

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.

NEWS



Contact: Mary Kay Grasmick, WHA 608-274-1820 or 608-575-7516 (cell)

Gov. Doyle Backs Statewide Electronic Medical Records System ***Wisconsin Hospital Association supports Governor's e-health initiative***

MADISON (January 25, 2007) ----- Today Governor Jim Doyle announced he would include \$30 million in his budget to fund grants and provide tax breaks to increase the use of electronic medical records in Wisconsin. Doyle's initiative builds on the recommendations released in December by the Governor's e-Health Care Quality and Patient Safety Board.

Doyle indicated the challenge will be to have technologies in place that allow all systems to communicate quickly about patients, while at the same time ensure patient confidentiality. Wisconsin Hospital Association President Steve Brenton expressed support for the plan because electronic medical records have the potential to increase both the efficiency and safety of patient care.

"Electronic medical records allow accurate medical information to be accessible to health care professionals no matter where the patient is treated," said Brenton. "Unfortunately, this technology is very expensive both in terms of initial investment and training costs."

Under Doyle's proposal, \$20 million in grants will be available for non-profit organizations and \$10 million will be used to fund tax breaks for for-profit entities.

"We applaud Governor Doyle's proposal to provide funding to health care providers. This aspect of his plan is especially important in rural areas to ensure that they are not locked out of the statewide implementation plan because of finances," Brenton said.

##