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## EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

**September 6, 2019**  
*WHA 2019 Post-Acute Care Conference*  
Wisconsin Dells, WI

**September 11-12, 2019**  
*Health Equity and Literacy Workshop*  
Madison, WI

**Visit [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org) for more educational opportunities**

## WHA Transparency Task Force Shares Surprise Billing and Patient Cost Estimate Initiatives



WHA's Transparency Task Force Meeting, August 26, 2019

The WHA Transparency Task Force (TTF) reconvened August 26 to discuss member efforts around price transparency. Jennifer Mueller, Vice President of the WHA Information Center (WHAIC), kicked off the meeting with a presentation on the tools and data available through WHAIC. The TTF was interested in learning about how the Information Center's data can inform WHA efforts as they relate to price transparency and surprise billing.

The WHAIC has been in existence since 2004 when the State contracted with WHAIC to lead the State's data collection efforts. As such, the WHAIC is a skilled data collector and data aggregator. Mueller informed the group that this data is shared with data purchasers, is used to develop mandated publications, as well as to populate both transparency websites—[PricePoint](#) for price and [CheckPoint](#) for quality. The WHAIC also has several projects in the works utilizing this data, which will assist hospital members in their price transparency efforts. *(continued on page 5)*

## Community Benefit Stories Due Sept. 6

**Submit stories highlighting what your hospital/health system does for its community!**

Later this fall, WHA will publish its annual Community Benefits Report that highlights how Wisconsin hospitals help support their communities, families and patients.

Each WHA member hospital may submit a story in each of the three categories below:

- **Charity care:** free care for those who cannot afford it. These make for especially powerful stories.
- **Free clinics:** tell us about the free clinic(s) your hospital/health system runs or contributes to.
- **Hospital-supported initiatives:** identify a priority from your community health needs assessment and explain how the hospital/health system led an effort to address it. If you engaged community partners, include those partners in the story, too.

**Stories are due by September 6**, and we would ideally like to include a story from each member hospital. We've created an [online form](#) to make it easy to submit your article. *(continued on page 2)*

Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WHAcBStories2019> to upload your story and photo to accompany the article. Please submit an image with your story whenever possible as that helps tell a compelling story to legislators, the public, and media outlets in both the report and on social media.

If you have questions, contact [WHA Communications](#) at 608-274-1820.

## Friday, September 6: WHA's Second Annual Post-Acute Care Conference: Register Now!

WHA's second annual Post-Acute Care Conference, "*Challenges in Post-Acute Care: Discharging Complex Hospital Patients*" will be held this Friday, September 6, 2019, at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

The program will address the challenges hospitals face in finding appropriate, accessible post-acute care for complex patients waiting to be discharged. Keynote Speakers are Dr. Josh Luke of the National Readmission Prevention Collaborative and Judy Baskins, former Chief of Clinical Integration for Palmetto Health in Columbia, South Carolina.

The conference also features six breakout sessions packed with information that will inform hospitals and post-acute partners about strategies in finding post-acute care for complex patients.

[Register here](#). For conference-related questions, contact WHA Vice President of Policy Development [Laura Rose](#).

## CMS Extends WHA Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN) Contract Through March 2020

In September 2016, the Wisconsin Hospital Association, Michigan Hospital Association Keystone Center, and Illinois Health and Hospital Association joined forces as the Great Lakes Partners for Patients (GLPP) and have worked with their member hospitals to improve patient care and outcomes as part of a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN).



WHA is proud to announce the GLPP HIIN's contract will extend into 2020 to continue the great work to achieve the goal of reducing hospital-acquired conditions by 20 percent in 11 areas of harm, as well as achieve a 12 percent reduction in all-cause readmissions.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of GLPP HIIN hospitals, there has already been:

- A 20 percent reduction in Central Line-associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABSI) in both Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and hospital-wide;
- A 20 percent reduction in Catheter-associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI) in the ICU; and,
- A nearly 20 percent reduction in Clostridioides difficile (C.diff) infection rates.

In addition, GLPP HIIN hospitals are currently over the halfway mark and have achieved at least a 10 percent reduction in the following categories: adverse drug events (ADE) related to anticoagulants and opioids, and probable Ventilator-Associated Pneumonias (PVAP).

These improvement efforts have resulted in an estimated cost savings of \$181,688,338, as well as a significant reduction in avoided harm events.

WHA Chief Quality Officer Beth Dibbert attributes the success to the GLPP HIIN members' commitment to seeking continuous improvement and participating in numerous offerings, such as cross-state best practice sharing, utilizing subject matter experts, hospital onsite visits, and coaching calls. Attendees have been able to learn how to utilize data to drive improvement, expand and improve conversations with key stakeholders, reduce costs, and make hospitals safer for both patients and providers.

"WHA thanks CMS for this extension, and the GLPP HIIN is looking forward to continuing this important work into 2020," said Dibbert. "Wisconsin hospitals will continue to have a meaningful impact, improving care and saving lives here and across the region."

## Grassroots Spotlight

### WHA Meets with Reps. Grothman and Moore to Discuss Surprise Billing

*Continue to ask for fix to federal legislation*

WHA hospital and health system leaders met with Congressman Glenn Grothman and Congresswoman Gwen Moore in separate meetings on August 28 to discuss federal legislation aimed at tackling surprise medical billing.



The first meeting was hosted by Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Ozaukee in Mequon. Grothman toured the facility and met with a group of WHA advocates from Ascension, Hospital Sisters Health System Eastern WI Division, Froedtert Health, Children's Hospital and Health System, and Columbus Community Hospital.

David Lally, of HSHS Eastern WI & Caleb Jensem of St. Nicholas Hospital in Sheboygan, discussed voluntary efforts hospitals are already doing to meet customers' desires for more transparency and price information. They discussed WHA's PricePoint website, which allows consumers to compare charges for hospitals across Wisconsin, as well as a website HSHS has developed for its patients. This website allows patients to obtain online estimates for planned procedures and takes into consideration a patient's health insurance plan so they have a better idea of what they might be paying out of pocket.



*from L to R: Jon Hoelter, WHA Director of Federal and State Relations; Elizabeth Cliffe, Ascension Wisconsin Director of Government Relations and Advocacy; Katie Burns, Vice President of Network Strategy & Development at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin; Lindsay Punzenberger, Director of Federal Government Relations at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin; Congressman Glenn Grothman; Caleb Jensem, HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital Director of Finance; John Russell, Columbus Community Hospital President & CEO; David Lally, HSHS Eastern Division Director of Business Development, Care Coordination, and Advocacy; Maureen McNally, Chief of Staff, Office of President & CEO at Froedtert Health.*

Grothman said he has been following the legislation in Washington that would end surprise medical billing and understands that it has been introduced to address consumer frustration with unexpected medical bills. He said he was unsure where the legislation would end up but hoped it would not become mired in partisan politics and would actually present a workable solution.

Katie Burns and Lindsay Punzenberger of Children's Hospital walked through efforts Children's makes to stop patients from receiving a surprise medical bill. Burns mentioned that Children's, like many Wisconsin hospitals, does up-front work to keep its providers in-network. It will also negotiate single-case agreements with insurers Children's does not have a contract with. Many Wisconsin hospitals take these steps to help make Wisconsin a state with a low rate of surprise medical bills compared to other states.

John Russell, CEO of Columbus Community Hospital, offered his perspective as a small, rural, critical access hospital. He noted that while hospitals support taking the patient out of the middle and avoiding surprise medical bills, the mechanism that would pay providers a government set median in-network rate would create other problems that heavily favor insurers at the expense of hospitals and patients' choices of providers.

Grothman thanked the group for sharing their perspectives, which he said he would keep in mind should the Education & Labor Committee he serves on take up this legislation.

WHA then went to meet with Congresswoman Moore in her district office in Milwaukee and was joined by Ascension Wisconsin and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. Moore said she is currently a co-sponsor of legislation authored by Ways & Means Committee Chair Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) which would require hospitals to inform patients if a provider is out of network prior to services being provided, otherwise the patient could receive a bill for no more than an in-network charge.

*(continued on page 4)*

*(Grassroots Spotlight: WHA Meets with Reps. Grothman and Moore to Discuss Surprise Billing . . . continued from page 3)*

Elizabeth Cliffe of Ascension noted that Wisconsin hospitals in the Milwaukee area all work to keep providers in-network as much as possible, which reduces the amount of surprise medical bills. She noted that current studies on the issue suggest Wisconsin has a low rate of surprise medical billing, but that current legislation requiring providers to accept government-set benchmark rates would create challenging issues for all Wisconsin hospitals and the patients they serve. Moore said she is aware of the concerns over this issue and will keep that in mind as legislation comes before the Ways & Means Committee she serves on or to the floor for a vote.



L to R: Jon Hoelter, Lindsay Punzenberger, Cong. Gwen Moore, Elizabeth Cliffe

WHA will continue to meet with lawmakers in Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. to request the government rate-setting provisions be dropped from legislation before it comes to the floor for a vote. For additional information, contact WHA Director of Federal and State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#).

## David Lally, HSHS Eastern Wisconsin Division, Presented with AHA “Grassroots Champion” Award



Jon Hoelter presents AHA’s 2019 Grassroots Champion Award to David Lally (right).

Following a meeting with Congressman Glen Grothman on August 28 in Mequon, WHA Director of State and Federal Relations Jon Hoelter presented HSHS Director of Business Development David Lally with an American Hospital Association (AHA) “Grassroots Champion” award. The award is given out each year by AHA to one individual in each state. Lally received the award for Wisconsin for his dedication and commitment to grassroots advocacy.

“WHA is pleased to present this AHA Grassroots Champion award to David Lally for his advocacy efforts in support of hospitals and health systems,” said Hoelter in presenting the award. “David is committed to the hospital mission and is a leader in promoting the value of hospitals to legislators, other influence leaders and to his community. Whether it’s heading to Washington, D.C., the state capitol in Madison, or joining us for meetings with legislators in their own communities, David is always jumping at the opportunity to advocate on behalf of his hospital, and Wisconsin health care as a whole. WHA truly appreciates his passion and dedication to advocacy.”

The AHA Grassroots Champion Award was created to recognize those hospital leaders who most effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect the hospital’s vital role in the community, who have done an exemplary job in broadening the base of community support for the hospital and who are tireless advocates for hospitals and their patients.

“We depend upon strong local voices to help tell the story of hospitals,” said Eric Borgerding, WHA President & CEO. “This award is recognition of the strong advocacy and dedication David Lally brings to his community and his hospital.”

## WCMEW 2019 Summit: Workforce Innovations for Now and Into the Future Tuesday, September 24, 2019, Best Western Waterfront, Oshkosh

This year’s Workforce Summit will focus on innovative solutions to Wisconsin’s health care workforce challenges – what we are facing now, and what we envision for the future. All leaders in the Wisconsin health care field – hospital and clinic executives, health educators and trainers, policymakers, and those in the front lines of care delivery – will benefit from hearing from:

- Two keynoters speaking on
  - » “Anticipating the Future of Health Care: Workforce Challenges and Opportunities”
  - » “Preparing Care Teams for Success: Interprofessional Training & Practice”

*(continued on page 5)*

- Panels presenting “Academic-Community Partnerships for Innovative Interprofessional Education,” “Mobile Integrated Health/Community Paramedic,” “Building a Workforce for Wisconsin’s Diverse Population,” and “Workforce Resiliency Strategies”
- A Policy Panel, consisting of health care leadership and policymakers, discussing “Solutions to Grow and Support Wisconsin’s Health Care Workforce”
- Members of WCMEW’s Clinical Site Enhancement Work Group, who will provide initial findings of their investigation into “Clinical Site Placement: Resources, Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Plans”

All sessions will be interactive, with participants encouraged to exchange views with presenters and all others.

**Who Should Attend:**

- Hospital, clinic, and health system leaders – See some innovative ways systems are deploying workforce resources to meet current workforce challenges;
- Educators/teachers/clinical coordinators – Learn from colleagues on how they are creating new interprofessional training opportunities, and hear about the current “state of the state” in clinical site placement experiences;
- Providers (Physicians, APRNs, Pharmacists, and others) – Gain a better understanding of how clinicians and systems are creating strategies to enhance workforce resiliency; and,
- State and local policymakers – Hear from Wisconsin’s health care leaders about their concerns and proposed solutions to the regulatory and legal challenges to optimizing our workforce.

ALL PARTICIPANTS will benefit from exploring the future of Wisconsin’s health care. [Register online.](#)

The TTF also heard from WHA Director of Federal and State Relations Jon Hoelter, who provided an update on the state and federal landscape as it relates to surprise billing, as well as WHA’s advocacy efforts. He noted WHA led a delegation to Washington, D.C. in mid-July to discuss surprise billing and was able to meet with lawmakers and/or staff from every Wisconsin office. WHA is also doing in-district meetings in August and September in Wisconsin with select lawmakers. Hoelter said WHA’s message was well-received, but the fate of federal legislation that would include government-set commercial rates to resolve balance billing disputes remains uncertain. Legislation is likely to continue moving when Congress resumes its work in September, and WHA is planning another trip to D.C. to address new developments with such legislation. Hoelter also noted that depending on what happens with federal legislation, there may be a desire to work on state legislation that would impact the individual and group health insurance markets in Wisconsin.

Finally, each TTF member described their own organization’s efforts pertaining to preventing and/or resolving surprise billing and engaging patients with cost information. Members presented and discussed innovative strategies already underway, and future phases of their work on these topics. The group reconvenes in October to continue to share and document best practices and will produce a report highlighting these discussions by the close of 2019. For more information about the TTF, contact WHA Vice President of Public Policy [Lisa Ellinger](#).

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