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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- June 9, 2020**
Building and Fostering a High-Performing Board
 Webinar
- June 16, 2020**
Second Victim of Harm: Coping after things go wrong
 Webinar
- June 16, 2020**
Psychological Safety: The Predictive Power of Feeling Supported When Things Go Wrong
 Webinar

WHA Board Discusses Latest COVID-19 Developments

Planning already underway for next state biennial budget

The WHA Board of Directors met virtually June 4, discussing the latest information related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its continuing effects on the state's hospitals and health systems. Among other agenda items, the Board approved revisions to the WHA 2020 Goals to reflect pandemic-related adjustments, received a detailed summary of WHA's wide-ranging COVID-19 activities with policymakers, and discussed the challenges state government will face in the upcoming 2021-23 biennial state budget.

2020 Goals Revisions

COVID-19 has required adjustments to WHA's goals for 2020, both in adding new goals to reflect the current pandemic environment and modifying others. One newly-created goal for 2020 includes WHA developing a white paper of lessons learned during the pandemic that policymakers can use to enhance health care delivery access and efficiency. Other new goals centered around making permanent certain regulatory flexibilities implemented due to COVID-19 health care needs.

The modified goals reflect Wisconsin health care moving into a new phase of the pandemic.

"COVID has required most of our focus for the last few months, but like our member hospitals we are increasingly phasing back into our normal operations and priorities," WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding said. "We're moving forward with one eye on COVID and another on resuming normal activities."

The Board unanimously approved the revised goals.

COVID-19 Updates

WHA staff shared the latest information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the most recent clinical trends. Many data points are trending in a positive direction, including the hospitalization rate for those who test positive for the virus, supply of ICU beds and ventilators, and the overall doubling rate of COVID-19 growth.

WHA Chief Medical Officer Mark Kaufman, MD noted that these trends combined with the opportunity for more outdoor activities during the summer can have a strong

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Latest HHS Remdesivir Distribution Deadline: June 8

The Department of Health and Human Services has announced the next round of Remdesivir distribution and the required data submission deadline for hospitals. Hospitals must submit COVID-19 bed capacity and utilization data through HHS' TeleTracking [portal](#) no later than the evening of Monday, June 8, 2020. Please see this [AHA special bulletin](#) for more details.

Congress Sends PPP Flexibility Act to President Trump

On June 3, the U.S. Senate passed federal legislation to make it easier for entities to utilize loan forgiveness under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) authorized in the CARES Act.



U.S. Small Business Administration

The legislation, known as the [Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act](#), passed the U.S. House in late May and is expected to be signed soon by President Trump.

Under the [PPP](#), which is run by the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 500 employees, including eligible hospitals, are eligible for loans to cover up to eight weeks of payroll and other expenses. Entities may also apply for loan forgiveness, with the amount of forgiveness based on keeping employees on payroll or quickly rehiring them. Under the PPP Flexibility Act, employers who receive these loans will now have 24 weeks instead of eight to use funding received. Under the act, the PPP will not penalize entities for an inability to rehire employees or similarly qualified employees if the employer makes a good faith effort to do so, or documents an inability to return to the same level of business activity. Entities will also have further flexibility on how the dollars are spent, allowing them to use 40% of loan forgiveness on mortgage interest, rent and utilities (the other 60% must be used on payroll), and extending the period on which repayment can be deferred from six months to one year.

This legislation comes a little more than a month after Congress passed legislation adding money to the PPP program after funds previously authorized under the CARES Act for the PPP had run out. According to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the program has sent out more than half a trillion dollars and has been utilized by three-quarters of all small businesses.

Please contact WHA's Director of Federal & State Relations, [Jon Hoelster](#), for more information.

COVID-19 Uninsured Claims Reimbursement for Testing and Treatment

According to the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), providers who have conducted COVID-19 testing or provided treatment for uninsured COVID-19 individuals on or after Feb. 4, 2020 can request claims reimbursement through the [HRSA online portal](#) and will be reimbursed generally at Medicare rates, subject to available funding. In general, reimbursement will be available for COVID-19 testing and testing-related visits for uninsured individuals, as well as treatment for uninsured individuals with a primary COVID-19 diagnosis as determined by HRSA.

Assignment of primary diagnosis for COVID-19 is date dependent. For dates of services through March 31, 2020, current coding guidelines take precedence for patients presenting with signs, symptoms, exposure and/or definitive diagnosis related to respiratory illness or disease. CMS created a new diagnosis code, effective April 1, 2020, to report COVID-19 cases: U07.1. – 2019 nCOV acute respiratory disease.

Eligibility for payment is subject to terms and conditions of participation in the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund. [Click here for more information.](#)

Be Safe in the Sun

The arrival of sunny days and warmer temperatures means summer fun will be in full swing! Too much sun, however, can be dangerous.

According to data gathered by the WHA Information Center, 5,071 surgeries were performed in 2019 in Wisconsin hospitals or free-standing ambulatory surgery centers for malignant skin cancer removal.



Use sunscreen and wear a hat to help prevent overexposure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [good advice](#).

Enjoy the summer and be safe in the sun!

Member Quality Spotlight: Flambeau Hospital, Park Falls

Care Pathway Succeeds in Decreasing Hospital Readmissions

Special Note: Many WHA members proud of their quality improvement efforts had prepared special poster presentations that were to be displayed in the Capitol Rotunda during WHA's Advocacy Day 2020, which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WHA is pleased to highlight these efforts in today's and future editions of The Valued Voice.

The Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) pathway continues to be successful in reducing COPD 30-day readmissions at Flambeau Hospital. The pathway was rolled out in January 2018 after having more than 20 COPD readmissions in 2017. In 2018 this number was reduced to three readmissions. The total cost for COPD admissions averages \$20,176.35. With reductions in COPD readmissions in 2017, Flambeau hospital achieved an estimated cost reduction of \$342,997.89 in 2018.

The pathway follows a patient with COPD mild/moderate or severe symptoms and addresses respiratory treatments, including oxygen use, medications and home regimens, medication transitions, patient activity, smoking cessation, flu vaccinations, discharge information, post-hospital follow up, use of a dyspnea scale and patient education. This year's focus was on post-hospital follow up.

The COPD educator follows COPD patients for several weeks after hospitalization, depending on the patient's needs and health status. If a patient is stable, they are contacted after one week and then again in a month after hospital discharge. There are more fragile patients who are contacted weekly until they are stable. There are also some who receive a home visit by the COPD educator, depending on the patient and the severity of the COPD. The outreach and management post discharge are unique and individualized.

The COPD educator has been working with insurance companies and home care companies to provide patients with special equipment and treatments at home. She continues to follow up with patients to make sure lung/respiratory tests are completed so they can qualify for pulmonary rehabilitation services.

Reaction from Local State Legislators:



Rep. Beth Meyers

"Flambeau's ingenuity and innovation to provide special care for their rural community is not just an example for rural health care, it's an example for the rest of the state. I am proud that we have thought and practice health care leaders like Kim Bortz and her team in my district."

– State Assembly Representative Beth Meyers (D-Bayfield)



Sen. Janet Bewley

"Flambeau Hospital's achievement in reducing hospital readmissions positively impacts the health care system as a whole. Wisconsin's top-ranking health care is a result of the collaborative effort of a dedicated team of professionals, and a regulatory environment that allows and encourages innovation. Congrats to Flambeau for being a featured quality project by the Wisconsin Hospital Association!"

– State Senate Minority Leader Janet Bewley (D-Mason)

Creating a Quality Care Pathway for COPD Which Reduces Readmission Rates

FLAMBEAU HOSPITAL
Park Falls, WI

Flambeau Hospital
A Service of Marshfield Clinic and Ministry Health Care

COPD Overview
COPD is a progressive lung disease that causes breathing difficulties, coughing with phlegm, and chest tightness. It is the leading cause of death in the United States. COPD is caused by long-term exposure to irritants that damage the lungs and airways. The most common cause is cigarette smoking. Other causes include air pollution, dust, and chemical fumes.

The Pathway
The COPD pathway is a multidisciplinary approach to care for patients with COPD. The focus is on reducing the burden of COPD through a coordinated, evidence-based, patient-centered approach. The pathway includes: 1. Sign assignment, patient receives assignment to pathway based on COPD diagnosis. 2. Daily rounding includes multidisciplinary approach. 3. Daily rounding includes multidisciplinary approach. 4. Daily rounding includes multidisciplinary approach. 5. Discharge remains the ultimate goal. 6. Pharmacy consultation aids in discharge process.

COPD Readmissions
COPD readmissions are a significant burden on the healthcare system. The pathway aims to reduce readmissions by providing comprehensive care and support to patients.

COPD Pathway Success
The pathway has been successful in reducing COPD 30-day readmissions at Flambeau Hospital. The pathway was rolled out in January 2018 after having more than 20 COPD readmissions in 2017. In 2018 this number was reduced to three readmissions.

Conclusions
The pathway has been successful in reducing COPD 30-day readmissions at Flambeau Hospital. The pathway was rolled out in January 2018 after having more than 20 COPD readmissions in 2017. In 2018 this number was reduced to three readmissions.

Other Tools + Resources
The pathway includes various tools and resources to support patient care and education. These include patient education materials, assessment tools, and communication tools.

Pharmacy Consultation
Pharmacy consultation is a key component of the pathway, ensuring that patients receive appropriate medication therapy and are educated on proper medication use.

Respiratory Care
Respiratory care is a key component of the pathway, ensuring that patients receive appropriate respiratory therapy and are educated on proper use of respiratory equipment.

For more information contact: Kim Bortz, Senior Director of Quality, Flambeau Hospital 715.762.7510 bortz.kimberly@marshfieldclinic.org

Click on image to enlarge this poster presentation

The COPD educator also facilitates the very popular COPD community support group, the "Better Breathers Club" that meets monthly. The program is promoted through social media, local papers, radio and the COPD educator reaches out to COPD patients recently discharged from the hospital. Once the core group was established, it also spread further by word of mouth.

The multidisciplinary approach of the pathway and the post-hospital focus has proven to reduce COPD readmissions at Flambeau Hospital, providing best practice care to all COPD patients both in and out of the hospital. The team's next focus will be to look at incorporating pneumonia into the pathway by adapting it to a respiratory pathway to broaden the scope of the COPD pathway. The COPD educator will also begin to follow pneumonia patients post hospitalization as well.

The Executive Director, Warren Von Ehren, Gets to Work

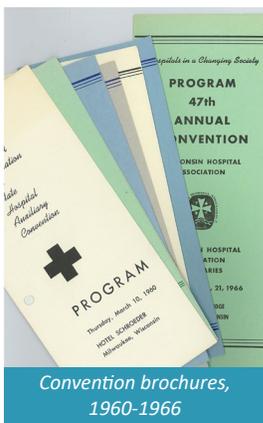


Warren Von Ehren, 1960

Warren Von Ehren worked half-time in March 1960, getting settled in Madison with an office and the immediate staff he needed. Beginning to work full-time in April brought orientation to Madison and the beginning of a new *Wisconsin Hospitals*, the official publication of the WHA. It became a monthly newsletter and replaced the former periodic publication.

Von Ehren began to meet with WHA's members, allied associations and other groups. His plan was to represent the association at meetings with other organizations in the health care services field.

"It will be my aim to see developed, with your help, a dynamic and progressive State Hospital Association program, with the ultimate goal of helping each hospital in the State serve its community better," Von Ehren stated in the May 1960 *Wisconsin Hospitals* edition.



Convention brochures, 1960-1966

Von Ehren worked diligently to create annual conventions during the 1960s to bring the members together to learn, advocate and collaborate. He also

worked to inspire strong leadership through officer, trustee and committee participation.



WHA's 1963 Board of Trustees and Area Council President
(See page 31 of [this document](#) for a list of those in the photo.)

Click to see a [document of board rosters](#), committees and convention wrap-ups (with photos) from 1960-1966.

Conventions had a President's Reception with a formal receiving line. Shown in the receiving line are left to right: Martin H. Albrecht, Assistant Superintendent, University Hospitals, Madison, President; his daughter, Nancy, a Registered Nurse at University Hospitals; Harold C. Guntner, Administrator, Memorial Hospital, Menomonie, who was installed as President of WHA at the 44th Annual Convention, and Mrs. Guntner, who were honored at the President's Reception; Mrs. Robert L. Jones, Green Bay, State Auxiliary Leader; and the Right Reverend Monsignor Edmund J. Goebel, Director of Hospitals, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, and a Past President of WHA.



1963 Convention Banquet



Today's Events are Tomorrow's History: Wisconsin Historical Society Seeks Hospital COVID-19 Stories & Artifacts



As the COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented demands on our state's hospitals and health systems, the Wisconsin Historical Society is asking hospitals to consider how various resources being used every day could be viewed in the future as powerful historical artifacts. As the Society mentioned in conversations with WHA about

this project, "just as we are looking back at the 1918 influenza epidemic for insights today, observers in the future will want to know what we experienced in 2020."



The Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI

The Society wants to collect objects and stories that speak to the professional demands of fighting the pandemic, as well as the personal challenges of coping with stress, uncertainty and isolation. They are interested in clothing and PPE worn by nursing, medical and maintenance staff; instruments used to diagnose and treat patients (touch free thermometers, ventilators, etc.); and objects used to maintain morale and communicate with patients, family members, and the public (signs, decorated face shields, superhero T-shirts, etc.). The Society is also interested in digital or paper documents that show procedures and concerns, photographs of people or events and voice or video recordings that capture the first few months of the pandemic.

If you had a memorable experience responding to the pandemic and can think of an artifact, photo or document that expresses that moment, the Society would like to hear about it. Please send questions or suggestions to David Driscoll, the Society's Curator of Economic History, at david.driscoll@wisconsinhistory.org.

The Society also invites participation in the [COVID-19 Journal Project](#) – an initiative to help capture history of the moment similar to how the Society gave journals to Wisconsin's Civil War soldiers stationed at Camp Randall in 1861.

(WHA Board Meets to Discuss COVID-19, Upcoming State Budget Challenges. . . continued from page 1)

impact on reducing transmission. Dr. Kaufman cautioned that this would not necessarily signal an end to the pandemic, however, as the return to cooler weather in the fall could once again increase the possibility of further spread.

COVID-19 testing resources and processes continue as important and challenging issues for the state's hospitals and health systems, especially as the state pursues its aggressive plan of testing expansion. The Board discussed WHA's efforts to work with the state on seeking out additional testing supplies and improving coordination among the state, local governments, public health agencies and hospitals.

The Board also received an update on the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee's (SDMAC) activity. Dr. Kaufman, a member of SDMAC, provided a summary of activities thus far, including the SDMAC's growing interest and spread into resource allocation, and board members shared their own involvement in other state-organized groups related to the pandemic.

Preparing for the next biennial state budget

The Board discussed the challenges state government will likely face in the upcoming 2021-23 biennial state budget, which Governor Tony Evers' administration will begin crafting in earnest later this summer. Public statements from Governor Evers and revenue reports from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau have shown that the short-term economic environment will be very challenging, with a combination of an estimated \$2 billion shortfall in state revenue, continued double-digit unemployment and large increases in the state's Medicaid population creating significant headwinds for all state funding.

WHA hospital leaders have already helped start conversations with policymakers about the COVID-19 crisis' effects on health care by participating in 19 WHA-organized virtual roundtables with federal and state elected officials. WHA staff noted that this early engagement not only helps address misunderstandings about why certain health care services were delayed for many people, but also informs elected officials about the major challenges health care faces due to reacting to the crisis and what government can do to help hospitals and systems take care of their patients.

The next regular WHA Board meeting is scheduled for October.