

Gov. Evers Declares 2023 the Year of Mental Health During State of the State Address

Evers previews budget proposals, including health care workforce and mental health investments

During his annual State of the State Address on Jan. 24, Gov. Tony Evers previewed hundreds of millions of dollars of proposed investments that he plans for the biennial budget bill and declared 2023 “the Year of Mental Health.”

Evers outlined a \$500 million investment in mental health services, citing reports by the Wisconsin Population Health Institute that indicates 55 of 72 Wisconsin counties have significant shortages of psychiatrists. These investments focused on expanding Medicaid-covered services for psychosocial rehab, residential intoxication management and withdrawal services, and room/board costs for residential substance use disorder treatment. The Governor also proposes a \$17 million increase in various outpatient Medicaid behavioral health services rate increases.

“But we’ll also need investments in targeted industries that we know have been hit hard by the pandemic, including in our health care industry,” said Evers, as he proposed a \$50 million increase in funding to bolster the state’s health care workforce.

In details provided by the Governor’s office, these investments will include multiple expansions of graduate medical education programs, additional resources to expand the long-term care workforce, and additional funding for the Worker Advancement Initiative targeted at health care workforce programs.

WHA has been in discussions with the Governor’s office and the Administration to put funding toward talent attraction campaigns that focus on generating more interest by K-12 students in health care careers, particularly for Wisconsin hospitals and health systems. Evers announced an investment of \$10 million for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to develop and implement initiatives to retain and attract talented workers.

WHA members Bob Van Meeteren, president/CEO of Reedsburg Area Medical Center, and Dan Rohrbach, president/CEO of Southwest Health in Platteville, joined WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding and Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O’Brien at the State of the State Address on Jan. 24.

Evers is expected to release his full biennial budget proposal on Feb. 15 during his budget address to the Legislature. Following the proposal of his budget, the Legislature will amend the budget bill and send it back to the Governor for his approval, partial-approval or veto targeting a completion date of June 30, 2023, which aligns with the end of the current fiscal year.



Gov. Tony Evers

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