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## Speaker's Mental Health Task Force Advances WHA Recommendations

*Chair Severson points to passing legislation this fall*

The Speaker's Task Force on Mental Health met in executive session September 25 to discuss its first draft of recommendations and adopted many of WHA's proposals to the Task Force, including a recommendation to enact "HIPAA Harmonization for Mental Health Care Coordination" legislation to remove barriers to mental health care coordination.

"Wisconsin's behavioral health care system is facing serious challenges and finding solutions is a top Wisconsin Hospital Association priority," according to WHA Executive Vice President Eric Borgerding. "For nearly two years, our team has worked diligently to build bipartisan support for targeted behavioral health reforms. WHA is quite pleased to see the breadth and depth of reforms, including enacting HIPAA Harmonization legislation, which the Task Force is supporting." *(continued on page 9)*

## Enrollment Activities Escalate As Exchange Opening Day Draws Near

With just days remaining before the health insurance exchange opens, Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are gearing up to answer questions and help with enrollment efforts. Each community is handling enrollment differently, but a common thread among all WHA members is their desire to connect people with coverage. Media attention is heavy now and will escalate as the countdown continues. With little or no paid advertising, the press will play an important role in educating the public on the enrollment process.

WHA has a number of resources and current information about the exchange on its website at this link: [www.wha.org/healthInsuranceExchange.aspx](http://www.wha.org/healthInsuranceExchange.aspx). The Association will update this section of the website several times a day as new information comes in, so check back frequently.

To review, here are a few facts and resources that WHA has compiled:

1. About 92,000 people will be transitioned from the Medicaid program to the exchanges starting 1/1/2014. They received a letter the week of September 23 from the Department of Health

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## Starmann-Harrison Receives WHA Distinguished Service Award



Dan Neufelder, WHA 2014 Board Chair; Mary Starmann-Harrison; Steve Brenton

Mary Starmann-Harrison, president and chief executive officer of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSBS), received the Wisconsin Hospital Association's 2013 Distinguished Service Award for her service to the health care industry, community and to the Association. WHA President Steve Brenton presented the award to Starmann-Harrison at a WHA event held September 19 in Pewaukee.

Over the past three decades, Starmann-Harrison has successfully led numerous quality initiatives that have been recognized at the state and national level. She was CEO of SSM Health Care of Wisconsin when the SSM Health Care team was awarded the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2002—the first health care entity to receive this prestigious award. SSM Health Care of Wisconsin hospitals and health care facilities also received multiple Wisconsin Forward Awards for quality during Starmann-Harrison's tenure as CEO.

Starmann-Harrison has been involved in state and national advocacy efforts as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Hospital Association, serving as the Chair of AHA's Regional

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## **Wisconsin's High Quality, High Value Care Touted in National Magazine** ***"Site Selection" article features Wisconsin employers, providers***

High quality health care is increasingly being recognized as an economic development attribute as corporate facility planners determine where to locate a new plant or expand an existing facility. In fact, Wisconsin's national position as a state that continuously ranks among the best for health care caught the attention of Site Selection magazine, which has featured a WHA-submitted article in their Life Sciences Report, now available at [www.siteselection.com/LifeSciences/2013/sep/healthcare.cfm?s=mp](http://www.siteselection.com/LifeSciences/2013/sep/healthcare.cfm?s=mp)

According to the article: "Many states have yet to restructure their approach to health care, which typically takes at least five years to mature to the point where big improvements can be made. Wisconsin has been improving its health care programs for two decades, and has the results to prove it...These enviable rankings are a result of the many ways Wisconsin health systems have worked to increase quality and reduce cost. When patients have quick access to excellent care and are rapidly assessed, efficiently diagnosed, and well-managed, their care is less expensive, especially over time. They also miss less work because of illness or disability. This type of coordinated, streamlined care is also facilitated by highly integrated medical centers."

"WHA is committed to increasing awareness of and promoting our excellent health care system as an asset to economic development in every one of our communities," said WHA Executive Vice President Eric Borgerding. "Our hospitals and health systems are national leaders in innovation, quality and performance. It's a good reason for a business to consider locating here, and we intend to spread the word."

To learn more, visit: [www.wha.org/healthCareValue.aspx](http://www.wha.org/healthCareValue.aspx).

## **Two-Midnights Transition Period, RAC Legislation, Resources and More** ***Your round-up on recent RAC activities and issues***

The activity surrounding Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs) continues at a rapid pace. This article provides a brief round-up on activities, including the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services rule on inpatient admission order/certification, two-midnight benchmark for inpatient hospital admissions, RAC legislation and related resources.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association regularly updates hundreds of hospital staff on these and other RAC-related activities via our "RAC Contacts" email updates. If your hospital is interested in having staff or leaders added to this RAC group, contact WHA's Jenny Boese at 608-268-1816 or [jboese@wha.org](mailto:jboese@wha.org).

- **Two-Midnights 90-Day Transition (No RAC Review), Inpatient Admissions Policy**  
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) held a Hospital Open Door Forum (ODF) on September 26 regarding the two-midnights policy. During the ODF, CMS stated it would initiate a **90-day transition, from October 1–December 31, with no post-payment reviews by the RACs or MACs for inpatient admissions of one midnight or less.** During the transition, CMS indicated the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) would "probe and educate"; in other words, the MACs will review 10-25 claims per hospital, depending on hospital size, and then educate on the results. Verbally, CMS also stated the RACs would not be able to look back at claims from these three months.

**Watch for continuing updates and FAQs from CMS at [www.cms.gov/medical-review](http://www.cms.gov/medical-review) (go to Inpatient Hospital Review).** Over the past few weeks, CMS has also issued several pieces of guidance interpreting the new requirements for admission and medical review criteria for hospital inpatient services under Medicare Part A. Access two of those documents at: [www.wha.org/pdf/IPcertificationAndOrder9-5-13.pdf](http://www.wha.org/pdf/IPcertificationAndOrder9-5-13.pdf) and [www.wha.org/pdf/CMSletter9-26-13.pdf](http://www.wha.org/pdf/CMSletter9-26-13.pdf).

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## Ginkel, Kirsh Receive WHA Trustee of the Year Awards



*Paul Ginkel, Steve Brenton*

Paul Ginkel, president of the Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital Board, and James Kirsh, Board chair at Beaver Dam Community Hospital, each received a WHA Trustee of the Year award in separate ceremonies this month.

Ginkel received a WHA 2013 Trustee of the Year Award at a ceremony held in Prairie du Chien September 23. The award recognizes the efforts of an individual who promotes the ideals of health care as well as the countless hours a person dedicates to the mission of ensuring that high-quality health care is accessible in the local community.

In presenting the award, WHA President Steve Brenton acknowledged Ginkel's service to the Board and his leadership, but he also recognized Ginkel's understanding of broad-based community health needs and his participation in local, state and national health care policy. Brenton shared that Ginkel is a strong grassroots advocate for rural health care.

"Paul has always embraced his role in the larger health care community," Brenton said. "His home base may be Prairie du Chien, but his commitment to improving health care is much broader. He has shared his knowledge of governance and the industry with health care organizations statewide. In addition, he has worked with local elected officials and legislators to build an appreciation for and an awareness of the issues that are unique to rural hospitals."

Brenton noted that during the selection process, the WHA Awards and Nominations Committee were overwhelmed by not only the nomination letter with 16 attachments, but also by the heartfelt sentiment from those who have been touched by Ginkel's leadership, compassion and commitment.

"Under Paul's leadership, the hospital has expanded its scope in the community far beyond those expected from a rural health care provider," according to Bill Sexton, Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital CEO. "He is active not only in hospital matters, but is a staunch supporter of our entire community. He truly is an asset to our community."

In presenting the award to Kirsh, Brenton noted his long-standing commitment to local health care. In fact, his leadership and vision have been instrumental in bringing the latest technology, medical expertise and services to the area that are not typically found in less urban locations.

"Jim has a vision for this community and for health care that he has capably articulated through both his words and actions," according to Brenton. "In these uncertain times, governance is crucial, and Beaver Dam Community Hospital is fortunate to have a dedicated and knowledgeable leader like Jim Kirsh at the helm."



*Kim Miller, Jim Kirsh, Steve Brenton*

Beaver Dam Community Hospital (BDCH) President/CEO Kim Miller said Kirsh's values align well with the hospital's mission, which has been an asset to the organization's strategic plan.

"Jim's deep sense of community, business acumen and disciplined approach to hospital stewardship set him apart. He is not afraid to tackle the tough issues and lead the BDCH Board during turbulent times," said Miller. "He has given much to BDCH and has never failed to uphold his responsibility. BDCH is in a much better position because of Jim and his loyalty and dedication to the organization and community."

Kirsh has served as a BDCH trustee for more than 20 years.

## WHA TCAB Event Generates Enthusiasm and Commitment to Spread Improvement Ideas

*More than 180 nurses bring high energy and creativity to best practice sharing event*



Carrie Brady

For many hospitals in Wisconsin, there is a desire to bring the patients' perspective directly into the planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of care. On September 25, more than 180 front-line nurses and nurse leaders participated in the WHA Transforming Care at the Bedside (TCAB) Mid-Point event in Wisconsin Dells to learn emerging best practices in this area.

*"We are great at taking care of patients, but we could do better caring for patients."*

- Staff nurse at the WHA TCAB Event

Keynote presenter Carrie Brady, a nationally-recognized HCAHPS expert, recently completed a large, national collaborative focused on improving the patient experience. She emphasized how important it is to involve a patient in bedside improvement efforts.

Watch for more coverage of the WHA TCAB event in the October 11 *Valued Voice* and check WHA's facebook page for hospital team photos taken at the event at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151802933223666.1073741834.172480133665&type=1>.

*TCAB is a project of Aligning Forces for Quality, which is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, through a grant to the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality. In Wisconsin, Aligning Forces for Quality is a joint project of the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, Wisconsin Hospital Association, and other organizations.*

## WHA Foundation's 2013 Global Vision Award Honors Two Community Initiatives



The WHA Foundation has selected PALS Mentoring and PALS 4 Good Programs, nominated by Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital; and the Neighborhood School Health Initiative, nominated by Froedtert and The Medical College of Wisconsin, as the recipients of the 2013 Global Vision Community Partnership Award.



The "People Actively Linked with Students" (PALS) mentoring program was established in 2003 by Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital through their Crawford Abuse Resistance Effort (CARE) program and a Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant. The primary goal of the PALS program is to promote successful, safe and healthy students. The curriculum focuses on six pillars of character education: respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, trustworthiness and citizenship. The program matches high school students with at-risk elementary youth for the purpose of engaging young people in healthy decision making. Initially piloted in the Prairie du Chien school district, PALS has grown to also provide prevention, health and wellness services in three other school districts in Crawford County. In 2005, the PALS 4 Good summer camps began when it became evident that a school year-only program was not sufficient to meet the varied needs of the second through fifth grade target population. In 2011, based on community health needs assessment results, the PALS program added an educational focus on childhood obesity and inactivity. Surveys conducted with parents, teachers and PALS mentors illustrate that mentees benefit by demonstrating healthier relationships, lifestyle choices, better attitude about school, enhanced self-esteem, improved behavior at home and school, improved interpersonal skills and a decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use. High school mentors report increased self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, increased patience, and improved supervisory skills that will benefit them in future career choices.

The "Neighborhood School Health Initiative" is a collaboration, launched in 2006, of Froedtert Hospital; Westside Academies, a Milwaukee Public School (MPS) K-8 charter school; and Progressive Community

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# High Value Health Care—Wisconsin's Competitive Advantage

*High quality, high value health care is a hallmark in Wisconsin. Hospital systems are improving quality, increasing efficiency and delivering value to employers and residents in their communities. Hospitals have been working with WHA in a focused initiative to reduce readmissions. This week, we feature the work of Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh.*

## Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh Reduces Early Elective Deliveries

While the number of early elective deliveries (EEDs) at Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh was already low, the improvement team took a proactive approach and determined that they could drive their rate even lower by focusing on process improvements.



Team members from Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh were familiar with the data entry required for the project from their experience working with Peridata, a web-based perinatal database developed by the Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care and the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee/Center for Urban Population Health (CUPH). Using that data, the team developed guidelines for providers that they felt would help standardize the process. Their primary objective was to improve birth outcomes by advocating for elective deliveries not to be scheduled prior to 39 weeks.

Information was shared with providers practicing at Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh, which included how the data is abstracted from the documentation and what diagnoses were coded as medical indications since this is not always clear. Physician involvement was key to improving outcomes.

"WHA staff was very helpful by always being available for conference calls when we had questions," said Cindy Malliet, women's health manager for Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh. "Tracking and monitoring the data helped us remain accountable to the work before us, as well."

For hospitals working to reduce EEDs, the team highly recommended gaining the support of the front-line nursing staff.

"This project was a good reminder that even small changes can make a big difference in our processes and outcomes," said Malliet.

## WHA Information Center Launches New Website

WHA Information Center (WHAIC) recently re-launched their website, [www.whainfocenter.com](http://www.whainfocenter.com), with a focus on improving the user experience. The revisions were designed to improve the navigation and visual aspects of the site.

WHA Information Center Vice President Debbie Rickelman said the WHAIC web users include data submitters from hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers, purchasers of the standard and custom data sets, certified Workers Compensation databases and analytic services. WHAIC also provides some information publicly via the website including access to the Guide to Wisconsin Hospitals, Uncompensated Health Care Report, Health Care Data Report and the Wisconsin Inpatient Quality Indicators Report. WHAIC's hospital pricing transparency website, [WIPricePoint.org](http://WIPricePoint.org) is available through their website or separately at [www.wipricepoint.org](http://www.wipricepoint.org).

Direct questions about the website to Brian Competente, operations manager, WHAIC, at [bcompetente@wha.org](mailto:bcompetente@wha.org).

## Holmay Named 2013 WONE Nurse Leader of the Year

The Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Executives (WONE) selected Diane Holmay, MSN, chief nursing officer for Mayo Clinic Health System (MCHS) – Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse, for its 2013 Nurse Leader of the Year Award.

Holmay has been a member of WONE for nine years and serves as an advisor to the nursing programs at Viterbo University, Winona State University and Western Wisconsin Technical College. She is a highly-respected chief nursing officer recognized as an innovator and a strong advocate for putting patients first. She has championed many key initiatives to strengthen nursing, including implementing a shared decision-making nursing structure within Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare and leading the adoption of a relationship-based care model.

In support of her nomination, Tim Johnson, chief executive officer for Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare, shared, "She is a visionary thinker – not only for the role nursing must play in the future of health care, but also for what organizations must become in order to serve the needs of our patients going forward."

Holmay received her award at the WHA Leadership Summit held September 19 in Pewaukee.



*Dan Neufelder; Diane Holmay; Steve Brenton; Peggy Haggerty, WONE President*

## Hamilton, Horton Receive ACHE Regent Awards



*Brett Norell, Steve Brenton, Wendy Horton, Mark Hamilton, Bill Calhoun, Andy Hillig*

Mark Hamilton, FACHE, received the 2013 America College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Regent's Senior-Level Healthcare Executive Award, and Wendy Horton, PharmD, FACHE, received the 2013 ACHE Regent's Early Career Healthcare Executive Award. The awards were presented at WHA's Leadership Summit September 19 in Pewaukee.

Hamilton has held the position of vice president of ambulatory services

for UW Hospitals and Clinics from 2001 to the present. He has been active with ACHE since 1978. Hamilton has been the recipient of the Wisconsin ACHE Regent Senior Level Leadership Award and the ACHE Exemplary Service Award. In addition to his work with ACHE, he currently serves on the Board of Directors of United Cerebral Palsy of Dane County; and chairs the Ambulatory Benchmarking Steering Committee for the University Health System Consortium at the national level.

Horton has served in several positions, beginning as a staff and clinical pharmacist in 2001, promptly followed by technology assessment program manager and clinical pharmacist in 2005, then advancing to senior clinical pharmacist in 2008, and most recently serving as the director of surgery for UW Health, University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics, starting in 2009.

Horton completed the Wisconsin Chapter of ACHE leadership development program in 2011, advancing to Fellow with ACHE, and being elected as a Wisconsin Chapter board of director member with direct responsibility as the leadership development program leader.

## 2013 WHA Summit Focuses on Leadership Role in Performance Excellence

***“True health care reform didn’t start in Washington or Madison, it started in our hospitals.”***

Those were the words of WHA Chair Dan Neufelder, senior vice president of hospital operations for Ministry Health Care, as he addressed more than 150 health care leaders at the WHA 2013 Summit held September 19 in Pewaukee.

“We are second in the nation only to Minnesota in delivering quality health care, so we will simply continue to try harder,” Neufelder said as he acknowledged the role that leadership excellence has had in driving quality performance, which is a hallmark in Wisconsin.



Keynote speaker Bob Murphy and WHA 2014 Board Chair Dan Neufelder

Keynote speaker Bob Murphy, RN, JD, a senior leader and executive coach with the Studer Group, said the goal is always to focus on the patient, but sometimes there are obstacles in the way of providing the care that nurses and physicians want to give. He suggested ways to identify performance and process issues that can contribute to the problem, but when solved, can lead to higher quality care and increased patient satisfaction.

The Summit offered attendees a choice of several breakout sessions, described below.

### **Toxic Behaviors in Health Care: Creating Systems of Respect to Impact the Double Bottom Line**

*Elizabeth Holloway, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Antioch University*

Holloway introduced a systematic approach to improving inappropriate behaviors that impact patient safety, employee retention and team building.



WHA Board Chair Dan Neufelder and Elizabeth Holloway

### **The Future of Health Care Financing**

Moderator: *Steve Kennedy, Senior Vice President/Regional Manager, Lancaster Pollard*

Panelists: *Weldon Gage, Chief Financial Officer, Children’s Hospital and Health System*

*Gail L. Hanson, Chief Financial Officer, Aurora Health Care*

*Patrick Walsh, Attorney, Hall, Render, Killian, Heath & Lyman, PC*

These four experts shared their perspectives on health care financing related to pay-for-performance, technology investments, and consumer-driven health care.



Steve Kennedy, Patrick Walsh, Gail Hanson, Weldon Gage

### **Improving Hospital-Physician Relations: Creating and Sustaining Physician Relationships**

*Michael E. Frisina, PhD, President, The Frisina Group*



WHA Chief Quality Officer Kelly Court and Michael Frisina

Michael Frisina, PhD, founder

and president of The Frisina Group LLC and The Center for Influential Leadership, provided an engaging session on the importance of good relationships in the work environment. Frisina presented several strategies for improving work relationships with physicians and other health care workers in an environment built on mutual trust. Good working relationships, when combined with the right technical skills, are known to lead to higher levels of productivity, quality, initiative and teamwork.

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## **Continued from page 1 . . . Enrollment Activities Escalate As Exchange Opening Day Nears**

Services (DHS) advising them of their changed status. Here is a link to the letters they could have received: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/CustomHelp/bcpleters.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/CustomHelp/bcpleters.htm)

2. About 86,000 childless adults will be newly-eligible for Medicaid starting 1/1/2014.
3. For a county-specific list of available health plans, visit: <http://oci.wi.gov/pressrel/0913serviceareas.htm>. WHA created a map, which is posted here: [www.wha.org/InsurersWiExchange.aspx](http://www.wha.org/InsurersWiExchange.aspx)
4. People can select a plan on the exchange anytime between October 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014. Coverage starts January 1 for those who sign up by December 15. For more information, see: [www.healthcare.gov/what-is-the-health-insurance-marketplace](http://www.healthcare.gov/what-is-the-health-insurance-marketplace)
5. 2-1-1 call centers will be referring callers to available enrollment services within their communities. Check with your regional enrollment networks to see if they have created a publicly-accessible online directory of certified application counselors, navigators, and other individuals who assist with enrollment. Here is a link to the regional enrollment networks (scroll to end of page): [www.wha.org/outreachplans.aspx](http://www.wha.org/outreachplans.aspx)

The WHA Enrollment Council will continue to meet through December, or longer if necessary, to address enrollment-related issues and to provide feedback to OCI and DHS as necessary.

## **Continued from page 1 . . . Starmann-Harrison Receives WHA Distinguished Service Award**

Policy Board 5. She chaired the WHA Board in 2006 and was a member of the Board for nearly a decade. She is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE).

In presenting the award, Brenton said Mary's leadership is evident not only in the organizations she serves, but also is an asset to the communities where she lives. According to Brenton, she always has the "big picture" in health care in mind.

"Mary can always be counted on to be a leading voice on advocacy—be it in Washington D.C. or Madison," Brenton said. "She understands that connecting personally with lawmakers gets the job done, and she has a distinguished track record of helping WHA advance important policy objectives."

## **Continued from page 4 . . . WHA Foundation's 2013 Global Vision Award Honors Two Community Initiatives**

Health Center, a federally qualified health center. The initiative provides a variety of health and wellness programs to roughly 700 students and their families annually. Froedtert employs a full-time school nurse to provide student nursing care, care management and health education during the school year. The initiative works with Progressive Community Health Center for primary medical home referrals, dental care access and immunization services. MPS provides equipment, nursing staff support and opportunities for continuing nursing education. During the 2012-2013 academic year, the initiative provided over 1,200 health visits with students and led a series of health education sessions with students, parents and staff. These efforts resulted in a 96 percent return-to-class rate (versus being sent home) and 100 percent immunization compliance for children in grades K-5. In addition, dental sealant services were coordinated with an attendance rate of more than 90 percent. The school principal attests that the initiative has "literally changed the culture of the school." Where students would have previously spent much time out of class—often for minor health concerns—the initiative has been able to keep more students in class and provide closer communication between their parents and physicians.

The WHA Foundation's Global Vision Community Partnership Award was created in 1995 to recognize the efforts of WHA members in meeting the documented health needs in their communities through creativity, innovation, partnership and collaboration. To date, the Award has honored 34 innovative programs in communities throughout Wisconsin.

## Continued from page 7 . . . 2013 WHA Summit Focuses on Leadership Role in Performance Excellence

### The Courage to Lead: Critical Skills for Health Care Leaders

*Jody Rogers, PhD, FACHE, Visiting Professor – Health Care Administration, Trinity University, Facilitator, Speaker, Leadership Coach*

Jody Rogers provided practical insight and application about leadership. Rogers focused on what it takes to lead, including the difference between the leadership vs. manager mindset, the importance of defining your leadership philosophy, how to be a “leader at all levels” and the five steps leaders need to follow.



*Jody Rogers, PhD*

## Cont'd. from page 1 . . . Speaker's Mental Health Task Force Advances WHA Recommendations

Redesigning Wisconsin's county-based mental health system into a regional-based mental health system has also been a key policy recommendation of the WHA Mental Health Task Force and was an issue discussed by members of the Speaker's Task Force September 25. Representatives noted that Iowa recently sunset its county-based mental health law and over a two-year period developed and passed legislation replacing it with a regional mental health system.

“The system does need to change,” said Task Force Chair Rep. Erik Severson. “Looking at Iowa is one good step.”

Rep. Sandy Pasch said the current mental health law and county-based system designed in the 1970s “has not kept up with the times. It is time to start over and get everyone together and redesign the system. You cannot keep putting band-aids on it.”

“The current system is unsustainable,” said Rep. Joe Sanfelippo. He agreed with the need for Wisconsin to undertake a complete redesign of its county-based mental health system. In particular, Rep. Sanfelippo suggested that “State government may have to take a bigger role.”

Wisconsin's county-based system has resulted in “72 different interpretations” of Wisconsin's mental health law, according to Pasch, and as a result there is no consistency in the availability of mental health services across Wisconsin.

“Mental health is provided in 72 different ways depending on each county's interpretation of Chapter 51,” Rep. Severson said.

Rep. Jim Steineke said that he agreed with the idea of working to undertake a complete redesign of Wisconsin's mental health law, and supported “building inertia to a significant overall redesign.”

Rep. Joan Ballweg noted that Iowa's efforts to redesign its system were brought forward by a legislator and also pointed to other Task Force recommendations to study Iowa's redesign.

The Task Force ultimately approved two WHA proposed recommendations to further study Iowa's redesign and regionalization pilots already occurring in Wisconsin.

Rep. Severson told the *Wisconsin State Journal* that he would like to see the Task Force recommendations passed as bills in the Legislature this fall.

“All of these bills are very bipartisan,” said Rep. Severson. “I think a lot of people in this room and in our caucuses will be supportive.”

## Continued from page 2 . . . Two-Midnights Transition Period, RAC Legislation, Resources and More

- **Submit Comments/Questions to CMS on Two-Midnights, Admissions Criteria**  
CMS continues to use comments and scenarios received from providers to develop its guidance and FAQs. Submit yours to CMS by emailing [IPPSAdmissions@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:IPPSAdmissions@cms.hhs.gov).
- **Medicare Audit Improvement Act (HR 1250/S. 1012)**  
WHA strongly supports legislation, HR 1250 and S. 1012, to improve Medicare audit contractor programs, like the Recovery Audit Contractor. **WHA thanks Wisconsin Representatives Ribble, Duffy and Sensenbrenner for co-sponsoring this legislation.** WHA encourages all Wisconsin Members of Congress to sign onto this legislation.
- **RAC Resources**  
To visually demonstrate the RAC burden on hospitals, take a look at the “infographic” on WHA’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Hospital-Association/172480133665](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Hospital-Association/172480133665). The American Hospital Association also released a spot-on video with hospital testimonials on the RAC burden and why the Medicare Audit Improvement Act, HR 1250/S 1012, is needed. Watch the video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic5IHvVMuu0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic5IHvVMuu0). WHA encourages you to consider using these resources with your advocacy efforts and on your social media sites.

# Care, Comfort and Hope

## Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

### Charity Care

Fear of a bill should never prevent a patient from seeking care at a Wisconsin hospital. Wisconsin hospital charity care programs provided \$232 million to more than 700 patients each day last year. The stories that follow illustrate the deep commitment and continuing concern that hospitals have to their patients to ensure they receive the care they need regardless of their ability to pay.

#### ***Working together at Community Memorial Hospital***

In addition to the health issues she was coping with, Lorna was facing a large outstanding medical bill of \$25,000. Every month, she was faithfully making payments of \$300. Community Memorial Hospital (CMH) was able to offer help.

It had just launched a new program for patients with outstanding medical bills to receive zero percent– or low interest loans through HELP Financial, an independent financial company. The program provides financing for longer-term payment options for patients with outstanding balances in the form of unexpected medical expenses.

Lorna had a specific need to keep her payments at or around \$300 monthly. In an effort to help her, CMH reduced her outstanding balance to \$17,000 so that she could obtain a long-term, five-year loan through HELP Financial at a low interest rate and still keep her payments close to \$300 per month.

The staff at CMH worked with HELP Financial and with Lorna, who was happy with the discount CMH provided to her. She was grateful for a program that kept her payment within her budget, lifting a huge weight from her and allowing her to focus on her health.

**Community Memorial Hospital, Oconto Falls**

#### ***Financial assistance program helps diabetes patient***

Kevin, 46, has been living with diabetes since he was 12. For years he has checked his blood sugar and tried to adopt a lifestyle that will help him avoid the long-term complications associated with diabetes.

Last year, his family physician at Mayo Clinic Health System – Red Cedar in Menomonie helped point him in a new direction in an attempt to manage his health. To better control his diabetes, he saw a diabetes educator regarding diabetes-related nutrition. He also saw an eye doctor for the blood vessel problem he was having in his eyes.

Despite caring for his health, Kevin still experienced complications that are commonly associated with diabetes, namely trouble with his feet.

“I have to wear steel-toe shoes for my job,” says Kevin. “My little toe rubbed on the steel part of the shoe, I got a sore on my toe and it became infected with staphylococcus aureus (staph).”

Kevin went to the emergency department at Mayo Clinic Health System for his toe, and the medical staff determined that it needed to be amputated behind the first knuckle. To help fight infection, he also had to take antibiotics for a month after the surgery.

Being a divorced father of two children, money is tight. His priority is paying child support to help cover the needs of his kids. Yet, despite holding a steady job, there isn't enough money left to afford health insurance.

The bills from his care added up, but fortunately Kevin discovered that he qualified for financial assistance. Mayo Clinic Health System – Red Cedar forgave his mounting bills.

The Financial Assistance Program has allowed him to heal and carry on worry free.

“It helped me out substantially,” continued Kevin. “Without it, I guess I'd have to work three jobs or file bankruptcy. That'd be the only answer.”

**Mayo Clinic Health System – Red Cedar, Menomonie**

*(continued on next page)*

## Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

### ***Some surgeries can't wait***

S.H. was suffering from a thyroid bleed. She had been experiencing symptoms, such as blood in her urine, for a couple of weeks, and her symptoms were increasing in severity. Even though she didn't have insurance, she became so concerned that she visited a physician at Aurora Medical Center Kenosha for an exam. The physician advised her that she needed surgery to correct the issue or it would continue to get worse if not treated.

S.H. is an unemployed, single, middle-aged woman who had been living off an old work comp benefit that was about to expire. Although her mom had been doing the best she could to help her, having no income and no insurance meant S.H. would be responsible for all of the expenses associated with surgery.

Aware of S.H.'s financial situation, the physician's office contacted the financial counselor at Aurora Medical Center Kenosha in hopes that she could assist S.H. in finding a way to pay for the much-needed surgery. The counselor helped S.H. apply for the Aurora Helping Hand Patient Financial Assistance Program that approved her for a 100 percent discount. Because of the Helping Hand approval, not only did S.H. receive her surgery, but she also is able to continue visiting the hospital clinic frequently for the continued care she requires to remain well.

**Aurora Medical Center Kenosha**

### ***Community Care program***

When a person becomes ill, their first priority should be their physical well-being. Unfortunately, the number of patients who are under-insured or need assistance in paying deductibles and co-insurance continues to increase. University of Wisconsin Hospitals & Clinics' (UWHC) uncompensated care program is there to work with these patients to relieve some of their financial burdens.

To help patients better focus on their health instead of financial situation, UWHC is proud to offer an uncompensated care program to patients who are uninsured or unable to pay for the care provided at UWHC. In FY12, UWHC's Community Care program provided \$23.3 million of charity care at cost to 26,089 patients.

Many of the patients who have benefited from the uncompensated care program are extremely grateful for the program and those who work with them to make this a possibility. *"It was such a relief to know that this program existed,"* said one patient who was able to receive help from this program during her husband's illness. *"I felt relieved that there are programs like this to help people."*

Another patient wrote, *"I know we could not have been able to afford the payments for my father to receive treatments for his lymphoma. Because of your help, he was just told his cancer is in complete remission. On behalf of my family, we are so grateful for this program and that my father now has another chance to live life to the fullest."*

**University of Wisconsin Hospitals & Clinics, Madison**

***Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at [mgrasmick@wha.org](mailto:mgrasmick@wha.org).***

