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## 2025 Physician Leadership Development Conference - In Review



More than 140 physician leaders and hospital executives gathered at the 2025 WHA Physician Leadership Development Conference March 14 and 15 in Kohler, WI. This year's presentations focused on physician engagement and wellbeing, the current health care climate challenges the state is facing, leading teams and creating a culture where physicians and others can thrive. This annual leadership educational event allowed attendees to learn, network and share successes and challenges with colleagues from around the state.

**Chris DeRienzo**, MD, MPP, Senior Vice President and Chief Physician Executive from the American Hospital Association, kicked off the conference with his presentation Why Physician Engagement is Imperative in Tackling External Threats to Patient Care, and How Physician Leaders can Shepherd Physician Voice to Drive Positive Change. He discussed how the investment of resources into keeping physicians engaged with their work and involving them in the decision-making process is a positive move that benefits not only the physician, but the hospital and the community.



Chris DeRienzo

Eric Borgerding

**Eric Borgerding**,  
President and CEO of  
the Wisconsin



Hospital Association discussed Identifying and Addressing Current Challenges Impacting Physician Practice in Wisconsin. He shared that understanding what these external challenges are can help equip physician leaders better in communicating to staff the “why” and “how” these external factors drive disruptions and change within their hospitals. He also shared how physician leaders can be effective advocates with government officials for positive health care policy change.

**Andy Hillig**,  
Managing

Director, Career Management of the LAK Group, led a discussion and activities surrounding Leading High-Functioning Teams: Habits of Systems Thinkers that Build Followership. He emphasized that leaders of high-functioning teams need to be enthusiastic and intentional about having a holistic understanding of the organization. They also need to understand the impact of their decisions and behaviors by seeking to understand their relationships, effects and delays among information, problems, people, events, departments and systems.



Andy Hillig

The day closed with a **panel of Wisconsin hospital leaders**, both physicians and non-physicians, sharing Strategies to Foster a Positive, Impactful Physician Culture Within Your Organization – Perspectives from Physician and Non-physician Leaders. This inciteful panel was made up of Jeff Bahr, MD, FACP, Chief Physician Executive - Midwest Region, Advocate Health; Wendy Ledesma, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Sauk Prairie Healthcare; Chris Woleske, Executive Vice President and President, Bellin Region, Emplify Health; and Brad Groseth, Regional President - Western Wisconsin, Marshfield Clinic Health System.



L to R: Brad Groseth; Chris Woleske; Wendy Ledesma, MD; and Jeff Bahr, MD

Nadine Allen

Ann Zenk

WHA’s **Nadine Allen**, Chief Quality Officer and **Ann Zenk**, Senior Vice President of



Workforce and Clinical Practice, started day two with Advancing Physician Wellbeing – Survey of Current Internal and External Strategies. Nadine and Ann shared data and insights around this critical topic.

As with previous

years, the closing presentation for the Physician Leadership Development Conference was An Executive Physician's Personal Leadership Journey. This year, attendees had the pleasure of hearing from **Imran Andrabi**, MD, President and CEO of Froedtert ThedaCare Health, as he shared his unique and interesting career journey.



Imran Andrabi, MD

Some of the comments from this year's attendees include:

- ***"The keynote speakers to kickstart & wrap up the conference were both quite dynamic, great picks! The panel format during the first day was nice—really like how interactive and easy the whole group conversation went."***
- ***"The Q&A sessions seemed the most engaging, as well as Imran Andrabi's presentation."***
- ***"Great conference, as always."***

[Click here to view the full photo album of the 2025 Physician Leadership Development Conference.](#)

[Download the \*In Review\* pdf here.](#)