

## Governor Tony Evers: "We must do more, do it quickly and get our health care industry back on track"

In his remarks to WHA Advocacy Day attendees on March 20, Governor Tony Evers applauded health care policy accomplishments over the past year but acknowledged more work is needed to address the significant financial and workforce challenges facing Wisconsin hospitals.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding warmly welcomed Evers, marking his fifth appearance at WHA's Advocacy Day event. Borgerding, expressing pride in Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems, highlighted the state's position as having some of the highest quality hospitals in the nation, ranking fourth according to CMS, and boasting commendably low uninsured rates.

However, Borgerding also acknowledged the challenges faced by hospitals, particularly concerning rising costs of care and the growing demands of an aging population. He emphasized the critical nature of the partnership between WHA and Gov. Evers' administration in addressing these challenges saying, "For these and many other reasons, our partnership with Gov. Evers and his team is more critical than ever."

Gov. Evers reciprocated the sentiment, recognizing the essential role of health care and the dedication of Wisconsin's health care professionals. Evers said, "Each year this is an opportunity to celebrate the important work of the Wisconsin Hospital Association and our state's dedicated healthcare system, our workers and partners."

Evers also underscored his administration's commitment to health care, citing substantial investments in Medicaid reimbursement increases and workforce development. He applauded the collaborative efforts between WHA and his team, particularly in crafting reforms to outdated guardianship laws and advocating for bipartisan legislation, such as the next of kin bill.

Additionally, Evers outlined ongoing initiatives aimed at addressing health care workforce shortages, including the establishment of a task force dedicated to this issue. He shared examples of innovative programs across the state, such as training initiatives in school districts and partnerships between hospital groups and technical colleges.

Evers stressed the importance of retaining health care professionals within Wisconsin and called for bipartisan cooperation in releasing critical funds to stabilize health care access, particularly in regions affected by recent closures.

"It's a really difficult time, folks. I know it's difficult for all of you, whether it's issues around funding, whether it's issues around workforce, but we have the state of Wisconsin counting on us to do the right thing and we're going to need your help to do that," Evers said.

Evers concluded with optimism about the future of health care in Wisconsin, emphasizing the need for collaboration, common ground and transparency. He called upon stakeholders to work together in overcoming challenges and making meaningful progress for the well-being of the state's residents.



Gov. Tony Evers

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