how we are asked to testify in front of various legislative committees, the letters we are asked to review and sign...and the list goes on. None of this advocacy would be possible without the extremely talented team at WHA,” said Van Meeteren.

Hospital Advocates Meet with 130 State Legislators to Discuss Health Care Policy



WHA Advocacy Day Attendees on their way to the capitol to meet with their legislators.

An important component of WHA’s Annual Advocacy Day event is not just hearing speeches about the current state of affairs in politics and health care, but making the voice of Wisconsin’s hospitals heard loud and clear in the State Capitol with a unified message. Advocacy Day attendees had the opportunity to do just that following a legislative issues briefing from WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations, Kyle O’Brien. Nearly 500 hospital advocates visited 130 state lawmakers and legislative staff on Advocacy Day.

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“Use your time at the Capitol to tell your story today. Remind legislators how important your hospital is to you and your community,” said O’Brien. “It is these stories, coming from you, that legislators will remember. Your presence today will make a difference.”

O’Brien asked those visiting with lawmakers to make three main points during their visit:

1. Remind legislators that high-quality, high-value health care is an asset to Wisconsin’s economy because it helps to attract great talent for all industries;
2. Urge lawmakers to address the increasing Medicaid cost-shift, known as the Hidden Health Care Tax, and use the progress presented in Governor Evers’ budget to increase hospital reimbursement.
3. Ask legislators to modernize telehealth laws to improve care and reduce costs.



WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O'Brien briefs attendees going on legislative visits.

