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WHA and Members Testify at Assembly Hearing
Support of Medical Licensure Compact in Wisconsin helps create access

Wisconsin is one step closer to making permanent the state's place in the medical licensure compact. During a meeting of the Assembly Committee on Health on July 10, SSM Health Dean Medical Group, Mercyhealth, and Stoughton Hospital testified along with WHA Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk in support of Assembly Bill 70, the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Reauthorization Act.



WHA's Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk testifies in the Assembly Health Committee alongside WHA members from Mercyhealth, Stoughton Hospital and SSM Health on bipartisan legislation to permanently reauthorize the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. The Compact expedites licensure for physicians recruited to treat patients in Wisconsin.



WHA was a strong supporter of the initial Compact legislation in 2015 which has allowed Wisconsin to successfully implement the Compact. In fact, Wisconsin was the first state in the nation to issue licenses utilizing the voluntary expedited process made possible by this interstate licensure agreement.

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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

September 6, 2019
 WHA 2019 Post-Acute Care Conference
 Wisconsin Dells, WI

Throughout 2019
 Health Care Workforce Resilience
 Free Member Webinar Series

Visit www.wha.org
 for more educational opportunities

OCI/DHS Health Care Coverage Partnership Advisory Council Kickoff

In June, Governor Tony Evers announced the formation of the Health Care Coverage Partnership, directing the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) to develop strategies aimed at enrolling more Wisconsinites in high-quality, affordable health insurance coverage.

“Together, we intend to take a series of actions that will connect more Wisconsinites to health care coverage and to promote a healthy individual insurance marketplace,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm.

On July 11, WHA was part of a stakeholder Advisory Council convened by OCI and DHS leadership to discuss the following goals:

1. Improve outreach and education on all forms of insurance
2. Increase enrollment
3. Improve retention and reduce churn
4. Increase health insurance literacy

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The Advisory Council effort will have a strong focus on targeting populations eligible for, but not enrolled in, Medicaid and heavily subsidized plans available via the exchange. Currently, approximately 40,000 individuals who are eligible for Medicaid (incomes below 100% FPL) are uninsured. Likewise, 30,000 people who have incomes below 138% FPL would qualify for low-cost options in the health care exchange market, but are also uninsured.

“WHA has a long history of advocacy around increasing health coverage enrollment and has worked to ensure there is no ‘coverage gap’ for low-income Wisconsin residents,” said Eric Borgerding, WHA President. “We fully support the goals outlined for this initiative and look forward to coordinating efforts to continue to expand health insurance coverage.”

In the weeks and months ahead, the Advisory Council will continue to discuss available resources and coordination of activities to improve insurance outreach and enrollment efforts.

For more information about the Health Care Coverage Partnership, contact WHA Vice President of Public Policy [Lisa Ellinger](#).

Grassroots Spotlight



Grassroots Spotlight: Tomah Memorial Hospital Hosts Rep. VanderMeer



Hospital leaders from Tomah Memorial Hospital host Representative Nancy VanderMeer (top photo, far left) and representatives from the Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association, Wisconsin Chiropractic Association and the Wisconsin Medical Society to discuss how health care providers support employers by preventing workplace injuries and get injured workers back on the job faster than any other state in the nation.



Free Member Benefit – Post or View Health Care Vacancies Online

Web-based tool helps members fill positions

You can post job openings and search vacancies in a variety of health care careers right on the WHA website. This web-based tool—called the **Job Bulletin**—has been offered as a member service since 2004 and is available right on our homepage at www.wha.org.

Take advantage of these great benefits:

- Post open positions at your hospital or health system—it’s quick and easy.
- All positions are posted for one month and can be resubmitted if you need to keep it online longer.
- It’s a FREE benefit for WHA members and their staff.
- The postings appear on the WHA website—which is widely accessed by large numbers of interested parties.

If you have any questions about the Job Bulletin, contact [WHA Communications](#).



Register Now: Epic Systems Featured at July 30 Wisconsin Healthcare Business Forum Luncheon in Madison



WHA members are encouraged to attend a Wisconsin Healthcare Business Forum event in Madison on July 30. James Hickman of Epic Systems will discuss how machine learning and data science are changing health care information technology and medicine in general. Additional information and registration are available [here](#).

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When the Compact was signed into law, the Legislature required a trigger for review of the law in 2019. This was required to evaluate the benefits of Compact membership. According to Zenk’s testimony, those benefits are clearly illustrated by physicians increasing their utility of the Compact. The number of applications using the expedited process doubled in Wisconsin’s second year of implementation.

Hospitals also value the process as a resource to extend access to care. As Kelli Cameron, Director of Physician-Provider Recruitment and Retention for Mercyhealth in Janesville noted in her testimony, “The Compact ensures that physicians extending telemedicine services, or other in-person specialty services, can cross Compact state lines without undergoing a duplicative single-state licensing process.”

SSM Health Dean Medical Group also testified in support of maintaining Wisconsin’s status as a medical licensure compact state. Kate Kaegi, Senior Leader Physician, Provider and Leadership Talent, reflected Dean’s experience.

“Having the Compact process available can bring licensing timelines down to four weeks, rather than what could be four months or more.” Kaegi added, “Not only does the Compact help when we are able to recruit physicians to our group, the expedited process has also been key to filling temporary gaps in our physician workforce using locum tenens providers.”

The advantage the Compact provides in bringing physicians to Wisconsin to practice is important as Wisconsin residents seek needed health care. Chris Schmitz, Stoughton Hospital’s Vice President of Human Resources, noted, “Delays in licensing create delays in patients getting care; each delay builds on and compounds the other.”

“With a runway to practice of 12 or more years and 400 Wisconsin physicians retiring each year, our state must take advantage of every strategy available to increase the supply of physicians,” said Zenk in her Committee testimony. “The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact is an important tool to grow Wisconsin’s health care workforce and ensure access to Wisconsin’s high-quality health care in all corners of our state.”

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As one of the bill's authors, Representative Nancy VanderMeer noted in her testimony, "This voluntary process creates efficiency for physicians, health care organizations and state agencies, and that creates access to care, which is vital, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Assembly Bill 70 is authored by Rep. VanderMeer and Sen. Patrick Testin. The companion bill, Senate Bill 74, was passed by the Senate in June. The bill has over 60 lawmakers either co-authoring or sponsoring the legislation. After receiving an Assembly committee vote, the legislation will move to the floor of the full Assembly. Once approved by the Assembly, the legislation will be sent to the Governor to be signed into law.

For additional information on Wisconsin's physician compact legislation, contact [Ann Zenk](#) at 608-274-1820.

Individuals who want to stay up-to-date on this and other important legislation, as well as take action on those issues should contact WHA's Vice President of Advocacy [Kari Hofer](#) or join WHA's grassroots advocacy program, HEAT, at <https://www.wha.org/Advocacy/HEAT>.