

WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



Date: August 16th, 2017
To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature
From: Eric Borgerding, President/CEO
Kyle O'Brien, Senior Vice President Government Relations
Re: Wisconsin's Rural Hospitals Rated Best in Country for Quality Performance
Capitol Briefing on Wisconsin's High Quality Health Care to be Held September 6th

The Health Resources and Services Administration recently announced Wisconsin ranked as the **top performing state** for Critical Access Hospital (CAH) quality improvement and reporting through the Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Project (MBQIP). This project, funded by the federal government and supported by staff at the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health and Wisconsin Hospital Association, encourages the voluntary reporting and use of hospital performance data to address specific quality improvement initiatives for rural Wisconsin hospitals.

This announcement is **yet another** federal recognition of our high quality, high value health care system that is an economic asset to Wisconsin. Every CAH in Wisconsin, which includes hospitals that have 25 or less inpatient beds, is compliant with the MBQIP program – a factor used to achieve Wisconsin's top ranking.

These results would not be possible without the strong commitment by Wisconsin's hospital leaders, physicians, advanced practice providers and many others on patient care teams dedicated to continuous improvement. The education, training and availability of patient care staff is critical in order to sustain these significant accomplishments.

Top 5 Performing States	
1.	Wisconsin
2.	Maine
3.	Utah
4.	Minnesota
5.	Illinois

In order to maintain this highly skilled workforce, Wisconsin policy makers have proactively created and improved upon programs that support the training of medical providers in rural communities. The Joint Finance Committee recently included a provision in the proposed state budget to provide \$2.5 million in additional workforce training grants for Graduate Medical Education, advanced practice clinician and allied health professional training in rural hospitals and health systems. These grants, which receive matching funds from our member hospitals and health systems, will encourage health care providers to train and ultimately end up staying in rural Wisconsin.

Rural hospitals support the physical well-being of the people living in that area, but they are also a critical asset to local economies. Oftentimes hospitals are the core of rural communities in Wisconsin, allowing other businesses to recruit and retain staff who depend on high quality health care for their families as well as directly employing hundreds of people.

Another challenge, which goes hand-in-hand with the ability to pay wages for health care workers, relates to government reimbursement from Medicaid. For Wisconsin hospital services alone, the cost-shift that results from Medicaid **has grown to over \$1 billion in 2016**. Programs like the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital program and the newly created Rural Critical Care Supplement help to offset Medicaid losses and provide additional resources for hospitals to invest in their workforce, health care access and quality improvement within their facilities.

Wisconsin is fortunate to have hospitals in rural and urban settings that are dedicated to providing high quality care for the patients they serve. We appreciate your continued support of public policy that enables our members to be successful in achieving the goal of providing the highest quality health care in the country and look forward to continuing our collaboration with the state legislature to strengthen this commitment into the future.

On September 6th, WHA will be providing a briefing to legislators and staff in the state capitol explaining why Wisconsin performs better than nearly every other state in the country and how public policy can support this quality improvement work. An invitation will be coming out soon with additional details regarding this briefing.