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Legislature’s Budget Committee Approves Significant Hospital and Physician Reimbursement Increases

The state Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee enacted key WHA budget priorities for hospitals and the health care workforce during a meeting on June 4. Among policies supported by the Committee, lawmakers approved a WHA-advocated \$148 million increase in Medicaid reimbursement for hospitals over the 2019-21 biennium through the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program and another \$10 million increase for the state’s rural hospitals via the Rural Critical Care supplement program. The Committee also approved a nearly \$25 million increase in physician and behavioral health Medicaid reimbursement increases.

“Over three months ago, WHA [applauded](#) the health care budget introduced by Governor Evers, and we are pleased to now recognize the Joint Committee on Finance for its work, including approving substantial Medicaid reimbursement increases for hospitals and physicians,” said WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. “As happens in state budgets, the Committee dialed up some of the Governor’s reimbursement proposals, matched, or dialed down others. But all told, this budget started and remains positive for health care.”

Lawmakers also approved several other elements of Governor Evers’ budget proposal which were supported and lobbied on by WHA. These items included changes to Wisconsin’s Graduate Medical Education (GME) grant program, such as eliminating specialty limitations, and reforming Wisconsin’s Medicaid statutes to allow for real-time provider-to-provider telehealth consultations, as well as remote patient monitoring.

As noted above, the Committee approved reimbursement increases for physicians and behavioral health services, but these would require approval by the Joint Finance

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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Throughout 2019
Health Care Workforce Resilience
Free Member Webinar Series

SAVE THE DATE
September 6, 2019
WHA 2019 Post-Acute Care Conference
Wisconsin Dells, WI

Visit www.wha.org
for more educational
opportunities



WHA Information Center Puts Important Data at Your Fingertips!

Learn more about all data sets available to help with your hospital’s decision making

WHA Information Center (WHAIC) compiles data from Wisconsin hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) across the state. This information is available to help you make important operations and service decisions, as well as better identify patient trends.

- Avoid the cost and burden of prepping and synthesizing data
- Find answers to key business questions

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Data Set Name	General Description	How You Can Utilize the Data
Standard Patient Discharge Data Sets	Hospital and inpatient and outpatient claims data; ASC claims data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine hospital and ASC resources and services Analyze patient populations based on demographics, diagnoses and procedures Identify patterns, relationships, anomalies, and trends in services, patient populations and other factors Evaluate charges and utilization for a specific service, hospital, ASC or market segment Explore market opportunities and patterns for key services Study payer mix impacts on charges, services and patient populations
Custom Data Sets / Analytics Services	Set of customized actionable data that has been tailored specifically for your organization's needs and interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain advanced, customized reports and data sets without the need for internal resources and expertise Attain faster insights for decision-making Improve productivity by leveraging the exact data set needed for internal analysis
Hospital Survey**	Staffing and utilization data, including detailed demographic, services, staffing and [some] financial data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze hospital services, utilization, staffing and financial performance Identify and compare hospital services
Fiscal Hospital Survey**	Revenue, expenses and deductions data; unrestricted assets and liabilities; charity care and bad debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuable insight into the efficiency and financial health of your hospital, including gross and net revenue projections Examine revenue, expenses, operating margins and other financial information Evaluate a hospital's uncompensated care – including charity care and bad debt

** Detailed information also available in [WHAIC annual publications](#)

For more information about WHAIC data sets, contact WHAIC's Director of Operations [Brian Competente](#) at 608.274.1820.

Wisconsin Hospitals PAC & Conduit 2019 Campaign Continues

Contribute before June 25



The Wisconsin Hospitals PAC & Conduit campaign heads into summer with \$144,749 raised to date. That is 45% of the aggressive \$320,000 fundraising goal for 2019.

The Wisconsin Hospitals PAC & Conduit raises funds annually supporting candidates and campaigns all year long—120 individuals have contributed so far this year.

“Campaigning is an ongoing, year-round process, and there are dozens of opportunities to support Democrats and Republicans alike through various events, several of which the Wisconsin Hospitals PAC organizes specifically for Wisconsin health care advocates,” said WHA Advocacy Chair Bob Van Meeteren, President and CEO of Reedsburg Area Medical Center. “These events are supported generously by individuals through both the Wisconsin Hospitals State PAC and the Wisconsin Hospitals Conduit, but participation is key.”

Individual contributions can be made online at www.whconduit.com or call WHA's Vice President of Advocacy [Kari Hofer](#) at 608-268-1816. The next Wisconsin Hospitals PAC & Conduit contributor list will be published in the June 25 edition of WHA's *Valued Voice* newsletter.

Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Reauthorization Bill Passes Senate

Legislation initiated by WHA to permanently reauthorize Wisconsin's participation in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact passed one house of the state Legislature last week, moving through the Wisconsin state Senate on a unanimous voice vote.

In April 2017, Wisconsin's Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) became the first licensing agency in the nation to process a Compact license. Since then, nearly 400 physicians residing in other states have used the Compact process to become licensed and serve patients in Wisconsin. [Senate Bill 74](#) and its companion, [Assembly Bill 70](#), would permanently reauthorize the Compact, which under the original enabling legislation enacted in 2015 faced a five-year sunset. The bills were introduced by a bipartisan group of legislators and led by Representatives Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah) and Deb Kolste (D-Janesville) and Senators Pat Testin (R-Stevens Point) and Patty Schachtner (D-Somerset).

This Compact reauthorization legislation is expected to have an Assembly Committee hearing sometime in late June or early July. Lawmakers in the Assembly are not expected to return to a general floor session until October, when they would consider the bill for final passage and forward it on to Governor Evers to be enacted into law.



SAVE THE DATE: Get Your Claims Questions Answered

WHA is partnering with UnitedHealthcare (UHC) and the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) to host a **free** claims consultation event for WHA members. You will have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with UHC staff to discuss and resolve outstanding claims submitted by your hospital, which will include a comprehensive look at how UnitedHealthcare reviews your claims.

During your scheduled appointment, you will have:

- One-on-one detailed conversations with an Issue Resolution Team Member and Provider Advocate
- An avenue to get your claim issues addressed
- A discussion on medical and reimbursement policies that may be influencing your claim outcome

How It Works / What To Do Next

1. Fill out and return the [linked spreadsheet](#) regarding any outstanding or denied claims that you have questions about to [Kelly Capozzi](#) at UHC by June 28. This will give UHC ample time to research your claims to be prepared for your personalized appointment.
2. Email WHA Vice President of Public Policy [Lisa Ellinger](#) to let her know you will be scheduling a UHC consult. Feel free to submit any questions you have about the event.
3. You will be contacted to schedule dedicated one-on-one time for your hospital on EITHER July 30 or 31 between 8:00AM – 4:00PM to discuss your outstanding/denied claims. Please note that UHC and WHA will work with your schedule—you are not expected to attend the entire day.

Scheduled Appointments on July 30 or 31
Time slots available between 8:00AM – 4:00PM
Consultations held at Wisconsin Hospital Association – 5510 Research Park Drive in Madison

Committee based on a plan to be developed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). If ultimately passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Evers, WHA will continue to engage with DHS to ensure the plan put forward by the Department provides resources to increase access to behavioral health care for Medicaid enrollees served in Wisconsin hospitals and health systems.

“Governor Evers got the ball rolling with one of the strongest health care budgets we’ve seen in many years, and as it stands after the Joint Finance Committee’s actions, it remains a strong health care budget. It’s not everything everyone wanted, including WHA, but all-in-all, a positive health care budget that will expand access to care and reduce cost-shifting—both bipartisan aims. It may seem counterintuitive in this political climate, but I actually believe this health care budget contains very positive investments for which both the Governor and the Legislature should be lauded.”

The Legislature’s budget bill needs to be approved by both the full Senate and Assembly before heading to the Governor’s desk for partial or full vetoes. The budget committee is reportedly targeting the end of next week to wrap up its work, with plans to pass a budget bill through the Assembly and the Senate by the end of June.