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WHA Board Meeting Lays Groundwork for Three-Year Strategic Plan Development

Future advocacy to build upon solid public policy foundation

In WHA's April 14 board meeting, association President and CEO Eric Borgerding outlined the process, timing and inputs that will drive the drafting of the 2023-2025 Wisconsin Hospital Association Strategic Plan, which Borgerding described as "one of the most important documents we will produce in a long time."



WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding outlines the process and timing for the association's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

Borgerding noted that WHA's mission and vision statements would, again, provide focus to the strategic planning process—specifically references to WHA members providing "high-quality, affordable and accessible health care services" and WHA serving as the "state's most trusted" health policy advocate.

Preliminary work on WHA's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is already underway, beginning with a thorough environmental scan of health care and the health care industry, which has already begun. WHA senior staff will also be meeting soon to discuss various inputs into the strategic plan and a special WHA board subcommittee will also do preliminary work on a draft plan leading up to the WHA board retreat in August. The goal of the strategic planning process is to review a proposed document at the October WHA board meeting. A final plan will be used by the association to develop its goals for 2023 and beyond.

Public Policy Advancements

Following Borgerding's remarks, WHA staff provided updates on key public policy initiatives affecting state hospitals and health systems.

WHA General Counsel Matthew Stanford highlighted important environmental benefits health care workers in Wisconsin enjoy that should be incorporated into workforce recruitment and retention efforts, particularly in light of increased burnout among health care workers. Stanford drew attention to recent rankings placing Wisconsin in the top-three best states for physicians and nurses to work. Stanford noted the importance of WHA workforce policy priorities that help make Wisconsin an attractive place for health care professionals to work. These include Wisconsin Act 209, which makes threats against health care workers a Class H felony; the 2011 Quality Improvement Act that revised criminal negligence statutes to exclude negligent medical errors; and Wisconsin's

balanced medical liability system.



WHA General Counsel Matthew Stanford updates the WHA board of directors on protections for health care workers in Wisconsin.

WHA Vice President of Communications Kelly Lietz reviewed the extensive statewide media coverage WHA's Wisconsin 2022 Health Care Workforce Report has received since its release on March 16. Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk remarked on how this broad media coverage provided an opportunity to share the key takeaways from WHA's annual workforce report. Zenk also outlined ongoing WHA efforts driven by WHA's workforce analysis and recommendations aimed at reducing barriers to health care licensure and maximizing the ability of health care workers in Wisconsin to provide care without disruptive and unnecessary regulation.

WHA Policy Counsel Laura Leitch detailed recent dramatic decreases in both nursing home bed availability and in nursing care sector employment in the state, despite significant funding and technical assistance provided to nursing homes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the peak of the COVID-19 surge in late 2021, WHA estimates that at least 600 hospital patients in Wisconsin who no longer required hospital-level care were awaiting discharge to post-acute care facilities that either could not or would not accept them. To address this long-standing challenge, WHA will collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services on a study of Wisconsin's long-term care system, Leitch reported. Leitch also reviewed recommendations made by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in a 600-page report for fixing the nation's "ineffective" and "unsustainable" nursing home system.



WHA Policy Counsel Laura Leitch details shrinking nursing home bed and worker availability in Wisconsin and plans to identify solutions to a growing long-term care crisis in the state.

These efforts and many others would not be nearly as effective without the grassroots support of WHA member hospitals, their supporters and advocates, all of whom were well represented at [WHA's 2022 Advocacy Day](#) on March 22, reported Vice President of Advocacy Kari Hofer. This year's virtual event drew nearly 1,000 attendees and included 353 WHA-organized legislator visits focused on issues important to Wisconsin hospitals and the patients they serve. Hofer went on to recap Wisconsin Hospitals State Political Action Committee and Wisconsin Hospitals Conduit fundraising goals for 2021 and outline advocacy goals for 2022, which include a fundraising total of \$340,000 from 315 total donors.