

# WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



February 25, 2010

**To: Members of the Assembly**

**From: Eric Borgerding – Executive Vice President  
Paul Merline – Vice President**

**Re: Support for Assembly Bill 614**

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**The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) supports Assembly Bill (AB) 614 as amended.**

WHA commends Representative Richards for bringing this proposal forward and for his willingness to work with hospitals to ensure it addresses what we consider to be the key issues in any transparency legislation:

- Ensuring the focus is on the most important information to consumers – out of pocket costs
- Recognizing insurers and different provider types have different roles in facilitating transparency
- Minimizing the administrative burden for complying while maximizing the value of the information provided

Transparency legislation has been worked on for many years, and by legislators from both sides of the aisle. The unanimous, bi-partisan vote on AB 614 in the Assembly Health Committee is a reflection of these efforts.

## **Wisconsin Hospitals – National Leaders in Price and Quality Transparency**

Wisconsin hospitals take transparency very seriously and are dedicated to providing patients and consumers with useful information for making sound decisions. Since 2005, the WHA Information Center has been collecting and disseminating (as mandated in Wis Stats Ch. 153) data about charges and services provided by Wisconsin hospitals through PricePoint ([www.wiPricePoint.org](http://www.wiPricePoint.org)). Here, consumers can find and compare facility-specific charge information on all inpatient and many outpatient hospital services. Interest in PricePoint grows and recognition of its validity continues to increase as it is now licensed in 18 other states.

Wisconsin hospitals are also committed to sharing information about the quality and safety of hospital services through the WHA CheckPoint website ([www.wiCheckPoint.org](http://www.wiCheckPoint.org)). Here the public can compare hospital performance in nearly 100 measures. Consumers can use this information to make informed decisions and learn what constitutes high quality care. CheckPoint is an evolving resource, and recently added hospital mortality data.

Wisconsin hospitals continuously strive to improve the quality of care as evidenced by last year's top ranking by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Wisconsin has ranked at or near the top in each of the last three years. The Dartmouth Atlas ranks Wisconsin very high nationally in the value of care provided for Medicare patients. Taken together, PricePoint and CheckPoint demonstrate our strong belief in the value equation– price and quality together determine the best value. For hospitals, AB 614 as amended advances the common goal of better informed patients becoming better consumers of health care services.

## **AB 614 recognizes hospitals' transparency efforts and abilities**

AB 614 acknowledges hospitals' continually proactive transparency efforts and recognizes their unique position to take advantage of existing infrastructure (including the electronic submission and collection of hospital data that is mandated under Wis Stats Ch. 153), and transparency technology (PricePoint and CheckPoint described above).

We believe AB 614 as amended strikes a good balance between efficiency and hospital responsiveness and capitalizes on available and constantly evolving transparency technology. WHA supports AB 614 as amended.