Some 1,000 hospital advocates attended the Wisconsin Hospital Association’s 2016 Advocacy Day in Madison March 30. The annual powerhouse event showcases that hospitals, health systems and their advocates are passionate about being engaged on priority issues. Over 500 of those attendees then took what they learned and went to the state Capitol for meetings with their legislators.

Rick Pollack, American Hospital Association president/CEO, provided the morning keynote, with Gov. Scott Walker keynoting the day’s luncheon. In addition to Walker’s remarks, he signed the bipartisan Health Care Data Modernization Act into law in front of the crowd of 1,000. Attendees also heard from an excellent, bipartisan legislative panel of Sen. Leah Vukmir (R-Brookfield), Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton), Rep. Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) and Rep. Peter Barca (D-Kenosha).

WHA presented Hospital Sisters Health System with the 2016 Advocacy All-Star award for their grassroots commitment. Rep. Deb Kolste received the Health Care Advocate award in recognition of her collaborative efforts with hospitals and health care systems on key WHA priority issues.

Gov. Scott Walker signed the WHA-backed Health Care Data Modernization Act into law March 30 at WHA’s 2016 Advocacy Day

Keynote Speaker Rick Pollack
2016 Advocacy All-Star Award
Hospital Sisters Health System

“Advocacy is central to our mission. Every day we advocate for policies that will enable us to continue to provide high-quality, accessible health care to the people living in our communities. We are very proud to receive this award as we continue to make our voices heard in Madison and Washington DC.”

- Therese Pandl, HSHS Eastern Wisconsin Division CEO, accepting the award for HSHS with Julie Manas, HSHS Western Wisconsin Division CEO.

Health Care Advocate Award
State Representative Deb Kolste

“It was with the help of the Wisconsin Hospital Association that we have had such great successes this year (in the Legislature). Health care and hospitals are economic drivers in our state, and I applaud the Association for their platform for expanding coverage, a proactive agenda in physician workforce and new approaches to care. WHA has formed a positive and growing relationship with both sides—Democrats and Republicans—and it truly is a valued voice in the Legislature.”

- Rep. Deb Kolste

“I am a new board member at our local hospital. I can’t tell you how much I learned yesterday. I will NEVER miss a WHA Advocacy Day. It was tremendously educational for me.”

- hospital trustee

“Advocacy Day provided me with a strong connection as to why I LOVE my career in health care. It was an inspirational day, despite all of the challenges our industry faces. It was great to be able to share our individual voices in a collective way to raise awareness for important issues in health care.”

- hospital employee

“Personally, I thought it was amazing that so many legislators made it a priority to be at this day and to really hear what we were saying. It was my first time doing something like this. It is very important to have our voices heard.”

- 2016 Advocacy Day attendee

“This is the first time I have participated in Advocacy Day and the first time I have ever interacted with legislators. It felt great to be engaged and to talk about issues that are important to my organization. I definitely felt like I was part of the process!”

- 2016 Advocacy Day attendee

“I think it is extremely powerful that the hospitals could come together and speak as a unified force.”

- 2016 Advocacy Day attendee
Advocacy Day Attendees

“The value of Advocacy Day to me, my hospital, as well as my community is priceless...We all need an advocate at some point in our lives, and Advocacy Day does a tremendous job of celebrating, informing, encouraging medical related advocates.” - 2016 Advocacy Day attendee