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## EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- January 6**  
*Prepare for 2021 Employer Reporting: 1094C/1095C*  
Webinar
- January 26**  
*Mega Healthcare Conference*  
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells
- Open Until 1/31/22**  
*Chargemaster Coding Updates and Implementation for 2022*  
Self-study module series

## U.S. Senate Eliminates Punitive DSH Cuts in “Build Back Better”

On Dec. 11, the United States Senate Finance Committee unveiled an updated version of [parts of the Build Back Better Act](#). Among the most notable changes, the bill has removed the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) cuts of 12.5% for the 12 states that have not fully expanded Medicaid.

As covered in a previous edition of *The Valued Voice*, WHA had expressed strong concerns to the Wisconsin congressional delegation over these [punitive and misguided cuts](#). While Wisconsin would not have been as impacted by these cuts as other non-expansion states, given its relatively low use of the Medicaid DSH program in comparison to other states, WHA nevertheless objected over this policy that would punish hospitals despite them having no control over whether their states accept Medicaid expansion.

WHA also noted that “this proposal would unfairly punish Wisconsin—even though it has no coverage gap—by limiting our future flexibility should our state decide to maximize our state DSH contributions like many other states do,” in a letter to Wisconsin’s congressional delegation health care staff back in November.

Democratic Senators Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock from Georgia, a state projected to lose a significant amount of DSH funding should the cuts have taken effect, wrote a [letter](#) to House and Senate leaders last month warning against imposing additional financial constraints on hospitals during the challenging COVID pandemic.

It is unknown whether the Senate intends to act on its version of the Build Back Better Act prior to the end of 2022, but WHA is continuing to follow the issue closely. Contact WHA Vice President of Federal and State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.

## HHS Announces Phase 4 Provider Relief Funds

On Dec. 14, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced its preliminary Phase 4 Provider Relief Payments for providers who applied in October. HHS released a [state-by-state breakdown](#) showing 1,067 Wisconsin health care providers would be awarded a total of \$164,656,519 in funding. Altogether, nearly \$9 billion is being awarded. This comes on the heels of approximately \$7.5 billion being awarded via [rural American Rescue Plan Act payments](#) just before Thanksgiving.

According to the American Hospital Association, HHS has made it through approximately 75% of the applications and is expected to begin disbursing funds on Dec. 16. It expects to make it through the remainder of applications and disbursements for Phase 4 in 2022.

According to HHS, the [payout formula](#) dictates that 75% of Phase 4 funding be distributed based on COVID-related expenses and decreased revenue hospitals experienced covering the period of July 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021. The remaining

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*(HHS Announces Phase 4 Provider Relief Funds . . . continued from page 1)*

25% of awards are based on bonus payments for serving Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP patients. [Hospitals receiving a payment must attest via the HHS PRF portal within 90 days of receiving payment.](#)

WHA will continue to advocate for HHS to disburse the remaining Provider Relief Funds and support the [Provider Relief Fund Improvement Act](#), as covered in a [past edition of \*The Valued Voice\*](#).

Contact WHA Vice President of Federal and State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.

## GUEST COLUMN

### **The War for Talent in Health Care: Strategies to Reduce Labor Needs and Keep Up with Demand**

*Insights from WHA premier partner M3*

While many industries have just started to feel the workforce shortage in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue is nothing new to health care providers. The shortage was a significant challenge pre-pandemic, but COVID-19 has escalated the situation into a full-blown crisis. WHA premier partner M3 has compiled strategies, efficiencies and insights into how to address this issue. Click [here](#) for M3's full report.



## **Harvard Business School Club of Wisconsin Honors Health System Leaders**

*Five Wisconsin health care CEOs named "Business Leader of the Year"*

The Harvard Business School Club of Wisconsin awarded the CEOs of five Wisconsin Health Systems with its Wisconsin Business Leader of the Year Award in a virtual event on Dec. 13.

The five health system CEOs receiving the Harvard Business School Club of Wisconsin award are:

- Cathy Jacobson, president and CEO of Froedtert Health
- Alan Kaplan, CEO of UW Health
- Bernie Sherry, CEO of Ascension Wisconsin
- Jim Skogsbergh, president and CEO of Advocate Aurora Health
- Chris Woleske, president and CEO of Bellin Health System



Cathy Jacobson



Alan Kaplan



Bernie Sherry



Jim Skogsbergh



Chris Woleske

It is the first time that the club has awarded the honor to more than one recipient, an acknowledgment of the collaboration between the state's health care leaders in responding to and fighting the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. Lisa Write, vice president of the Wisconsin Business Leader of the Year Program, noted that an "extensive list" of deserving health care organization executives could have been chosen for this year's award, but that those recognized had the greatest reach in caring for Wisconsinites during the pandemic.

WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding hosted a discussion with the award recipients in conjunction with the award announcement. Award recipients reflected on the pandemic and the challenges it has presented and reaffirmed their commitments to the patients, families and communities they serve.

## Marshfield Clinic Health System's Mark Bugher Receives WHA Trustee Award

WHA has honored Marshfield Clinic Health System Board Chair Mark Bugher with the 2021 Trustee Award. WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding presented the award to Bugher at the system's board meeting, held virtually on Dec. 14.



For more than 60 years, the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) has recognized outstanding member trustees, those who excel and make an exemplary commitment to his or her hospital and community.

In presenting the award to Bugher, Borgerding said, "Wisconsin hospitals consistently deliver some of the highest quality, most accessible care in the country, and given the critical role hospital trustees play in guiding and steering those high-performing systems, you can imagine we had several nominations and some stiff competition. But Mark was a slam-dunk for this selection. It was as though this award was crafted with him in mind."

Bugher has been an influential figure in Wisconsin business, government and health care for more than 30 years. He served as Secretary of Revenue under Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson from October 1988 to 1996. He was then appointed as Secretary of the Department of Administration in 1996. He later spent nearly 15 years as director of the University Research Park, a position he retired from in 2013. Bugher has served on Marshfield Clinic Health System's board of directors since 2012.

In nominating Bugher for WHA's Trustee Award, Marshfield Clinic Health System CEO Susan Turney wrote, "It is obviously a volatile and challenging time in health care. Mark's characteristic steady hand, calm temperament, ability to see all sides of an issue and his wisdom have been indispensable as our organization has navigated this pandemic. Our system board has diverse and passionate voices, and Mark is exceptional at bringing people together to serve the common good."

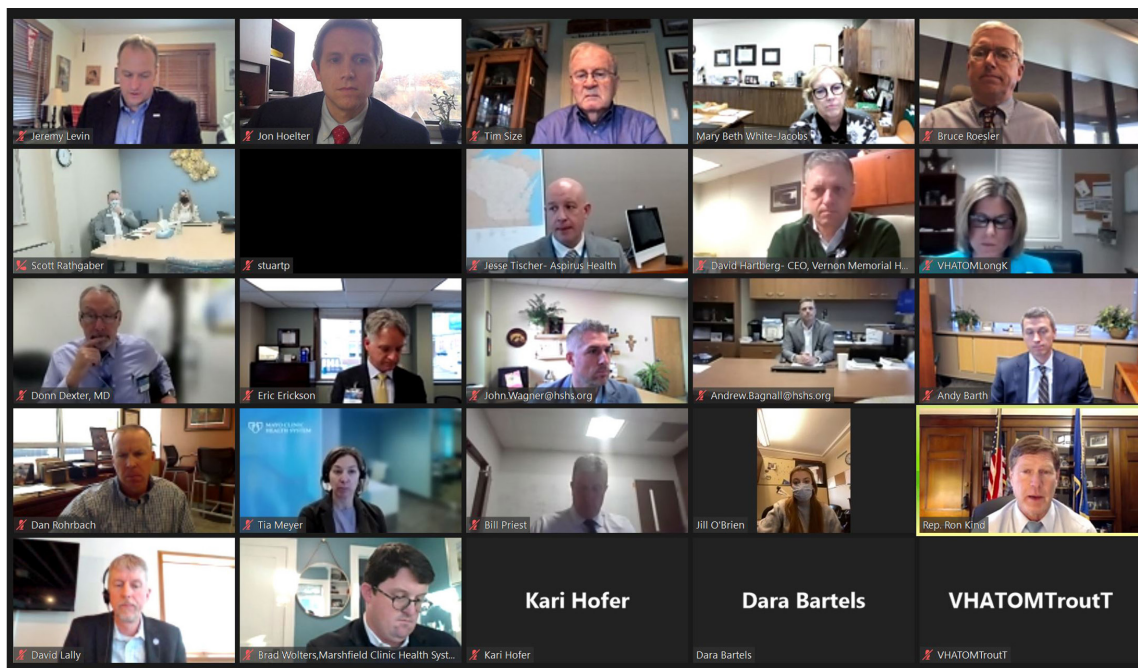
Tweeting congratulations to Bugher, Marshfield Clinic Health System Board Treasurer Dick Leinenkugel noted, "Mark's leadership as the chair of the board is authentic and always keeps the patient and staff in the fore."

As part of his recognition, WHA will donate \$500 to the charity of Bugher's choice.

## Grassroots Spotlight

### Virtual Roundtable with Ron Kind

WHA members met with Congressman Ron Kind on Dec. 14 to discuss the numerous capacity challenges they are facing as COVID-19 continues to surge and his work advocating for federal support for Wisconsin health care staff.





# Grassroots Spotlight

## Rep. Alex Dallman Visits ThedaCare Medical Center-Berlin

On Dec. 13, state Rep. Alex Dallman (R-Green Lake) met with Tammy Bending, vice president of operations for ThedaCare critical access hospitals; Brian Floeter, director of finance, ThedaCare; and Kyle O'Brien, senior vice president of government relations at the Wisconsin Hospital Association during a visit to ThedaCare Medical Center in Berlin.

During the visit, Bending discussed challenges facing hospitals across the state as they treat both COVID and non-COVID patients in their communities, including increased demand for care by area patients who are becoming sick or injured. In addition to workforce challenges, Bending discussed recent insurer actions that have required patients to use a process called "white bagging" to receive infusion medications. Bending described the significant burden this process places on hospitals and the disruption these processes cause to patient care.

With a family background in health care, Dallman has an appreciation for the importance of high-quality, high-value health care in rural Wisconsin communities and how hospitals have invested in advanced technology to offer less invasive surgery, which gets employees back to work more quickly.

"Thank you ThedaCare Medical Center in Berlin and the Wisconsin Hospital Association for allowing me on a tour with you this morning," shared Rep. Dallman on social media following his hospital tour. "I was able to see the new expansion that was added in the spring for emergency services such as a better location for the staff workstation, access to telehealth, a larger trauma room and a decontamination room for chemical accidents. This hospital is an important one for the cities in my district because it is the closest one for about 60,000 people," continued Dallman.



*Rep. Alex Dallman gets a tour of ThedaCare Medical Center-Berlin from ThedaCare's Vice President of Operations Tammy Bending.*

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