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## ***A WHA Press Statement***

### **WHA Hails Supreme Court Decision *Recognizes Evolution of Health Care Delivery System***

**MADISON (July 19, 2011) -----** The release of a highly-anticipated decision by Wisconsin's Supreme Court (*Covenant v. City of Wauwatosa*) was praised today by the Wisconsin Hospital Association for acknowledging the vital and changing role of Wisconsin's nonprofit community hospitals. The Court ruled 6 to 1 in favor of upholding the tax exempt status of freestanding outpatient hospital departments.

The WHA, which filed an amicus brief with both the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court, said it was pleased that the Wisconsin Supreme Court recognized the evolving nature of health care delivery. Conditions that once required inpatient care now can be treated more quickly, more effectively, and less expensively on an outpatient basis in locations more convenient for a hospital's patients. According to WHA, the decision is crucial for preserving and expanding access to quality health care and bringing the latest cutting-edge technology from inside the hospital to outpatient settings in urban and in rural underserved areas.

WHA recognizes the foresight of the Wisconsin Legislature that created the hospital property tax exemption decades ago, and which the Court today affirmed. The exemption has encouraged Wisconsin's highly integrated health care delivery model, which has positioned the state well to excel in the emerging health care dynamic, where outcomes and efficiency are the measure of progress.

"Wisconsin hospitals have responded to our patients' needs for quality care closer to home by locating services away from the traditional hospital campus," said WHA President Steve Brenton. "Advances in medical science and technology, and an increased understanding of health care quality improvement, have made it possible for modern hospitals to develop new, innovative ways to bring hospital care outside the walls of the traditional hospital and into their surrounding communities. We applaud the Court for recognizing the Legislature's intent to support nonprofit hospitals in their missions and for recognizing the important evolution of the modern hospital."

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