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WHA Board of Directors Discuss Key Issues, Fill Immediate Vacancies

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Board of Directors convened on June 25, 2024, for a productive meeting, discussing significant issues impacting Wisconsin hospitals and strategies for addressing them.



WHA's Board of Directors meeting, June 27, 2024.

During his President's Report, WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding provided a progress update on WHA's 2024 goals. He highlighted the impact of WHA's 2024 Workforce Report and the ongoing attention it has received from the lawmakers, the media and other key stakeholders. The report was [released on March 11](#), but received another wave of earned media when WHA presented the report in a [special briefing](#) to lawmakers and staff in the State Capitol on May 23.

While WHA's next-of kin guardianship bill did not progress this session, Borgerding applauded the progress made in educating lawmakers and staff on the problem and thanked members for their commitment to advocacy on the issue. He also spotlighted WHA's efforts thus far in "Telling the Hospital Story" and previewed plans in the pipeline for the rest of the year.

Next, Borgerding discussed plans for the upcoming WHA Board Retreat in August, including official business on the agenda, guest speakers and social activities.

President and CEO of Prairie Ridge Health John Russell reported on the recent activities of the WHA Nominating and Awards Committee, including filling vacancies on the WHA Board of Directors. The committee proposed and the board approved appointing Teri Theiler, President of North Region, Aspirus to fill an immediate at-large vacancy on the WHA Board. Additionally, with the retirement of Cathy Jacobson, the committee proposed and the board approved appointing Mike Schafer, CEO, Spooner Health to Chair of WHA's Audit and Investment Committee. The Nominating and Awards Committee will consider further appointments in the fall for terms to being in 2025.

WHA Senior Vice President of Public Policy Joanne Alig presented an update on the Medicaid Reimbursement Workgroup, established in April. While Medicaid funding for hospitals and physicians was allocated in the last biennial budget, Medicaid reimbursement remains significantly below cost. The workgroup is focusing on strategies to increase Medicaid reimbursement and level the playing field for hospitals serving Medicaid patients. The progress, resources allocated by WHA and important dynamics of this initiative were discussed.

Borgerding led a special recognition for Froedtert Health CEO Cathy Jacobson, who is retiring effective June 30, acknowledging her significant contributions to the organization.

Borgerding said, "I want to add my voice to those who are personally grateful to Cathy for the impact she has had not only on the organizations we work for or represent, but for the influence she has had on WHA's development and growth. Many examples of

this, some immediate, others realized months later. Her foresight, her wisdom and guidance has been truly invaluable. She has helped WHA navigate some very treacherous waters, steering us away from rocks only she could see at the time," Borgerding said. "Cathy has been the kind of member leader that makes us proud of what we do."

"Being on this board has been a highlight in my career, but time passes and it's time," said Jacobson. "I am just so grateful for everything—the connections, the learning, the personal friendships I have gained...Thank you, this has been a joy," Jacobson concluded.



Eric Borgerding and Cathy Jacobson

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- [WHA Comments on U.S. Senate Bipartisan GME Proposal](#)
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- [WHA Offers Training to Meet MATE Act Mandates and Improve Access to Opioid and Substance Use Treatment](#)
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