

IN THIS ISSUE

Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center COVID-19 Dashboard Viewed One Million Times 1

New CMS Medicare Certification will Further Enhance WHA Information Center Data and Analytics 1

WHA Advocacy Day *In Review* 2

WHAIC Data Show Effects of COVID-19 on State Hospitals..... 2

WHA Information Center Virtual Brown Bag Lunch Series: How has COVID-19 Impacted Your Facility? 3

State Physician Leaders Urge Vaccination Against COVID-19 in Joint Letter..... 3

Act 10 Interstate Licensure Webinar Available Online 4

Boatwright Reflects on Service to SSM Health and WHA. Looks Ahead to HSHS.. 5

Bob Duncan of Children’s Wisconsin Named to Medicaid CHIP Commission.... 7

RWHC to Host First Health and Community Economic Development Webinar 7

Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: May is Mental Health Month..... 8

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- May 10**
Community Benefits and Special Considerations for COVID-19 Webinar
- May 12**
Social Media for Governing Boards: Opportunities and Pitfalls Webinar
- May 19**
Employing AI to Solve Specific Tasks & Drive RCM Webinar

Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center COVID-19 Dashboard Viewed One Million Times

Health system data underscores pandemic’s toll on state and its people

In a milestone reflecting the still intense interest in reliable, real-time data about COVID-19 in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) [online COVID-19 dashboard](#) recently logged one million views in just over a year since its launch in April 2020. In those 13 months, the dashboard has averaged 2,589 views per day.

Recognizing early on the lack of data needed to fight COVID-19, WHAIC quickly developed its dashboard, which for over a year now has served as a daily and reliable source of information for policymakers, the media and the general public. Referenced in hundreds of statewide news stories every month, WHAIC’s COVID-19 dashboard draws upon information from Wisconsin’s seven Health Care Emergency Readiness Coalitions and translates the data into accurate and easy-to-understand visualizations of COVID-19 hospitalization, testing, case, death and supply capacity data. The dashboard informs key decision-making by helping users understand the current state of the pandemic, its impact on the health care system and its changing intensity statewide and regionally and how all these measures trend over time.

“The Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center made a commitment very early in the pandemic to put data to good use in our state’s fight against COVID-19,” said Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) President and CEO Eric Borgerding. “Entirely resourced by WHAIC, the dashboard requires a significant investment of technological resources and staff time every day, roughly 1,200 hours thus far

(continued on page 9)

New CMS Medicare Certification will Further Enhance WHA Information Center Data and Analytics

The Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) has passed the Phase 2 requirements related to Data Security and Corrections and Appeals and has met the requirements to be compliant under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Qualified Entity Certification Program (QCEP). What does this mean? The QCEP enables organizations like WHAIC to receive Medicare Parts A and B claims data and Part D prescription drug event data for use in evaluating provider performance. WHAIC is one of only 32 organizations in the country, and the only hospital association, to receive this designation.



“This data will truly enhance our already robust data sets,” said WHAIC Vice President Jennifer Mueller. “Meeting the rigorous standards of the QCEP is also a feather in the cap of the Information Center, and it is a testament to our ability to handle big data in a very secure and compliant environment.”

WHAIC will continue to work on the final steps in the QCEP process and expects to be in receipt of this new data in the coming months.

WHA Advocacy Day In Review

Following past Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Advocacy Day in-person events, attendees received a retrospective publication featuring photos of the smiling faces of hundreds of WHA members gathered in Madison eager to learn and engage on timely topics important to the success of hospitals and health systems in Wisconsin. While this year's publication lacks the group photos of past issues, it nonetheless captures the meaningful connections and critical discussions that make WHA Advocacy Day special.

Click [here](#) to view the 2021 Advocacy Day *In Review*.



WHAIC Data Show Effects of COVID-19 on State Hospitals

Part Two: Non-Emergent Care Shutdown (April 1 – June 30, 2020)

The Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) has quantified and documented the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Wisconsin's health care system in a [new report](#) published last week.

This week, *The Valued Voice* focuses on the shutdown of non-emergent care by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the spring of 2020. The goal of this shutdown was to contain virus spread and to preserve capacity for an expected surge of patients. Hospitals and health systems canceled or postponed diagnostic tests, health screenings and surgeries in response.

Why the Federally Directed Shutdown:

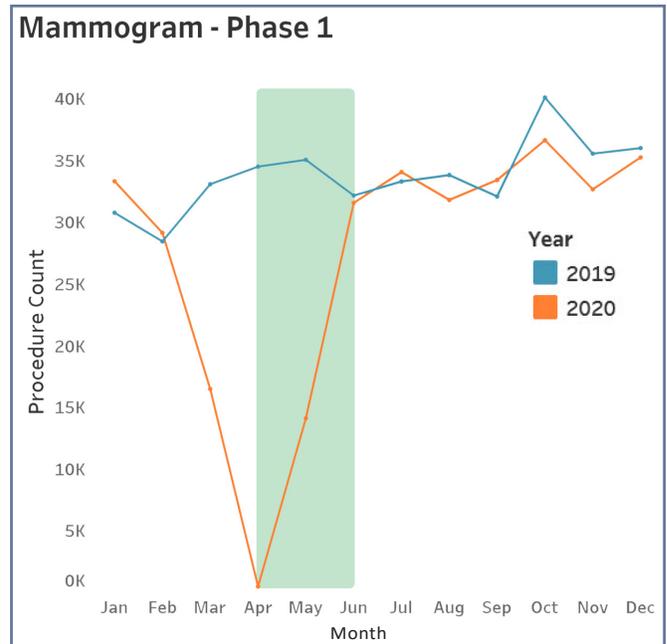
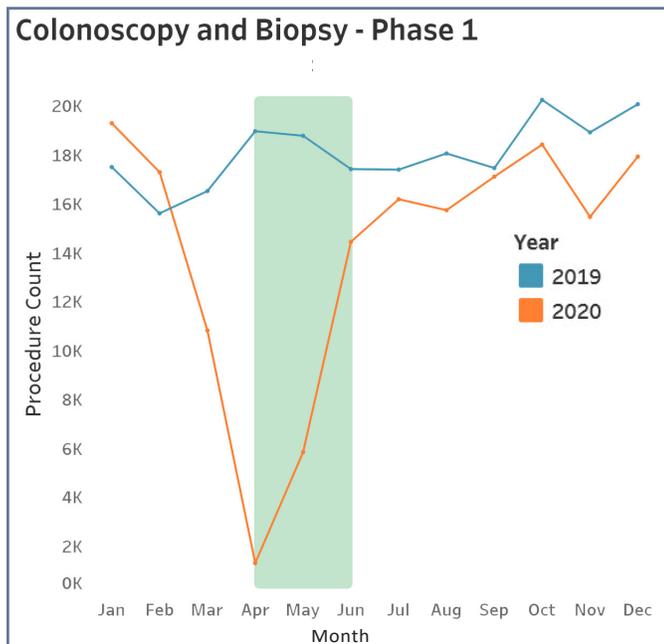
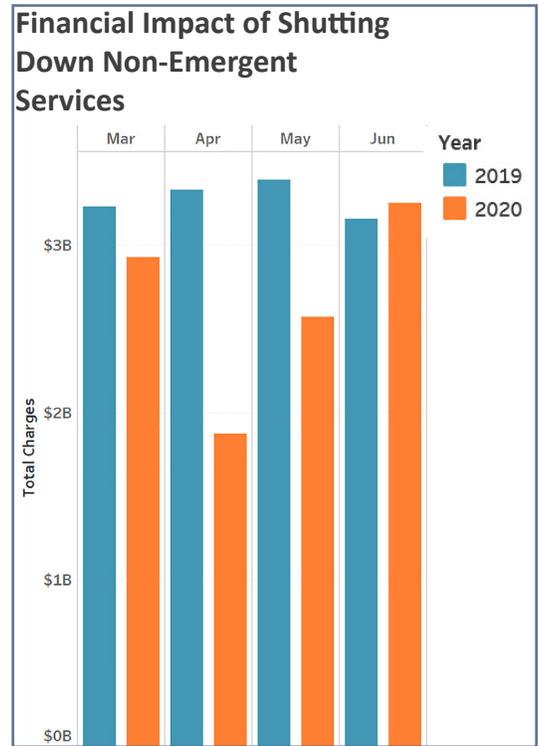
- Shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff
- Proactive measure to stop virus spread
- Opening hospital beds for anticipated case surge

What Happened:

- Inpatient activity down 19% compared to 2019
- Outpatient surgeries and procedures down 45% compared to 2019
- Emergency department visits down 30% compared to 2019

Health Impact: Non-emergent procedures and preventive health care delayed

Hospital Impact: \$2.5 billion in lost revenue for Wisconsin hospitals



WHA Information Center Virtual Brown Bag Lunch Series: How has COVID-19 Impacted Your Facility?

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted health care facilities and patient care in dramatic and measurable ways. The Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) is offering a members-only webinar to help users understand how to use the COVID-19 Impact Dashboard to compare and contrast year-over-year data related to 2019 and 2020 charges and volumes.

[How Has COVID-19 Impacted Your Facility? A Year-Over-Year Comparison](#)

Wednesday, May 19

12 noon – 12:30 p.m.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

State Physician Leaders Urge Vaccination Against COVID-19 in Joint Letter

The following letter signed by 33 health system and hospital physician leaders representing 110 Wisconsin hospitals encouraging vaccination for all eligible Wisconsinites was sent to statewide media outlets this week. The Wisconsin Hospital Association thanks member hospitals that helped formulate this message and encourages hospitals and health systems to share it with their staff and stakeholders. An online version of this letter is available [here](#).

May 6, 2021

Wisconsin Physician Leaders: Vaccination is Key to Moving Past COVID-19

The following important message on COVID-19 vaccinations is made on behalf of physician chief medical officers of Wisconsin health systems and hospitals.

COVID-19 has been with us now for more than a year. We've been through a lot together—illness, death, economic hardship and the disruption of the lives we cherish, including the close personal interactions that we as humans need to thrive. And while we've shown collective resolve in fighting the disease and adapting to its threat, what we all really crave is getting back to the people and things we miss. Vaccines offer us precisely that hope.

As physicians and health care providers, we've devoted our lives to caring for others. It is our responsibility to review medical studies and weigh risks and benefits to recommend the best treatments to protect the health of our patients. Based on our medical training and judgement, we believe the science and safety behind the COVID-19 vaccines is sound, and we encourage our patients and others to get a COVID vaccine whenever and wherever available in your community.

The dramatic rise of COVID cases in Wisconsin in late 2020 posed many threats to our state and its people. Wisconsinites responded appropriately by adopting recommended mitigation behaviors—wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands—and successfully reversed the COVID surge. And yet, COVID remains with us, stubbornly so. Vaccination offers us the best chance to continue reducing COVID's grip on our daily lives.

Our voices, we hope, will provide encouragement to anyone who has questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Important, too, are the perspectives of those you know, love and trust who have sought and safely received a COVID-19 vaccine. Why did they do so? What future are they looking forward to now that they are protected against contracting or being severely sickened by COVID? We hope you will join them and us on this path back to the activities and togetherness we long for.

Christopher G Green, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Wisconsin Hospital Association

Gary Stuck, DO, FAAFP
Chief Medical Officer
Advocate Aurora Health

John Misa, MD
Interim Chief Medical Officer
Allina Health System

Gregory Brusko, DO, MMM, FACOS
Chief Clinical Officer
Ascension Wisconsin

Ryan Andrews, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Aspirus Wausau Hospital

Brian Johnson, MD, FACP
Chief Medical Officer
Aurora BayCare Medical Center

Cynthia Lasecki, MD, FAAFP
Chief Medical Officer
Bellin Health System

Esteban Miller, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Black River Memorial Hospital, Inc.

Blaise P Vitale
Family Physician
Burnett Medical Center

(continued on page 4)

(State Physician Leaders Urge Vaccination Against COVID-19 in Joint Letter . . . continued from page 3)

Michael Gutzeit, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Children's Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Hospital

James Heise, MD, MBA
CMO
Door County Medical Center

Bill Cannon
Medical Director Fort Medical Group
Fort HealthCare

Jonathon D. Truwit, MD
Enterprise CMO and Sr. Admin. Dean
Froedtert & the Medical College of
Wisconsin - Froedtert Hospital

Robyn Borge, MD
Chief of Medical/Clinical Staff
Gundersen Health System

Edgar (Ted) Collison
Chief Physician Executive
HSHS Wisconsin

William Melms, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Marshfield Clinic Health System

Joseph Krien, MD
Regional Chair of Practice
Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan
Healthcare in La Crosse

Richard Helmers, MD
Regional Vice President
Mayo Clinic Health System - Northwest
Wisconsin Region

Tim Bjelland, DO
VP/CMO
Mile Bluff Medical Center

Robert Gouthro, MD
Chief Medical Officer
North Central Health Care

Matthew Niesen, MD
Chief of Staff
Prairie Ridge Health

Elizabeth Baker, DPM
Chief Medical Officer
Reedsburg Area Medical Center

Jerry Halverson, MD, FACPpsych, DFAPA
Chief Medical Officer
Rogers Memorial Hospital, Inc.

Kent Kramer, MD
Vice President of Medical Affairs
Southwest Health

Mark Van Etten, MD
Medical Director/Chief of Staff
Spooner Health

Amy Franta, MD
SSM Health Regional CMO
SSM Health

Aaron Schwaab, MD, FACS
General Surgeon and Chief Medical
Officer
Stoughton Health

Mark Cockley, MD
Chief Clinical Officer
ThedaCare

Jeffrey Cavaness, MD
President, Tomah Health Medical Staff
Tomah Health

Pam Wetzel, MD
Chief Medical Officer
UnityPoint Health

Aimee Becker, MD, MBA
Chief Medical Officer
University Hospital

Sara Fox, MD
VP-Medical Services Primary Care
Upland Hills Health, Inc.

Jeffrey Lawrence, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon/Chief of Staff
Vernon Memorial Healthcare

Act 10 Interstate Licensure Webinar Available Online

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) hosted a webinar on the implications of the Act 10 interstate licensure provisions on state hospitals on May 5. WHA General Counsel Matthew Stanford and Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk provided an update on the recent legislation to 140 Wisconsin hospital members in an online training session that was recorded and is now available on the [WHA On-Demand Learning Center](#). The webinar can be found under "Videos and Recorded Webinars."

Boatwright Reflects on Service to SSM Health and WHA, Looks Ahead to HSHS

Member participation “makes WHA the strongest hospital association in the country.”



Damond Boatwright

SSM Health Wisconsin's Regional President and Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Board Member Damond Boatwright accepted the CEO position at Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) in March. In his new role at HSHS, based in Springfield, Ill., Boatwright will oversee system operations of 15 hospitals, numerous community-based health centers and clinics that employ nearly 2,300 physician partners and more than 13,000 associates in Wisconsin.

Before his departure from SSM, *The Valued Voice* asked Boatwright, who has been a member of the WHA board of directors since 2015 and served as board chair in 2019, to reflect on his accomplishments at SSM and to share his thoughts on the importance of advocacy on behalf of the state's hospitals and health systems.

Boatwright received [WHA's Distinguished Service Award](#) in 2020 for his exemplary commitment to both WHA and the communities it serves and the 2021 [WHA Advocacy All Star Award](#) at this year's WHA Advocacy Day in April.

The Valued Voice:

What goals did you prioritize upon your arrival at SSM in 2014, and what progress did you make toward them?

Boatwright:

When I arrived in Wisconsin, the first time in my life along with my family, I wanted to embrace the opportunity to live and work in this great state. I had a strong feeling there was more to love than cheese, beer and brats. Professionally, my priority was to understand the history, culture, the practices and norms of our organization. In my humble opinion, it is difficult to add value to something if you have no idea what the current value is.

Integrating disparate parts of what is now our Integrated (Care) Delivery Network was a priority. Part of this work meant personally and professionally seeking to understand before recommending any changes, connecting with others and developing deep friendships and working relationships that would facilitate that integration.

Personally, coming to Wisconsin and making it my home meant finding and creating a welcoming community for my family where we would not just fit in, but flourish as individuals.

I truly hope that my time here reflects that the mission was accomplished!

The Valued Voice:

You have served as a leader not only to SSM, but to Wisconsin's health care system more broadly as a WHA board member and officer as well as through service on key WHA committees. Why do you feel it is important to lean in so intently on collaborative industry initiatives?

Boatwright:

One of the first things I was excited to discover in Wisconsin was an existing culture of cooperation and collaboration among the health care systems across our state—rural and urban; systems and independent hospitals; academic medical centers and community hospitals. We truly have the same goal—helping our patients and all Wisconsinites build healthier lives. Because our systems are interwoven in many ways, collaborating means providing better care and improving the quality of life for all Wisconsinites. To accomplish this, I truly believe that we are stronger together.

The Valued Voice:

Having served in a number of states, what advice do you have to hospital leaders for engaging with their state hospital associations? And why is member participation so important to WHA's work?

Boatwright:

My advice to hospital and health system leaders is to get involved and stay involved. I once heard Assembly Speaker Robin Vos say, "Success in government happens when people show up and participate at all levels... state, county, city, local, etc." Member participation is what makes, in my opinion, the Wisconsin Hospital Association the strongest hospital association in the country. It's through all of our collaboration and participation that we can enact necessary changes that benefit our organizations, our patients and our state as a whole.

The Valued Voice:

SSM received this year's WHA Advocacy All Star Award, and you chair WHA's Advocacy Committee. Tell us about the role you feel advocacy plays in maintaining and extending health care excellence?

(continued on page 6)

Boatwright:

Receiving this recognition is incredibly meaningful to me and to our organization. We know the value and importance advocacy plays in making meaningful, positive changes for not just our health organizations, but for our patients and our communities.

While we all learned many valuable lessons over the past year, we learned that even in the most uncertain times, our health care workers are true heroes. As Dr. Brian Calinawagan wrote, “We, the healthcare workers are NOT your frontline any longer. We are your LAST LINE OF DEFENSE.” This is an accurate reflection of where we are today. It is through our grassroots advocacy work that we can influence policy that supports the physical, mental and emotional health of our teams.

Additionally, it is through our advocacy that we can lift up our public health partners, ensuring that together hospitals and public health departments throughout the state can and do coordinate efforts with maximum efficiency and effectiveness to ensure the health and safety of our communities.

I will continue to advocate for a more inclusive, fair and just business environment where any individual who has the capacity and capability to work, is motivated to seek out employment. But not just find a job, but a job that truly values their contribution and allows them to fulfill their true potential.

Bringing vaccine doses to our communities in efficient and equitable ways is vital to finding our way out of this pandemic. We can all work together to ensure that the most vulnerable and at-risk community members are given access to vaccines.

As we advocate for our organizations, we must remember to find common ground with one another, and expand that unifying bond to our elected and appointed leaders. We are stronger as One Wisconsin, and I wish that the idea that we are One Wisconsin is bigger than any one party, class, race or other secular affiliation.

The Valued Voice:

How has COVID-19 and its effects on the state’s health system influenced the advocacy that needs to be done on behalf of hospitals and health systems?

Boatwright:

The pandemic taught us the importance of coming together to do the right thing for everyone, something that the Wisconsin Hospital Association has helped our state’s hospitals and health systems do for 100 years.

The pandemic highlighted challenges and disparities health care systems have faced for quite some time. We continue to have public health gaps that health providers are expected to fill but are not equipped to do so.

We now have an opportunity to prepare for the next inevitable pandemic by focusing our efforts on measures that will bring equitable care to our communities. We can also work as one hospital association in advocating for strong public health capabilities throughout the state.

The Valued Voice:

You speak often of servant leadership. What has this meant to you as you’ve risen through the ranks of health care management, and how do you envision continuing this philosophy at HSHS?

Boatwright:

I was blessed to have a wonderful servant leader as my mentor when I began my career in health care named Frank DeMarco. Frank showed me that truly the best way to lead is to serve those around you. He always told me that great leaders listen first to their teams, then work to solve the problems that you hear about.

In addition to shaping my leadership style using Frank’s philosophy, I’ve also found much comfort in the words of Winston Churchill, who once remarked, “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” It has truly been an honor to give what little talents and leadership skills I have to SSM Health and the Wisconsin Hospital Association these past seven years.

Knowing that HSHS is a Catholic Health Care organization with similar values and a similar mission inspired by St. Francis of Assisi helped me make the difficult decision to transition from SSM Health to HSHS. It also helped to know that I will still have responsibility and connection in Wisconsin through the high-quality facilities and care HSHS provides in northern Wisconsin.

GOD bless and good health to all.



WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding presents SSM Health Regional President Damond Boatwright with WHA's 2021 Advocacy All-Star Award for SSM Health's dedication to grassroots advocacy.

Bob Duncan of Children's Wisconsin Named to Medicaid CHIP Commission



Children's Wisconsin executive vice president Bob Duncan has been appointed by Gene Dodaro, the comptroller general of the United States and head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office as one of five new members to the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC).

Duncan oversees the strategic contracting for Children's systems of care and population health and the development of value-based contracts. He is also the president of Children's Community Health Plan, which insures individuals with BadgerCare Plus coverage and those on the individual marketplace, and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. Duncan is also a regular participant in WHA's Advocacy Day.

"Policymakers rely on MACPAC's thoughtful suggestions concerning Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program," Dodaro said. "We had a number of excellent candidates interested in serving on the commission this year, and I'm very pleased to announce today's five new appointments and two reappointments, as well as the naming of a chair and vice chair."

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 established MACPAC to review Medicaid and CHIP access and payment policies and to advise Congress on issues affecting Medicaid and CHIP. The Act directs the Comptroller General to appoint MACPAC's members.

RWHC to Host First Health and Community Economic Development Webinar

The Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative will host a complimentary webinar focused on housing and hospitals in Wisconsin on May 25.



This webinar will answer the following questions:

- What housing issues are facing rural Wisconsin?
- How do we engage the community around housing issues?
- What has worked to combat housing issues in rural Wisconsin?
- How does housing impact health outcomes?
- How does housing impact health care, including financially?
- How have rural hospitals engaged in their communities to address housing issues?

The target audience for this webinar includes health care employees interested in growing their economic development knowledge around housing. Roles may include but are not limited to CEO, business development, community engagement, community relations, public relations, population health and development. Economic development practitioners interested in learning how to partner with health care institutions to solve local issues such as housing would also benefit from this webinar.

Housing + Hospitals in Rural Wisconsin

Tuesday, May 25

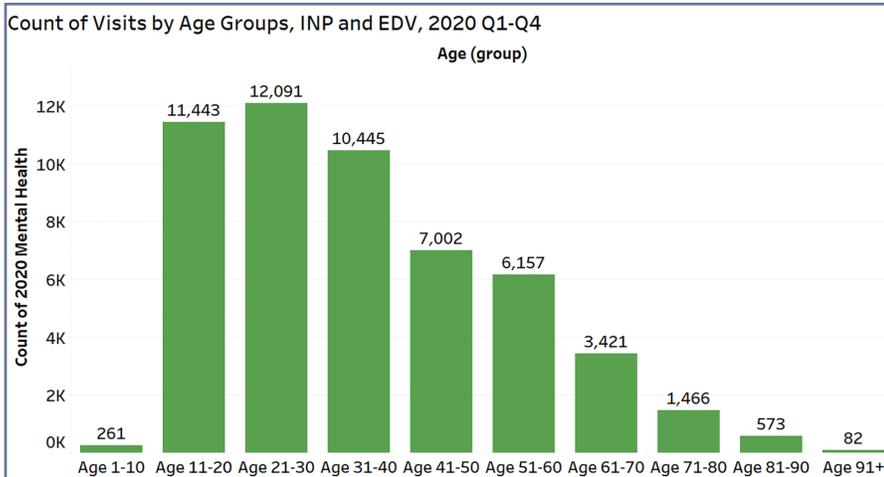
9 – 11 a.m.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).



Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: May is Mental Health Month

With mental health awareness on the rise throughout the world, some may wonder, “What exactly does mental health entail?” According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.” Mental illnesses are the conditions that affect one’s mood, thinking, behavior such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia. Mental illnesses are some of the most common health conditions found in the United States.

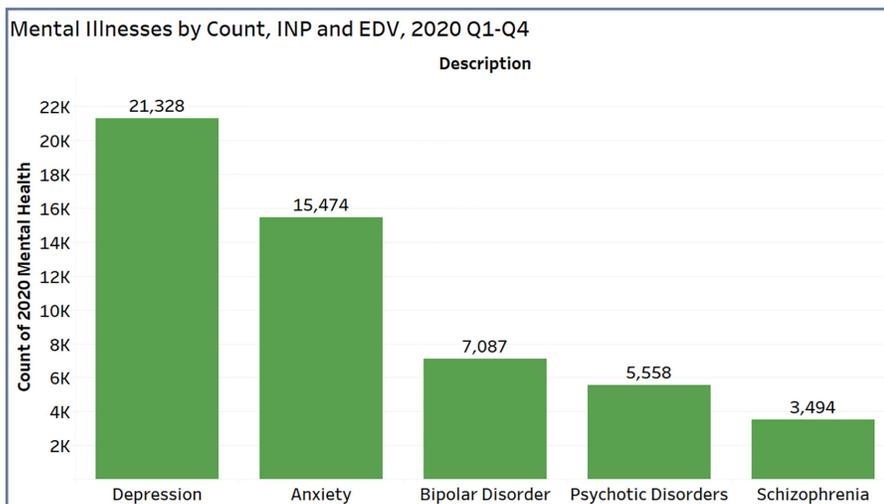


In 2020, the Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC) reported roughly 53,000 inpatient and emergency department visits where mental health was the reason for visit. The average age of a patient was 36 years old. Following the national trend, ages 21-30 recorded the highest visit counts in Wisconsin, trailed closely by ages 11-20. Females had larger visit counts than males, again matching the national and state trends. Milwaukee County had the highest visit counts in the state, with Dane County coming in second.

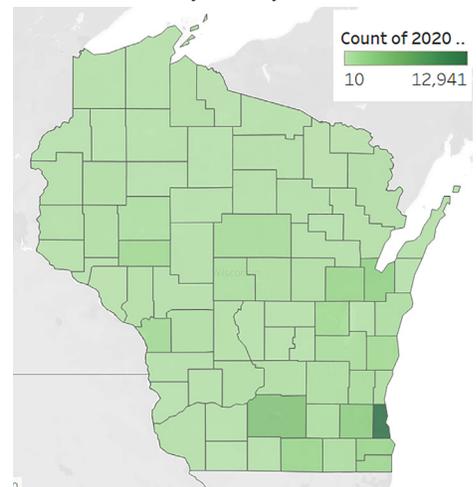
The CDC states that “more than 50% of people will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime. And one-in-five Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.” In Wisconsin specifically, most recent Wisconsin Department of Health Services data show that 18.9% of the total adult population in the state have been diagnosed with a mental illness. National data show that adults ages 18-25 along with individuals who are currently employed full-time have an increasing rate of mental health needs when compared to others.

The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) created some warning signs and symptoms to be on the watch for in adults and adolescence. These include:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite



Count of Visits by County



(Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center COVID-19 Dashboard Viewed One Million Times . . . continued from page 1)

including weekends and holidays, to maintain. It’s more than worth the effort and is one of the many ways we are proud to assist the state’s response to this once-in-a-lifetime challenge.”

The data captured in the WHAIC’s COVID-19 dashboard provides a detailed accounting of the ongoing challenge. A few key milestones and data points from the dashboard tell part of Wisconsin’s COVID story thus far.

Date	Event
April 2, 2020	WHAIC COVID-19 dashboard launched, 35,000 views in first 48 hours. 192 COVID-19 hospitalizations in Wisconsin—lowest one-day figure recorded to date.
Nov. 16, 2020	178 – Largest single-day increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations in Wisconsin.
Nov. 17, 2020	2,277 – Highest, or peak, number of COVID-19 patients being treated in Wisconsin hospitals on one day.
Nov. 19, 2020	113 – Largest single-day decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations in Wisconsin.
March 21, 2021	193 COVID-19 hospitalizations recorded, lowest point since dashboard launch, reflecting a 91% decrease since Nov. 17 peak.
April 30, 2021	WHAIC COVID-19 dashboard logs one million views, averaging 2,589 views per day.

Sadly, the dashboard also tracks deaths of Wisconsinites due to COVID-19. Much more than a number, the nearly 7,000 family members, friends and loved ones lost to this disease reflect the true toll COVID has taken on Wisconsin, underscoring the continued resolve needed to beat the virus.

Follow Us



[@WIHospitalAssociation](#)



[@WIHospitalAssn](#)



[@Wisconsin Hospital Association](#)