

## Former Governors Doyle and Thompson encourage Advocacy Day Attendees to Rise Above Partisanship, Tell Their Story



*Keynote speakers former Govs. Tommy G. Thompson and Jim Doyle join WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding for a moderated discussion.*

Former Wisconsin Governors Jim Doyle and Tommy Thompson joined WHA's annual Advocacy Day on April 19 in Madison as keynote speakers in a conversation moderated by WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. The Governors shared a common view on political divisiveness today and encouraged attendees to rise above the partisanship to make an impact by telling their story.

Gov. Doyle was first elected Governor of Wisconsin in 2002 and served for two terms, following his three terms as Attorney General. Gov. Thompson was first elected Governor of Wisconsin in 1986, winning his next three gubernatorial contests and making him the longest serving Governor in Wisconsin history.

"You both have made a lasting impact on health care in Wisconsin and access to care for the people of the state," said Borgerding kicking off the conversation. Borgerding continued with an acknowledgment of the two Governors' combined health care accomplishments, including Wisconsin's medical malpractice system, BadgerCare, FamilyCare, Medicaid managed care, the statewide trauma system, welfare reform, funding for rural physician residencies, loan forgiveness for health care providers and transparency.

The Governors commented on changes in health care today, specifically the growing use of data in health care and the threat the aging population has on both health care demand and the health care workforce shortage.

Doyle said, "Our care has gotten so much better, and people are living longer, but we don't have enough people to provide care with the growing demand."

Thompson agreed and added, referencing the state's \$7 billion budget surplus, "We have the money at the Capitol, and this is the year to convince the Legislature to invest in health care. You'll find that Jim and I will support Eric and you all wherever possible so we can convince them to do it." Thompson continued, "The biggest change you can make is to convince your legislator that the investment in health care is an investment for the future with a return that will be bigger and better than anything else they can spend the money on."

The Governors engaged in dialogue about today's partisan environment and its impact on the legislative process. Borgerding reminded attendees both Governors served during times when their Legislature was controlled by the opposing party and asked the Governors to offer insight into how to navigate the "hyper-political environment so that we're not fighting, but problem solving."

"The partisanship is going to happen one way or another. When you talk to your legislators, say, 'We're here to talk to you about what's really happening in our health care system, in your district and in the state,'" said Doyle. "Your role is to go beyond the partisan battle and share what is going on in your hospital. This is a unique opportunity and one where your voice needs to be heard," Doyle continued.



*L to R: 2023 Board Chair David Hartberg, Tommy G. Thompson, Jim Doyle and Eric Borgerding.*

Thompson responded in agreement, "He's right. Partisanship needs to be left at the door. We need to start rewarding accomplishments and leadership." He added, "You've got to make sure you convince your legislators of your cause, and the best way to do that is to invite them into your hospital to see the problems you are dealing with and what you need. Ask them to help you and check in on the progress."

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