



additional resources available at [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org)

## Regulatory Relief

### Background

Government regulation should help to promote patient safety and improve the delivery of health care to patients. However, in 2002, PricewaterhouseCoopers estimated that government regulation drove 15 percent of the increase in health care costs that year. Government clearly has a role to play in regulating hospitals, but often, the results of the regulations do not achieve the goals of improving patient safety and delivery of care. Many times, the results of regulation have the opposite effect.

### Issues

- Unnecessary and duplicative government regulations add to the cost of health care and burden the patient with increased waiting times, costs and paperwork. Regulatory burden also inhibits the hospital's ability to find creative solutions addressing problems in the health care delivery system.

### WHA Position

- WHA wants to reduce the cost of health care and encourage innovative thinking to address problems in the health care delivery system both today and in the future. Eliminating duplicative and unnecessary regulations, like the following, will reduce cost and create an environment where innovation is uninhibited.
  - Eliminate unnecessary state hospital licensure. These state regulations are in addition to those required by Medicare, Medicaid, and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations already.
  - Harmonize state and federal law regarding the sharing of health care information. The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) established a framework in which medical information can be released without patient consent for the purposes of payment, treatment and operations, which include quality assessment and improvement activities. Wisconsin's privacy statute should be amended to mirror the language in federal law in order to avoid confusion and eliminate unnecessary administrative burden.
  - Encourage the state to use commonly accepted quality benchmarks in its health care purchasing strategies. Health plans, providers and purchasers have collaborated to develop standards and measures



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that are gaining greater use as tools for evaluating and reporting quality health care. Government program administrators have already embraced some of these. New, additional procedures and requirements proposed for the sole purpose of government oversight will only increase costs and divert valuable resources if the intent of such procedures and requirements could be addressed by existing practices.

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### Related Resources

- WHA website: Legal & Regulatory  
<http://www.wha.org/legalAndRegulatory/default.aspx>
- News release, June 21, 2002: Hospital Association President Praises Conference Committee's Removal of Certificate of Need Provision  
<http://www.wha.org/newsCenter/pdf/nr6-21-02con.pdf>

### Localize The Message

Be prepared to talk about:

- The impact excessive paperwork has on your hospital's efficiency.
- How you are trying to streamline the paperwork burden.

