

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. NEWS

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WHA Hails Package of Mental Health Reforms

**New law creates mental health bed locator program;
Encourages provider care coordination for patients with mental health needs**

Green Bay (February 26, 2016) ----- The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) applauds Governor Scott Walker for signing into law a bill that will provide over \$2 million in funding to test alternate payment models in the state Medicaid program that encourage mental health care coordination within an integrated health system and promote psychiatric consultations between providers.

The new law incorporates many recommendations that were proposed by WHA's 2014 Medicaid Work Group.

The law will help to reduce ER wait times for individuals who require an inpatient psychiatric bed by funding the creation and operation of an online database and tool that will enable ER staff to more quickly identify hospitals that have an available and appropriate psychiatric bed at a given time.

"WHA was proud to work with Representatives Czaja and Kolste and Senators Vukmir and Bewley to develop this forward-thinking set of public policies that will demonstrate the role providers can play in better coordinating care for patients with mental illness in our Medicaid program," said WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding.

Borgerding said Wisconsin hospitals and health systems continue a tradition of partnership with the State of Wisconsin by delivering high-quality, high-value health care to Wisconsin residents and Medicaid enrollees.

"Wisconsin health care providers are among the most innovative in the country. They welcome an opportunity to publicly test new integrated and coordinated care delivery and payment models that can reduce utilization, lower costs and produce better outcomes for individuals with mental illness in the Medicaid program," according to Borgerding.

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