



**Wisconsin Hospital Association
P.O. Box 44992
Madison, WI 53744-4992
608/274-1820
News Release**

15 October 2002
Contact: Mary Kay Grasmick
608-274-1820 (office) 608-575-7516 (cell)

WHA Reacts to Release of Governor's Health Care Workforce Report

MADISON (October 15, 2002)-----While hospitals continue to be challenged by the workforce shortage, a report released by Gov. Scott McCallum brings reason for optimism. The Governor's Health Care Workforce Shortage Committee, a group of nearly 90 people representing the health care industry, labor, education and government, issued their report today. The report establishes goals and recommendations that offer a framework for addressing the workforce shortage that threatens to cripple hospitals' ability to meet the increasing demand for patient care in their communities.

Wisconsin Hospital Association President Steve Brenton said the report does a good job identifying several areas that hospitals have found are barriers to retaining and recruiting employees:

- Lack of openings in health care training programs that stall or prevent students from joining the workforce.
- Low Medicare reimbursement that makes Wisconsin less competitive in offering salaries and benefits that are available in states with higher reimbursement rates; and,
- Redundant and outdated regulations that require employees, particularly nurses, to spend more time filling out paperwork than delivering care to patients.

"If you ask a hospital CEO what their greatest concern is for the future, they will tell you it is recruiting and maintaining a workforce. It is without a doubt one of the biggest challenges in providing health care to Wisconsin communities," Brenton said.

The report doesn't advocate for regulatory "quick fixes," which Brenton points out will do nothing to bring more workers into the health care field.

"The workforce shortage won't be solved by burdening hospitals with more regulations, it will only be solved with cooperation and participation by those stakeholders who are actively advocating for a healthy future for our children," he said.

-30-