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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

February 20 2020
New State Law on Medicaid Reimbursement for Telehealth
 Webinar

March 13 & 14, 2020
Physician Leadership Development Conference
 Kohler, WI

March 18, 2020
Advocacy Day
 Madison, WI

Wisconsin Hospitals and Health Care Providers Are Key Line of Defense in Preventing Spread of Coronavirus

WHA and WHA members have been following intently the developing situation with novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). According to the CDC as of Feb. 3 there were 260 people in the U.S. being tested for coronavirus: there are 11 confirmed cases – two in Illinois – 167 negative cases and 82 with results pending. In Wisconsin, coronavirus test results are pending for four individuals identified as at risk. Test results for six additional Wisconsin patients were negative.

While state health officials continue to assess coronavirus as a low risk for Wisconsin citizens, hospitals and health system preparedness is an important part of prevention. Resources, including preparedness checklists for hospitals and providers, can be found in a [news release](#) from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services’ (DHS) [Outbreaks and Investigations](#) webpage and at CDC’s [Information for Healthcare Professionals](#) page. *(continued on page 6)*

People Under Investigation (PUI) in Wisconsin	
Positive	0
Negative	6
Pending	4
Total	10

Source: DHS, as of Feb. 3, 2020

Agreement to Limit Substance Abuse Treatment Prior Authorization Announced



State Assembly Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette) announced at a State Capitol press conference Jan. 21 that several health insurers in Wisconsin have agreed to remove various prior authorization requirements for substance abuse treatment.

“WHA is pleased to see health plans removing prior authorization requirements that have placed barriers on individuals seeking substance abuse treatment and added unnecessary administrative burdens to physicians and health care professionals providing substance abuse services,” WHA President and CEO Eric

Borgerding said in a statement following the press conference. “We thank Rep. Nygren for his continued dedication in fighting for patients who need addiction treatment.”

“We were able to accomplish this, most proudly, without legislation; this is due to the conversations and relationships that have been developed over a multi-year effort here in Wisconsin,” Rep. Nygren said. “Rather than having government tell people how to perform their business, having a one-on-one conversation about what is best to serve Wisconsin, I believe, is the best direction forward for us.”

Cynthia Valentin, Ph.D., Advocate Aurora behavioral health vice president of therapy services, told the press that removing prior authorization requirements would allow

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physicians and other health care professionals to “focus on treatment and not spend hours on paperwork.” She noted that practitioners and their patients have faced delays in treatment of hours to weeks due to prior authorization requirements. Removing prior authorization requirements will remove treatment barriers that have discouraged individuals “on the road to recovery,” Dr. Valentin said.

Representatives from UnitedHealthcare, Anthem, WPS Health Solutions, Children’s Community Health Plan, Network Health, Quartz, Dean Health Plan, Security Health Plan and MercyCare Health Plans joined Rep. Nygren at the announcement. Several of the health plans indicated they had already removed prior authorization requirements for substance abuse treatment prior to the announced agreement.

“The major insurers in Wisconsin, many of our larger regional health plans in Wisconsin, are here,” Rep. Nygren said. “I believe it’s going to set an example for the others to follow and that will impact everyone long term.”

“Wisconsin has been a recognized national leader in efforts to combat opioid and substance abuse,” Dr. Valentin said. “Today’s announcement is a prime example of our state’s leadership to continue this recovery.”



Cynthia Valentin, Ph.D., speaks in favor of health insurers removing various prior authorization requirements for substance abuse treatment at a Jan. 21, 2020 press conference at the State Capitol.

WHA Presents State Capitol Briefing on “Silver Tsunami” Workforce Report

Building off of the attention garnered following the successful release of the [2019 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report](#), and in partnership with the chairs and ranking members of the Assembly Committee on Workforce Development and the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Commerce and Local Government, WHA provided a special Workforce Capitol Briefing for state policymakers and staff Jan. 30, 2020 in the Capitol’s stately North Hearing Room.



The North Hearing Room at the State Capitol

State Assembly Reps. Warren Petryk (R-Town of Washington) and Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) and State Senators Dan Feyen (R-Fond du Lac) and Janis Ringhand (D-Evansville) hosted the briefing. Leaders from Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Development (DWD), UW Health and Mayo Clinic Health System Northwest Wisconsin joined WHA in presenting workforce trends, challenges and successful solutions to address local and statewide needs. The WisconsinEye network broadcast this briefing live to a statewide internet and cable audience, and will produce a video of the briefing that will be available on demand.

Representative Petryk welcomed more than 70 people in attendance on a busy day in the Capitol. Petryk noted the importance of partnership to reach solutions to address a “disappearing workforce,” as ever-growing numbers of the baby boom generation reach retirement age every day. Petryk said his roles of Chair of the Assembly Committee on Workforce Development and Vice Chair of the Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care provide a unique perspective: “I am acutely aware of how important the link is between addressing our state’s workforce and the economic well-being of our state,” Rep. Petryk said. “We’re pleased to host this workforce briefing today because we know one of the largest workforce needs is for health care workers.”



Rep. Warren Petryk

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Petryk also noted the importance of an adequately resourced and supported health care workforce. “I’ve been proud to work with many of you to increase Medicaid reimbursement for hospitals, psychiatrists, nursing homes and personal care workers and look forward to continue that work into the future.”

Petryk closed with the hosts’ hope for the briefing. “We hope you come away from today’s briefing with a better understanding of the current state of Wisconsin’s health care workforce, and leave with ideas on what we can do to strengthen the workforce and prepare for the challenges ahead.” That charge was a perfect segue for the morning’s roster of presenters: WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding, WHA Vice President Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk, DWD Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams, UW Health Director Allied Health Education and Career Pathways Bridgett Willey, Ph.D. and Mayo Clinic Health System Chair of Education Donn Dexter, M.D.

Borgerding set the stage by highlighting recent examples of bipartisan legislation that will help address Wisconsin’s health care workforce shortage, such as expanding Graduate Medical Education programs, funding for training advance practice clinicians and allied professionals and enabling even better use of telemedicine technology. “We’re appreciative and proud of what we have been able to accomplish



Eric Borgerding

with our state legislators, state agencies and the administration, but there’s more work to be done,” Borgerding said. “Unlike other industries, health care’s work is often driven by forces we can’t control, like the demographic changes we’re undergoing right now.”



Ann Zenk

WHA’s Zenk then dove into the highlights of the issues arising from the arrival of the “Silver Tsunami” – the waves of baby boom generation retirements. The projections are stark: by 2032 the population over 75 years old will grow by 75% while the population under age 18 will grow by a scant 3.5%; in fact, the state’s population older than age 65 will double by 2030, causing health care demand to increase by at least 30%.

“With a shrinking workforce and rapidly increasing health care demand, we must of course grow our health care workforce faster,” Zenk said. “But we need to also make sure that we’re working smart: attracting workers to health care pathways, growing the workforce where most needed, forming our health care teams and allowing team members to work at the top of their skill level to meet the needs of patients and better leveraging technology to support patients and the health care workforce.”

DWD’s Williams then addressed the group, describing how state government agencies can partner with health care entities through state initiatives designed to support workforce growth and career pathways. Williams described a state apprenticeship program that helped UW Health offer approved classroom and clinical instruction for a Medical Assistant (MA) Registered Apprenticeship.



Danielle Williams



Bridgett Willey, Ph.D.

UW Health’s Dr. Willey shared more about the successful apprenticeship program and also described the myriad ways UW Health is promoting more pathways to employment for both clinical and non-clinical health care staff. Willey shared that more programs are currently in the works, with the potential for apprenticeships in more clinical areas. “Entering one of our apprenticeship classrooms is entering a very happy place as UW Health employees pursue the opportunities for advancement they have been looking for,” Dr. Willey said.

Mayo Clinic Health System’s Dr. Dexter also provided an example of how public-private partnerships are growing and strengthening Wisconsin’s health care workforce. He shared how his health care system is utilizing a state Department of Health Services advanced practice clinician (APC) training grant to expand the capabilities of physician assistants and nurse practitioners in emergency medicine ultrasound

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Donn Dexter, M.D.

technology. Dr. Dexter said that Mayo easily filled their two courses, and have a waiting list of APCs from Mayo and other health care organizations waiting and wanting to participate in the training. “This type of training improves the spread of this critical education to many facilities that would otherwise need to spend thousands of dollars to send their PAs and NPs to courses out of their area or even out of state,” Dr. Dexter said. “We’re happy for the opportunity to partner with the state and with other organizations to improve care for our patients – that’s what it’s all about.”

WHA’s Zenk then returned with a critical message for policymakers on how government regulation hinders the health care workforce. Spending the time to fulfill the wide array of government requirements unnecessarily lengthens a clinician’s workday and makes providers less available to their patients and less satisfied in their chosen profession. “In health care, we aren’t seeing technology

relieve the heavy lifting for our workforce,” Zenk said, “and a big part of that is the way rules and regulations add more clicks in electronic health records and more hoops providers must jump through to use technology.

“An important first step is to avoid creating more regulation,” Zenk said.

Zenk summarized the briefing by sharing WHA’s 2019 workforce recommendations for policymakers: invest in targeted workforce recruitment and retention, leverage team-based integrated care delivery models, and use technology wisely.

Contact [Ann Zenk](#) with questions or ideas regarding the health care workforce or WHA’s 2019 Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Report.

Physician Leadership Development Conference, Kohler, WI - Register Today!

WHA is once again proud to be offering the Physician Leadership Development Conference in Kohler, WI on March 13 & 14, 2020. Check out this outstanding lineup:

- Dr. David Nash headlines Friday morning. Dr. Nash is an amazing speaker, and to some, the leading expert on the role of physician leaders in providing value-based care.
- Dr. Scott Rathgaber, Gundersen Health System CEO, will discuss his physician leadership journey from clinician to the CEO suite.
- Dr. Jay Bhatt, AHA CMO, and Elisa Arespachoga, vice president of the AHA’s Physician Alliance, will lead a session on physician burnout titled “Regular or Extra Crispy? Lessons from the Field in Addressing Burnout.”
- Bill Benjamin, a scientist at the Institute for Health and Human Potential, will discuss emotional intelligence.
- Marty Martin, Director of DePaul University’s Health Sector Management MBA Program, will discuss physician performance management.
- Eric Borgerding, WHA president & CEO, will give an advocacy update during Friday’s lunch focused on key issues impacting care delivery.



In response to attendee feedback, we have added additional speakers on Friday. Saturday morning will feature two educational tracks – one for developing physician leaders and another for senior physician leaders.

Please take a few moments to review the [conference brochure](#). [Register](#) and secure your hotel room today!

WHA-Backed Legislation Advances to Governor's Desk

Two state legislative bills with strong WHA support gained final approval in separate legislative bodies this week in Madison.

Advance Directives and Team-Based Care

A WHA legislative priority, [Assembly Bill 287](#) addresses a regulatory bottleneck in Wisconsin's health care workforce that results in unnecessary delays in acting upon a patient's advance directive wishes for treatment. The bill helps address these delays by recognizing the education and training of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to make the medical diagnoses necessary to activate the patient's written medical wishes. Under the bill, a physician must still confirm the diagnosis; a patient retains the option of requiring two physicians to complete any needed assessments.

The State Senate unanimously approved the bill in a voice vote Jan. 21; the State Assembly similarly approved the bill in November 2019. Gov. Evers is expected to sign the bipartisan bill into law.

Harm to a Health Care Worker – Penalty Enhancer

The State Assembly Jan. 21 approved by voice vote a bill enhancing penalties for causing intentional bodily harm to health care workers. [Senate Bill 163](#) increases the maximum penalty for such crimes from the current Class A misdemeanor to a felony; the state senate unanimously approved the bill in early November 2019. Originally drafted to cover harm involving nurses, the bill was amended – at WHA's urging – to apply to all acts committed against any licensed health care professional working in a hospital.

The Jan. 21 State Assembly floor action saw some attempts by Assembly Democrats to amend the bill further; these attempts were unsuccessful. While the bill had bipartisan support in both houses, it is unclear whether the failed late amendment will influence Gov. Evers' approval.

WHA Offers CMS Proposals to Remove Physician Co-Signature Burdens

WHA offered several recommendations in a [comment letter](#) to CMS Jan. 17 to address Medicare regulations that limit advanced practice clinicians from practicing at the top of their licenses in hospitals, adding to physicians' administrative burden. WHA's comment letter responded to a CMS solicitation for assistance in developing future reforms to the Medicare program, including removing burdensome requirements impacting physician assistant and advanced practice registered nursing practice.



"Regulatory burden creates additional cost on the health care system and limits the productivity of health care providers," WHA's letter to CMS Administrator Seema Verma said. "Wisconsin, like other states, has workforce challenges that impact our members' ability to meet the demands for care of our citizens, and regulatory burden directly impacts the amount of clinical care that physicians and non-physician professionals can provide in one day."

To address regulatory burden on physicians, advanced practice clinicians and team-based care delivery, WHA's comment letter recommended several clarifications to CMS's Hospital and Critical Access Hospital Conditions of Participation that would better recognize advanced practice clinicians' scope of practice and avoid unnecessary physician co-signatures.

WHA's proposals include clarification and alignment with other CMS policies regarding physician co-signature requirements for hospital admissions, certifications of care, history and physical performance, and discharge orders and summaries.

WHA's recommendations to CMS were drawn from presentations at WHA's Advanced Practice Clinician Conference held in September 2018 that highlighted problematic federal regulations limiting the ability of advanced practice clinicians from practicing to their full scope of practice in hospital settings.

If you have questions about CMS's solicitation or WHA's comment letter, contact WHA General Counsel [Matthew Stanford](#) or WHA Vice President Workforce & Clinical Practice [Ann Zenk](#).

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Of vital importance is the identification of patients with respiratory or febrile illness at risk for coronavirus either through travel from Wuhan City, China in the 14 days before symptom onset, or close contact with a person under investigation for or confirmed with coronavirus. Hospitals and clinics should ensure that health care providers have the knowledge and resources to identify and isolate patients who are at risk for coronavirus. Health care providers should contact the DHS Department of Public Health at 608-267-9003 for consultation and approval of 2019-nCoV testing for patients identified as at risk for coronavirus.

DHS will update the [Outbreaks and Investigations](#) webpage daily, and WHA will provide updates when new or important information becomes available. Contact WHA Vice President, Workforce and Clinical Practice [Ann Zenk](#) with questions related to 2019 novel coronavirus resources and preparedness.