

WHA Welcomes Member Hospital Representatives and Sponsors Back to In-Person Wisconsin Rural Health Conference

More than 250 hospital executives and stakeholders attended the WHA Wisconsin Rural Health Conference at the KI Convention Center in Green Bay from June 15-17, the first time the conference was held on-site in three years.

After an eventful dinner reception at historic Lambeau Field on June 15, participants enjoyed an entertaining and insightful joint morning session with attendees of the Physician Leadership Development Conference on June 16. Both groups were treated to keynote presentation "Motivating Health Care Teams in an Era of Change, More Work, and Fewer Resources" by Executive Speaker Bureau presenter Joe Mull. Mull shared his formula for achieving true commitment in the workplace: the ideal job, meaningful work and a great boss.

Next, WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding and Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative Executive Director Tim Size provided their perspectives on "The State of Health Care in Wisconsin." Borgerding highlighted issues affecting WHA members, including hospital at home trends, 340B Prescription Drug Pricing Program, price transparency and surprise billing. Size called attention to challenges and opportunities facing rural health care providers, from the health care workforce shortage, questionable payer behaviors and community economic development.

The conference's afternoon session was comprised of educational and actional presentations geared toward WHA members' most pressing issues, many of which were delivered by WHA corporate members. These included:

- *The Problem is Poverty* by Merritt Hawkins
- *Ransomware: Are you protected?* by Heartland Business Systems
- *Board Governance: Insights into Trustee Roles and Responsibilities* by FORVIS
- *Maintaining Relevancy as a Rural Hospital in the Face of the New Realities of Healthcare* by Erdman Company
- *Full Disclosure: Surprise Billing and Hospital Price Transparency Legal Update* by Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman, P.C.
- *Health Care Compliance for Leaders and Beyond* by von Briesen & Roper, S.C.
- *Strategies to Reduce Labor Needs and Keep Up with the Demand for Health Care* by M3 Insurance
- *Identifying and Improving Health Disparities in Rural Wisconsin Using EHR Data* by the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality
- *Refocusing Leadership Teams on Strategy* by Wipfli, LLP

The day concluded with a dinner reception in the exhibitor hall where WHA corporate members had the opportunity to meet and converse with WHA hospital members.

The conference concluded on the morning of June 17 with Dan DeGroot, chair of the WHA Council on Rural Health and president and CEO of Stoughton Health, welcoming the group and introducing the morning's speakers. Deb Skarda of Thrive Forward Consulting started things off with a presentation entitled, "The Secret to Excelling in Evolving Times." Skarda spoke on the reality of living in VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) times and provided strategies for thriving during those times.

Executive Speaker Bureau speaker Laurel Braitman, PhD, closed the conference out with a presentation on "How to Improve Our Mental Health and Build Resilience." Braitman challenged the group to "enlarge our definition of health to include the systems that employ us."

WHA thanks all who attended the WHA Wisconsin Rural Health Conference. Mark your calendars for next year's conference scheduled for June 7-9 in the Wisconsin Dells.

WHA is also grateful to the exhibitors and sponsors of the WHA Wisconsin Rural Health Conference, who, along with attendees will be highlighted in a photo recap of the event in next week's *The Valued Voice*.

Click [here](#) or on the photo below to view and download photos from the conference.