

Health Care Rapidly Adopting Registered Apprenticeships

WHA Council on Workforce Development welcomes DWD apprenticeship director

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Apprenticeship Director David Polk met with the WHA Council on Workforce Development on May 19, 2023, to discuss apprenticeships as a way for health care employers to attract new entrants to the health care workforce through earn-while-you-learn opportunities, including recent apprenticeships developed with DWD support and resources.

Polk told the council health care is considered an emerging industry for apprenticeships, and that DWD has assigned specific resources to foster health care apprenticeships. He noted the health care industry's rapid adoption of apprenticeships over the past three years, with more than 100 health care apprentices currently earning while they pursue their degree or certification. Polk noted Wisconsin was the first state to create registered apprenticeships in 1911 and continues to lead in the field. The latest health care apprenticeship, and a first-of-its-kind in the nation, is a pilot registered nurse apprenticeship developed by a Wisconsin health system and a Wisconsin nursing school.

Polk said that hospitals can assist by becoming an apprenticeship sponsor and by advocating with national professional certifying bodies and with their peers to promote apprenticeship as a pathway to education and a profession.

Those interested in starting an apprenticeship at their organization are encouraged to email apprenticeship@dwd.wisconsin.gov to speak to the staff assigned to health care apprenticeship.

The workforce council also heard updates from WHA staff on key workforce issues. WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk discussed WHA's advocacy on licensure reform and WHA's hospital-positive messaging initiative that is part of the foundation for the work underway for a statewide campaign promoting health care careers.

WHA 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. Hoelter updated the council on the status of the workforce-related dollars in the Governor's proposed budget and the work underway by the Joint Finance Committee (JFC). Hoelter noted the value of WHA member participation in the JFC hearings, including a committee member commenting on how many hospital and health system leaders have attended.

Hoelter shared WHA's work to ensure that Wisconsin legislators and stakeholders are aware of the leading place Wisconsin hospitals and health systems hold in price transparency. This is an important initiative, as there is now a Wisconsin legislative proposal for state enforcement of the Trump administration's rules on hospital price transparency.

Hoelter also discussed the status of two topics with federal proposals underway that WHA is defending against: site-neutral payment policy and 340B. He noted WHA's communication with leaders of the House Energy & Commerce Committee and Subcommittee on Health opposing the changes.

WHA Senior Vice President of Policy Joanne Alig provided an update on WHA's advocacy work to stem the tide of payer practices such as prior authorizations and payment denials. Alig provided national information on the escalation of preauthorization requirements and denials, and provided examples of how recent changes in payer platforms and the use of artificial intelligence to determine and issue denials is resulting in confusing and incorrect denials, and greatly increasing the time it takes for providers to receive reimbursement.

Contact [Ann Zenk](#) for questions or feedback about the Council on Workforce Development and any other workforce issues.

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