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5510 Research Park Drive  
P.O. Box 259038  
Madison, WI 53725-9038  
608.274.1820 | FAX 608.274.8554 | [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org)

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Contact: Mark Grapentine, Vice President of Communications  
[Communications@wha.org](mailto:Communications@wha.org) | 608.575.2514 (c)

## **WHA Lauds New Telehealth Improvement Law** *Bipartisan Bill Will Increase Access to Health Care*

The Wisconsin Hospital Association lauded today's enactment of legislation that will enhance availability of innovative telehealth services to Wisconsin patients. This afternoon Governor Tony Evers signed Senate Bill 380 into law at the Richland Hospital in Richland Center. WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding was present at the event and spoke about the importance of updating Wisconsin's telehealth law.

"The bill Governor Evers is signing into law today brings more parity between in-person and telehealth-provided care and removes outdated barriers to delivering and receiving care through telehealth," Borgerding said. "This is especially important for expanding access to critical areas of care like behavioral health, where the need for services is being increasingly understood and growing rapidly.

"This legislation, coupled with new investments in broadband infrastructure supported by the Legislature and the Governor, will help Wisconsin more fully realize the promise of telehealth and other new technologies," Borgerding said.

Senate Bill 380 enjoyed very broad bipartisan support in the state legislature, with 67 cosponsors from both houses and unanimous votes in all committee actions and floor votes.

Numerous studies, including Wisconsin's own state employee health insurance program, have determined that creating access to care through telehealth is a cost-effective strategy for the state's Medicaid program. The legislation is the culmination of three years of work by WHA's Telemedicine Work Group, and includes provisions implementing the work group's four recommendations for the state's Medicaid program:

- Cover telehealth the same as in-person care when the quality of the care provided is functionally equivalent.
- Catch up to Medicare in the number of telehealth-related services that are covered.
- Cover in-home or community telehealth services.
- Increase access to behavioral health via telehealth.

The legislation's lead authors are State Assembly Reps. Amy Loudenberg (R-Clinton) and Deb Kolste (D-Janesville) and State Senators Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield) and Janet Bewley (D-Mason).