

## Southern and Western Region Host DHS Leader at Annual Dinner

Despite a few scheduling hiccups that led to the “spring” dinner taking place in July, and a last-minute change in guest speakers when Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-Designee became unavoidably unavailable, the WHA Southern region and their invited guests from the Western region enjoyed a spirited discussion with Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge.

WHA CEO Eric Borgerding introduced the Deputy Secretary, noting her leadership history at Wisconsin hospitals and on the WHA board, and the depth of her experience and expertise. Standridge’s remarks made this knowledge very apparent and underlined the importance of her presence in DHS leadership.

In her prepared remarks Deputy Secretary Standridge commented: “We need to work together to serve the most vulnerable, and we know hospitals do their part, but also that you have tremendous challenges.”

Leaders from the Southern and Western region were able to share key challenges, such as a shifting payer mix to more Medicare and Medicaid that does not cover the cost of care, shrinking government reimbursement and how their hospitals and health systems are tasked with taking care of the needs of our communities, while competing in the market against disruptors that do not carry this same burden. Hospitals maintain 24/7/365 access including physician call requirements, that competitors moving into their communities do not. Noting Standridge’s experience as a hospital and health system leader, they also expressed their appreciation for her ability to help DHS understand this operations challenge that is underappreciated by most.

Dinner attendees thanked Deb Standridge for stepping in on short notice and providing informative and energizing remarks.



*Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge*

WHA’s [Ann Zenk](#) provides support for the Southern region. WHA’s [Brian Potter](#) provides support for the Western region. Contact Ann or Brian with questions or feedback about region activities, including the upcoming Southern Hospital Invitational Tournament golf outing at University Ridge.



## Other Articles in this Issue

- [WHA-Crafted Training Grant Applications Now Open](#)
- [New Coalition Report on Value of 24/7 Care Provided by Hospitals](#)
- [August Fast Facts: Heat-Related Illnesses](#)
- [HealthPartners to Exit UnitedHealthcare's Medicare Advantage Network Over Payment Issues](#)
- [Wisconsin Employers Saved Over \\$1 Billion in Worker's Comp Premiums Since 2017](#)
- [Southern and Western Region Host DHS Leader at Annual Dinner](#)
- [WHA to Sen. Baldwin: Focus Should be on Keeping Hospitals Open Rather than Regulating Closures](#)