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ACA Repeal, Replace Attempts Fail in U.S. Senate

This week the U.S. Senate made multiple attempts to repeal and/or replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), but each of those efforts failed. Early this morning, July 28, the U.S. Senate took up its last ditch effort—the so-called “skinny” bill which would have repealed only a very few provisions of the ACA. It was thought passage of the skinny bill by the Senate would then set up a joint Senate-House conference committee to hash out differences between the two chambers. However, 51 Senators rejected that approach on a 49-51 vote. The three Republicans voting against the skinny bill were Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and John McCain (R-AZ). Earlier this week the Senate also failed to pass the Better Care Reconciliation Act, which would have repealed and replaced parts of the ACA, and the Obamacare Repeal Reconciliation Act, which would have repealed parts of the ACA without replacement. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has now pulled repeal legislation from consideration after today’s final failed vote.

As these developments continue to unfold, the Wisconsin Hospital Association will aggressively engage with our state and federal legislators to maintain insurance market stability and to discuss what the federal rejection of ACA repeal means for Wisconsin. Watch the Valued Voice for updates on this issue.

WHA Board Planning Session Sets Stage for New Initiatives, Strategic Plan

Discussions at the WHA Board Planning Session have historically laid the foundation for many of WHA’s most successful initiatives. This year’s gathering on July 27-28 was no exception as Board members shared their expertise and perspectives on current issues and the future challenges facing Wisconsin’s evolving health care delivery system. WHA Chair-elect Bob Van Meeteren, president/CEO, Reedsburg Area Medical Center, presided over the session.



WHA Officers from left: Chair-elect Bob Van Meeteren; WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding, Chair Catherine Jacobson and Immediate Past Chair Mike Wallace.

“The planning session is an opportunity to explore in greater depth the issues that will shape the health care landscape in Wisconsin,” according to WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding. “The health care leaders in our state are among the most innovative and informed in the nation. We are very fortunate to be able to tap into their knowledge and experience so WHA can be proactive in developing strategies now and in the future to ensure WHA is a valued resource to its members in this rapidly changing environment.”

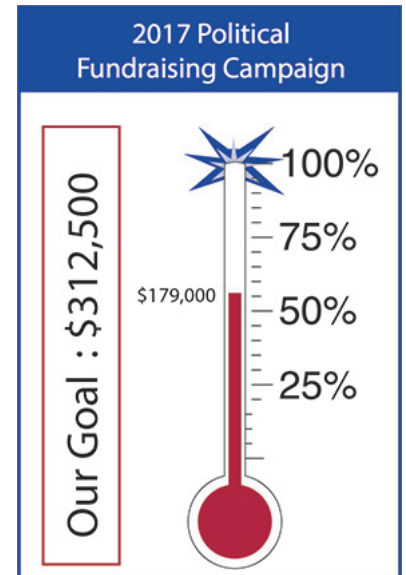
Borgerding said staff will use the information gathered at the planning session to develop the 2018 WHA goals and to inform the preliminary work on the 2019-2024 strategic plan.

Wisconsin Hospitals State PAC & Conduit Reach \$179,000 Next contributor list to run August 18

The Wisconsin Hospitals State PAC & Conduit reached \$179,000, which is 57 percent of the campaign's aggressive \$312,500 goal for 2017. To date, a total of 192 individuals have contributed an average of \$932.

"While \$179,000 is great progress, there is still a long way to go to reach the important goal of raising over \$312,000 this year," said Mike Wallace, chair, WHA Advocacy Committee. "Thank you to the hundreds of contributors who have given already in 2017. I would strongly encourage everyone to consider making a contribution today."

A full list of 2017 contributors will run in the August 18 edition of the Valued Voice newsletter. To be included on the list, make your contribution today at <http://www.whconduit.com> or call WHA's Jenny Boese at 608-268-1816 or Nora Statsick at 608-239-4535.



WHA Offers Active Shooter Response Training September 20 International Risk Communications Expert Vincent Covello will also keynote event



Christopher Sonne



Billy Castellano

It is a reality in today's world that hospitals must be prepared to respond to the threat of an active shooter on their campus. On September 20, the Wisconsin Hospital Association is sponsoring the "WHA Emergency Preparedness Conference: *Ready to Respond.*" This important, one-day conference will feature Chris Sonne and William Castellano, both of HSS EM Solutions, who will share best practices and lessons learned from live active shooter scenarios, as well as direct tabletop exercises and a practical, scenario-based training exercise, during a special afternoon session focused on preparing for an active shooter.

Hospitals are encouraged to take advantage of this in-state training opportunity designed for hospital emergency preparedness directors, emergency department directors and physicians, infection prevention staff, department directors, public relations professionals and public information officers.

The conference will also feature national experts who will share communication and preparedness lessons learned from real world events and focus on current threats facing health care organizations, including workplace and community violence and highly infectious diseases. Attendees will have the opportunity to collect strategies to enhance their current emergency management programs, practice them through interactive exercises, and integrate those preparedness and communication strategies into daily operations.

Vincent Covello, PhD, will keynote the conference and offer a deep-dive session in the afternoon specifically for public information officers and health care public relations professionals.

Covello is a nationally and internationally recognized trainer, researcher, consultant and expert in crisis, conflict, change and risk communications. Over the past 25 years, he has held numerous positions in academia and government. Covello was a senior scientist at the White House Council on Environmental Quality in Washington, D.C., a study director at the National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences and the director of the risk assessment program at the National Science Foundation. Covello has authored or edited more than 25 books and published over 75 articles on risk assessment, management and communication. Covello will share principles, strategies and practical tools for communicating effectively in a high stress situation.

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Additional sessions include a look at infectious disease outbreaks and what hospitals can do to better prepare; as well as the role of governmental agencies, including the Department of Health Services and the Department of Public Health during an emergency.

This conference is September 20 at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. The registration fee is \$225 per person. The full agenda and online registration are available at www.cvent.com/d/b5qw08. Seating is limited—WHA highly recommends registering early.

2018 Updates for the Chargemaster: December 1 Seminar

Get ready to prepare your hospital's chargemaster for 2018 at WHA's one-day seminar "Preparing the Chargemaster for 2018," scheduled Friday, December 1 in Wisconsin Dells.

Back by popular demand, presenter Glenda Schuler will lead attendees in an overview of all 2018 reporting requirement updates and CPT and HCPCS coding revisions. Schuler will focus on updating the chargemaster as well as strategies for department staff education.

Chargemaster/APC coordinators, chief financial officers, controllers, decision support managers, office managers, compliance auditors, coding staff, pharmacy directors, material managers/purchasing directors, and other directors and managers responsible for the charge generation process are encouraged to attend this event. This program has prior approval of the American Academy of Professional Coders for 5.5 continuing education units.

This seminar will be held at Glacier Canyon Lodge at The Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells on Friday, December 1. A brochure is included in this week's packet, and online registration is available at www.cvent.com/d/f5qshc. For registration questions, contact Kayla Chatterton at 608-274-1820 or email kchatterton@wha.org.

NE Wisconsin Hospitals Complete Emergency Response Exercise

More than 80 hospital personnel from ten hospitals in the Northeast Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition participated in a recent mass casualty exercise. The hospitals were supported by more than 40 regional partners from emergency management, county health services, emergency medical services and law enforcement.

The exercise scenario was developed to test the region's ability to respond with a united effort to a large scale medical response and the associated family support such an event would require. The scenario was an explosion event set in Oconto County at a factory site hosting a run/walk event on factory grounds. There were over 400 simulated "injured patients" that required care. The exercise estimated 2,800 concerned family and friends could be affected by the disaster.

The exercise was an opportunity to use a patient tracking system in each hospital emergency operation center. The Wisconsin Tracking Resources and Communication System (WI-Trac), an internet-based hospital bed management platform that has been provided free of charge since the mid-2000s by the Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program (WHEPP), was also used by hospitals participating in the exercise to provide hospital capability status directly to the incident scene triage and transport officers. As part of the exercise, the Oconto County Health and Human Services Department set up "family information center" to support concerned family and friends.

The Northeast Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Response Coalition is supported by WHEPP, a program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services in partnership with WHA and other stakeholders to support hospital emergency preparedness planning and response to mass casualty incidents and other emergencies. If you have questions about WHEPP, contact Andrew Brenton, WHA assistant general counsel, at abrenton@wha.org or 608-274-1820.