

## IN THIS ISSUE

*The Valued Voice* Newsletter Refresh ..... 1

WHA's Advocacy Day Gives Voice to Wisconsin Hospitals..... 2

Advocate Aurora Health Receives WHA Advocacy All-Star Award ..... 3

Rep. Evan Goyke Receives 2022 Health Care Advocate of the Year Award..... 3

Dr. Scott Gottlieb Discusses Pandemic Response, Preparedness with WHA's Borgerding in Advocacy Day Keynote ..... 4

Gov. Evers Praises Health Care Workers, Announces Signing of Two Bipartisan Bills on Advocacy Day ..... 5

Lawmakers Discuss Health Care Workforce, Insurance Related Challenges During Legislative Panel . 6

## EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

**April 6**  
*Patient Financial Engagement Solutions that Drive the Revenue Cycle* Webinar

**April 6**  
*The CMS Hospital Conditions of Participation (CoPs) 2022 - Session 1* Webinar Series

**April 13**  
*The CMS Hospital Conditions of Participation (CoPs) 2022 - Session 2* Webinar Series

## 2022 Advocacy Day coverage starts on page 2!

### The Valued Voice Newsletter Refresh

**Same timely industry, legislative and educational information. New, optimized format.**

Each week, WHA members and health care industry stakeholder subscribers receive *The Valued Voice* in their inboxes. That's not changing, but the reader experience will improve, starting next week.

Rather than each *The Valued Voice* headline linking to a single pdf document, starting on April 7, links in the email newsletter subscribers receive will drive to dedicated pages for each featured story.



With each story contained on a single page, readers will no longer have to navigate multiple document pages to access the "continued" portions of stories broken up due to their length. And each story page will also include a full table of contents for that week's issue for ease of navigation.

The new presentation of *The Valued Voice* newsletter stories also makes social sharing from the page simple and will allow WHA to better assess reader engagement with the content delivered to members and subscribers each week.

Questions about *The Valued Voice* newsletter can be directed to WHA Vice President of Communications [Kelly Lietz](#).

# WHA's Advocacy Day Gives Voice to Wisconsin Hospitals

*Nearly 1,000 hospital supporters gather to promote good health care policy*

Nearly 1,000 hospital and health system leaders, frontline workers, supporters, volunteers and stakeholders attended WHA's 2022 Advocacy Day, held virtually on March 23, to learn from industry experts, receive updates on significant WHA initiatives and engage directly with elected leaders on issues of critical importance to health care providers and the patients they serve.



WHA President and CEO

Eric Borgerding welcomed attendees in a [recorded message](#) that was both reflective and optimistic. "Throughout two long years of COVID, Wisconsin hospitals and health systems have persevered and made WHA so proud to be your voice and advocate," Borgerding said, recalling that Wisconsin's health care workers had been tested like never before. "You adapted and stepped up to every new challenge with courage and professionalism, and saved thousands of lives in doing so," he added.

While audience members are undoubtedly anxious to put COVID in the rearview mirror, Borgerding cautioned, "We can't do that just yet, because there are so many opportunities to emerge stronger and better. And together, we will do just that."

As emcee of the event, WHA Board Chair and Prairie Ridge Health CEO John Russell greeted attendees with praise for their resilience. "We coordinated, we collaborated, we tested and we vaccinated, all while caring for more patients than any of us would have previously believed we could handle," Russell recalled, adding, "I am proud to call myself one of the health care workers in the state of Wisconsin."



Borgerding presented WHA's Advocacy All-Star Award to Advocate Aurora Health President and CEO Jim Skogsbergh and recognized Rep. Evan Goyke as the 2022 WHA Advocate of the year (*see stories on page 3*).

Gov. Evers praised hospitals and their workers for going above and beyond in their roles during the state's greatest public health crisis before announcing the signing of two important pieces of bipartisan legislation for Wisconsin hospitals and the patients they serve. Assembly Bill 960 protects Wisconsin health care workers and their families from threats and acts of violence, while Assembly Bill 679 permanently enables hospitals to deliver inpatient-level care in a patient's home (*see story on page 5*).

WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O'Brien hosted a legislative panel discussion focused on the vital role Wisconsin hospitals and health systems play in their communities (*see story on page 6*). Participants included Wisconsin State Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan), Wisconsin State Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee), Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee).

The event's keynote discussion featured former U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb and WHA's Borgerding in an hour-long exchange focused on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies that can be employed now to strengthen the state's and the nation's public health preparedness (*see story on page 4*).

Following the morning gathering, hospital representatives met virtually with their state senators and representatives. They thanked lawmakers for enacting public policies that help Wisconsin hospitals, providers, staff and their patients, including critical Medicaid funding, removing regulatory barriers for innovative care delivery models and protecting health care workers from acts and threats of violence. Other key priorities highlighted included workforce challenges and hospitals' important role in serving their communities.



## Advocate Aurora Health Receives WHA Advocacy All-Star Award

WHA awarded its 2022 Advocacy All-Star Award to Advocate Aurora Health at this year's Advocacy Day event on March 23. The annual award recognizes one hospital or health care system for its exemplary dedication to grassroots advocacy on behalf of the state's health care providers and in partnership with WHA.

"Advocate Aurora Health has been an outstanding advocacy partner with WHA. Members of the Advocate Aurora team are always willing to step up to discuss important issues," said WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. "Their longstanding and ongoing level of commitment to advocacy supports all our state's hospitals," Borgerding added.

Advocate Aurora President and CEO Jim Skogsbergh accepted the award in a recorded segment broadcast to nearly 1,000 hospital supporters in attendance at Advocacy Day.

"We've all seen how discussions and debates—whether that be in Madison or Washington, D.C.—directly impact the care that we're providing to our patients," said Skogsbergh. "You, WHA, pull us all together, and the stakes are way too high to sit on the sidelines, particularly when navigating the global pandemic," Skogsbergh continued.

Skogsbergh added, "Thank you for honoring Advocate Aurora Health with this prestigious award. We promise we'll continue to work hard to merit this award in the weeks and months ahead."

Advocate Aurora Health actively participates on WHA's board of directors, councils and work groups, attends both virtual and in-person advocacy events and engages directly with state and federal lawmakers in their districts. The health system has also shown strong growth in the number of new members to the Hospital Education and Advocacy Team (HEAT) network, a statewide initiative designed to facilitate grassroots involvement on state and federal issues that impact Wisconsin hospitals.



Advocate Aurora Health President and CEO Jim Skogsbergh; the Advocacy All-Star Award trophy

## Rep. Evan Goyke Receives 2022 Health Care Advocate of the Year Award



WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding presents State Rep. Evan Goyke with WHA's Health Care Advocate of the Year Award in the Wisconsin State Capitol.

WHA recognized State Representative Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) with the association's 2022 Health Care Advocate of the Year Award at this year's Advocacy Day on March 23.

Goyke was honored for his partnership with local hospital leaders and his support of legislation to provide necessary Medicaid funding for hospitals, remove unnecessary regulations and bolster the state's health care workforce.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding honored Goyke in an exchange broadcast to nearly 1,000 hospital supporters attending WHA's Advocacy Day virtually.

"Representative Goyke continues to serve as a strong partner in the state Legislature alongside Wisconsin hospitals," said Borgerding. "He understands the tremendous challenges hospitals face, as they are expected by some to fill roles that have been abdicated by

government for decades. He knows that this tremendous task is only possible if hospitals are supported by state lawmakers."

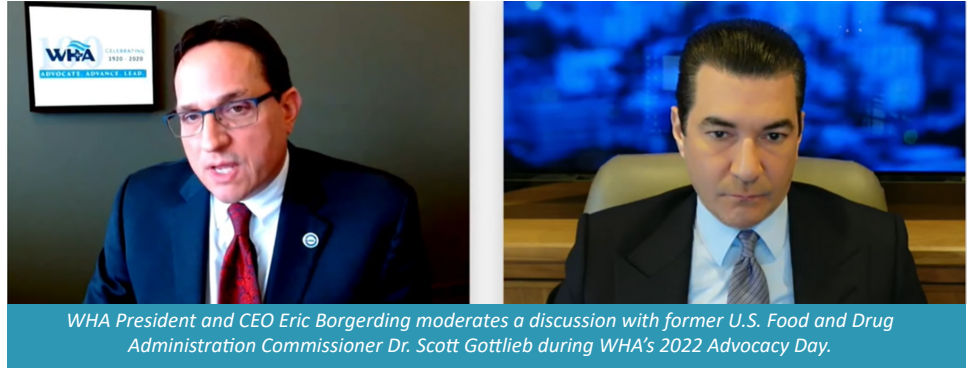
Borgerding added, "We look forward to continuing our work alongside Representative Goyke to bring solutions that will improve health for all Wisconsin residents. Evan doesn't just show up, he leads."

"Wisconsin's hospitals are an important asset that we need to protect," said Rep. Goyke after receiving the award. "I've been fortunate to work with the team at the Wisconsin Hospital Association and their members in and around my district as they advocate for policies that support access to high-quality health care in the community I serve."

Goyke continued, "I'm grateful to receive this year's WHA Advocate of the Year Award and am proud of the work we've accomplished together to improve health in Wisconsin."

## Dr. Scott Gottlieb Discusses Pandemic Response, Preparedness with WHA's Borgerding in Advocacy Day Keynote

Dr. Scott Gottlieb, physician, former commissioner of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and frequent contributor on national news programs, including CNBC's *Squawk Box* and CBS's *Face the Nation*, joined WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding for a moderated discussion, the keynote presentation at WHA's 2022 virtual Advocacy Day program. The keynote presentation was sponsored by Quarles & Brady, LLP, and Sarah Coyne, partner with the firm, introduced the segment. Gottlieb and Borgerding discussed various facets of the U.S. response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and lessons learned for future pandemic preparedness.



Borgerding began the conversation on the topic of the collection and sharing of data and information as a fundamental element of pandemic preparedness and response. Gottlieb shared his perspective on the critical breakdown of data and information sharing between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the early months of the pandemic and discussed the dynamic between the two agencies.

"The lack of good information and near real-time analysis was at the root cause of a lot of the early problems," said Gottlieb. "I think a lot of people were surprised at the CDC's lack of capacity to collect bottom-line data that could inform real-time decision making," Gottlieb continued.

Gottlieb explained how the CDC's use of modeling in reporting hospitalization data created a misrepresentation of the situation and led HHS to develop a new reporting system for acquiring real-time data directly from hospitals. Gottlieb provided examples of the CDC's structural, cultural and operational challenges as justification for the agency's inability to collect real-time data at the time.

Borgerding asked Gottlieb about the March 2020 directive to hospitals across the country to stop elective and non-emergent procedures. Was it the right decision, given the data available at the time? Gottlieb did not think the directive was the right decision, nationally, although he agreed it was necessary for parts of the nation who were overrun by COVID-19 patients at the time, like New York City.

"Other parts of the country did not have much spread or none. But we did not know where the virus was and wasn't. We were blind during the first wave," said Gottlieb. "We did not need to shut hospitals and commercial activity in Montana, and was probably true of Wisconsin. The wave came later," he continued.

According to Gottlieb, diagnostic testing needed to be more widespread earlier on in the pandemic to better inform where the virus was and where it was not.

Exploring linkages between the health crisis and national security, Borgerding asked Gottlieb about global cooperation in the pandemic response and public health preparedness. Gottlieb compared public health preparedness to national security in the terms of infrastructure investment, such as testing, vaccines and hospital capacity. He reflected on the reluctance to share information between nations, using South Africa's discovery of the Omicron variant and the global economic isolation that followed as an example of a disincentive to do so. As countries exhibit unwillingness to collaborate, Gottlieb called for the U.S. to do more of its own monitoring and data collection.

"I think we are going to need to do much more active monitoring around the world, and that is going to mean collecting data—looking for indications of outbreaks, trying to intercept data where you can get early information about potential pathogens," said Gottlieb. "We cannot be solely dependent upon on multi-lateral commitments and the good graces of other nations, especially as we've conditioned other nations that if they do the right thing, divulge information early, they're going to get punished for it," he added.

*(continued on page 5)*

*(Dr. Scott Gottlieb Discusses Pandemic Response, Preparedness with WHA's Borgerding in Advocacy Day Keynote . . . continued from page 4)*

Referencing shifting sentiment toward the health care industry following an outpouring of support early in the pandemic, Borgerding asked, “How do we gain trust for our patients, for the public to listen to public health officials, for our staff that have been demoralized and defeated by disinformed patients, and for our health systems, hospitals, doctors, public health officials and institutions in general?” Gottlieb said of regaining public trust, “I think the one missing ingredient from the public health establishment was enough humility to be candid about what we knew and didn’t know and admit when we were wrong.” He recounted how the CDC’s guidance on masking left the public feeling confused and misled. He attributed the confusion to the agency’s reluctance to deliver complex, but accurate messages on “what [masks] will do and what they won’t do.”

Borgerding concluded the 60-minute discussion with a focus on lessons learned from the pandemic and Gottlieb’s thoughts on President Biden’s COVID proposals. Gottlieb said he was encouraged by the plan the Biden administration has laid out. “Conceptually, they are looking at public health preparedness through that national security lens,” he related. “They are looking at trying to build core capacities and invest, rather than just put out individual fires.”

As for lessons learned, Gottlieb called for “an honest after-action report,” but recognized that the current environment is too polarized and “emotions are still raw” for that to happen just yet.

A full recording of the discussion between Borgerding and Gottlieb is available for viewing for registered Advocacy Day attendees through the [LeaderPass](#) event platform until April 7.

---

## **Gov. Evers Praises Health Care Workers, Announces Signing of Two Bipartisan Bills on Advocacy Day**

### ***“Hospital at home” and threats of violence bills signed into law***

In remarks to Advocacy Day attendees, Gov. Tony Evers praised health care workers for their resilience during the pandemic and announced the signing of two important pieces of bipartisan legislation for Wisconsin hospitals and the patients they serve.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding welcomed Evers to the event, noting, “Since elected in 2018, WHA and our members have worked very closely with Governor Evers and his team, but especially during the past two years, partnering to marshal the needed resources and implement important regulatory reforms to better enable us all to both fight COVID and provide care during this pandemic.” Borgerding highlighted important collaborations between WHA and the Evers administration throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Borgerding took time to thank other key partners in his remarks.



“I want to extend our deepest appreciation to the men and women who serve in the Wisconsin National Guard,” said Borgerding, who credited the Guard with bringing critical relief to an overwhelmed public health infrastructure by providing testing and vaccination support in communities throughout the state. “And more recently, Guard members have voluntarily trained as certified nursing assistants to staff incapable nursing homes and relieve bottlenecked hospital discharges to free up much-needed hospital beds,” Borgerding said. “Those who serve in the Wisconsin National Guard are special people who give of themselves to others,” he noted.

Borgerding singled out DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake and Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge, “who, despite their lofty titles, have not shirked from getting down in the trenches side by side with WHA and our members in every stage and every aspect of this pandemic,” he said. “Thank you to Karen and Deb and so many others at DHS who have worked so hard these past two years,” Borgerding added.

Evers began his address—his third Advocacy Day appearance—acknowledging several examples of Wisconsin hospital and health system leadership over the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, including testing, contact tracing, vaccines and increased volume of patient care, all on top of hospitals’ standing mission of supporting the health of the communities they serve.

“On a normal day, the work that you do is heroic, but during these past two years, as you’ve navigated the most difficult periods of public health our state has ever faced, you have gone above and beyond your roles,” Evers said. *(continued on page 6)*



***(Gov. Evers Praises Health Care Workers, Announces Signing of Two Bipartisan Bills on Advocacy Day . . . continued from page 5)***

Evers acknowledged the critical role WHA and Wisconsin’s hospitals and health systems played in Operation Allies Welcome, the federal mission resettling Afghan refugees in the United States, which included clinical services to over 13,000 refugees.

Evers continued with the announcement of the signing of two important pieces of legislation. “This work is a powerful reminder of why Wisconsin’s hospitals and health systems are leaders in the nation, but we recognize the work has not always been easy,” he said. “I have had the fortunate chance to meet with many health care workers over these past months, and I have seen and heard firsthand what you have been up against. We hear your calls for change, and I am proud today to take that step forward.”

The bills, AB 960, protecting health care workers and their families from threat and acts of violence, and AB 679, enabling hospitals to deliver inpatient-level care in a patient’s home, were signed into law by Evers moments before his remarks.

“Support from trusted organizations, like WHA and the state’s medical partners, made my decision to sign their bills quite simple, and that is the impact events like today have. By creating spaces where we can share dialogue about the issues facing your field and the people you represent, we open the door for making real, positive change for the people of the state,” Evers concluded.

---

## **Lawmakers Discuss Health Care Workforce, Insurance Related Challenges During Legislative Panel**

A bipartisan panel of the Wisconsin State Legislature’s budget-writing Joint Finance Committee (JFC) joined WHA’s 2022 virtual Advocacy Day for a discussion of this session’s top legislative issues that impacted health care. Lawmakers discussed the enactment of the last biennial budget, which made Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding permanent, as well as workforce and insurance-related challenges.

Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) credited his GOP colleagues on the Joint Finance Committee for writing a budget that put Wisconsin in the best position for health care and credited WHA and its members for voicing their support for the budget given its inclusion of the permanent increase for DSH payments.



“It goes back to advocacy,” said Kurtz. “To make the DSH payments a permanent line item in the budget was a huge reason why you and your members went to the governor and said this was something we support, we need,” said Kurtz, discussing the budget passed by Republicans in the Legislature and Gov. Evers’ decision to veto the budget or sign it into law.

*(continued on page 7)*

*(Lawmakers Discuss Health Care Workforce, Insurance Related Challenges During Legislative Panel . . . continued from page 6)*

Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) said Gov. Evers deserves credit for coming up with a budget that set a benchmark that included key priorities for both parties, giving Republicans a target for developing their own budget.

“I don’t believe my Republican colleagues had their budget crafted before they saw Governor Evers’ budget; I believe they responded to his budget. So, in that sense, Governor Evers set the mark,” said Goyke. He also said Evers deserved credit for ultimately signing the budget that went through the Legislature.

The discussion then shifted to the health care workforce shortage and whether one of the challenges was people sitting on the sidelines unwilling to work. Sen. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee) said she doesn’t think the problem is people sitting on the sidelines so much as it is a demographics issue.

“We have to remember, for every three people who retire, we only have one person to take their place,” said Johnson. She said the pandemic really highlighted the importance of health care and noted she supports programs like loan forgiveness, funding for more nurse educators and other strategies that create a pipeline to fill the void.

Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) said she thinks Wisconsin needs to streamline regulations and provide more flexibility, noting that she heard from a constituent recently complaining about state licensure barriers. “I had a local gentleman talk to me last weekend who had a daughter that could not get her RN license done online, and so she got a license in Arizona instead,” said Ballweg. She said she supports efforts to streamline licensure and increase the use of telehealth.

Rep. Kurtz said he’s also heard about workforce concerns from constituents, including some who have shifted careers during the pandemic. He relayed the stories of emergency room and operating room nurses who recently became CDL truck drivers and dispatchers. “These people, they got burnt out, and they literally had a change of career,” said Kurtz. He said he’s also heard from retirees who left the workforce because they were looking at their 401ks and pensions and decided now was the right time. He thinks legislators are grappling with what incentives they can provide to get these folks back into the workforce.

WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O’Brien, who moderated the panel, said that the health care workforce discussion was a great reminder of the proactive work the Legislature has done to partner with WHA and its members to create better educational pathways as well as the successful graduate medical education grant programs the Legislature has funded.

In addition to these issues, the panel also discussed several proposed bills this session that address insurer practices impacting care delivery and access to patient care. Rep. Kurtz highlighted how proud he was to work with WHA on Koreen’s Law, legislation to restrict the practice of insurer-mandated “white bagging.” He said it was important to educate his colleagues who were not aware of the difficulties this practice was causing for patients, which leads patients to spend hours on the phone to get special authorization for life-saving medications.

Rep. Goyke agreed that this was an important issue. He said he looks forward to working on it more next session, noting that it faced opposition from the insurance industry. He described the practice by insurers as creating a nightmare for many patients. “What was missing from their side was one story from one patient that benefitted from this practice,” said Goyke.

---

## Follow Us



[@WIHospitalAssociation](#)



[@WIHospitalAssn](#)



[@Wisconsin Hospital Association](#)