

WHA Member Leaders Appointed to Governor's Healthcare Workforce Task Force

On Jan. 29, Gov. Tony Evers signed [Executive Order #220](#) to create the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce. On Feb. 6, the governor's office announced the 25 members of the task force, including six leaders from WHA member hospitals and health systems:

- Kelly Buchholtz, chief nursing officer, Mayo Clinic Health System NW Wisconsin
- Sharon Cox, vice president/chief nursing officer, Beloit Health System;
- Eric Humphrey, chief human resources officer, Froedert ThedaCare Health;
- Shawn Lerch, chief executive officer, Sauk Prairie Healthcare;
- Heather Schimmers, president, Gundersen Health System;
- Robyn Woolever, director of Integrated Care Services, Children's Wisconsin.

The executive order acknowledges the demographic challenges all employers face and the [additional challenge health care faces](#). Evers' proclamation notes the impact of "an aging population that is both retiring and requiring additional medical care."

WHA and WHA members have been working for the past decade or more to grow the health care workforce faster, to best utilize the health care workforce we have, and to recruit, protect and retain health care workers--all to prepare for the Silver Tsunami that is now here. Task force members will be able to discuss the efforts they are already making, the barriers they face and how state resources and policy can help.

The Governor's Task Force on Healthcare Workforce is charged with recommending solutions in line with WHA recommendations, including, as noted in the governor's [2024 State of the State](#) address, identifying strategies to alleviate the burden on our healthcare workforce through innovations in technology and alternative methods of care, and exploring educational pathways to grow a more sustainable health care workforce.

Lieutenant Governor Sara Rodriguez, a registered nurse with master's degrees in nursing and public health, will chair the task force. Rodriguez shared the aims of the task force with leaders during roundtables and with health care teams during tours. "What we really wanted to do was to make sure we were getting information from different sectors within health care," Rodriguez noted. "Because we know, and we heard today, that there are issues within nursing but also issues with surgical technologists, radiology and other professions."

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