

WHA Council on Workforce Development Focuses on Sustaining the Health Care Workforce

Growing, recruiting, retaining and sustaining the health care workforce was the focus of WHA's Council on Workforce Development at their first meeting of 2023.

WHA Vice President of External Affairs Kari Hofer joined the meeting to gain feedback on strategies members are using to promote health care careers, and how WHA could best support and complement the efforts hospitals and health systems might already be making.

Key advice included taking a multi-generational approach that appeals to both new and incumbent members of the workforce: "don't focus too much on recruitment and lose retention." Council members shared the variables important to appealing to a diverse group of workers, such as flexibility, safety, work/life balance and immediate financial rewards.

A statewide approach complementing their internal efforts would be helpful, but council members acknowledged the value of local and regional efforts when sharing their partnerships with health care coalitions, schools and organizations like HOSA – Future Health Professionals (high school health occupations association) to promote health care professions.

Following the theme of resources for recruitment and retention, WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk was joined by WHA Information Center Data Analyst Emily Holden and Iowa Hospital Association Director of Database Services Allison Martin to provide an update on WHA's first annual salary survey. Zenk noted that over 40 WHA and WisHHRA members have started or completed the salary survey, with more joining in every day. Martin noted Wisconsin's survey is going well, particularly in the number of participants who have completed the survey already.

WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O'Brien and Vice President of Federal and State Relations Jon Hoelter provided an update on state and federal issues impacting health care leaders and the health care workforce.

O'Brien updated the Council on workforce-related dollars presented in Gov. Evers' State of the State address Jan. 24 and changes proposed to Grow Our Own GME grants to expand the number of residents and the number of years these WHA-crafted grants can cover. O'Brien also noted WHA is engaged in discussions with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to make sure grant opportunities and support offered by DWD and other state workforce agencies offer resources WHA members will benefit from.

Hoelter provided an update on the results of WHA's participation in the Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licensure, noting the Committee recommended legislation on two of the three changes promoted by WHA: lengthening renewal timeframes and eliminating lengthy and unnecessary investigating into remote, minor and isolated convictions.

WHA will continue to work on advancing the third proposal to leverage certification and an employer attestation as a pathway to provisional licensure for new graduates. The bill's author is working with WHA to narrow the scope to health professions. Hoelter garnered feedback from the council to ensure the proposed components of the attestation will not create barriers to utilization or the burden of unnecessary requirements for health care employers.

At a federal level, Hoelter provided an update on the omnibus legislation that passed last December. While that legislation included extremely helpful extensions of federal Telehealth and Hospital at Home waivers, WHA continues to work with other stakeholders to advocate for the extension of waivers for the nursing home three-day rule and the CAH 96-hour rule, which will both end once the

public health emergency expires.

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