

March 17, 2020

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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

March 25, 2020
EMTALA Update – 2020
 Part 3 of a 3-part series - Webinar

April 1, 2020
LGBTQ 101 for Health care professionals
 Webinar

Visit www.wha.org
 for more educational opportunities



Health Care Worker Safety, Availability Prompts WHA Program Cancellations

With the safety of the state's hospital and health care workers of paramount importance as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to develop, WHA made the very difficult decision to cancel two of its upcoming premier events: the Physician Leadership Development Conference scheduled for March 13 and 14 and Advocacy Day 2020 scheduled for March 18.



spread could have on Wisconsin's health care workforce outweigh the benefits of holding these events."

The cancellation of WHA events mirrors actions taken throughout the state and nation, with gatherings bringing groups of people together in close proximity being postponed or eliminated altogether. Earlier today Gov. Tony Evers [declared a public health emergency](#) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our foremost priority is the health and safety of our member caregivers and their patients," WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding said in the announcement of the cancellations. "The fact is, the potential health risk to attendees and impact community

President Trump Signs \$8.3 Billion Coronavirus Emergency Response Package

On March 6, President Donald Trump signed into law an \$8.3 billion emergency aid package to assist with coronavirus (COVID-19) response efforts. The package will fund various federal government agency response activities while also injecting needed funding into state and local response efforts.

To support state efforts to combat the coronavirus, the [package includes](#):

- \$950 million for state and local public health, preparedness, and emergency response, half of which must be allocated within 30 days.
- \$300 million for hospital and health care emergency preparedness, with a minimum of \$4 million for each state.
- \$500 million for pharmaceuticals, PPEs, and other supplies to support the national stockpile.



President Trump signs the Congressional Funding Bill for Coronavirus response as HHS Sec. Alex Azar watches.

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Physician Leaders Council Discusses Current Status Of COVID-19 Epidemic

WHA's Physician Leaders Council met March 9 in Madison. The council reviewed the latest clinical information on COVID-19 infection from the World Health Organization, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physician leaders shared what is happening in their communities. Ironically, at the start of the Physician Leaders Council meeting there was still only one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Wisconsin but, after the meeting adjourned, DHS reported the second confirmed COVID-19 case in our state (there are now [seven active cases](#)). WHA Chief Medical Officer Mark Kaufman, M.D. shared results of the two most recent weekly DHS surveys of health care facilities regarding what they are experiencing with respect to the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). The latest survey generated more than 240 replies (see questions/responses on right).

WHA Director of Federal & State Relations Jon Hoelter emphasized that WHA is staying in close contact with Wisconsin's congressional delegation and the Wisconsin State Legislature. On March 6, President Trump signed an \$8.3 billion emergency funding package into law. Nearly \$1 billion will go to state and local public health with each state receiving a minimum of \$4 million. Importantly, the bill allows the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to waive Medicare site restrictions for telehealth services.

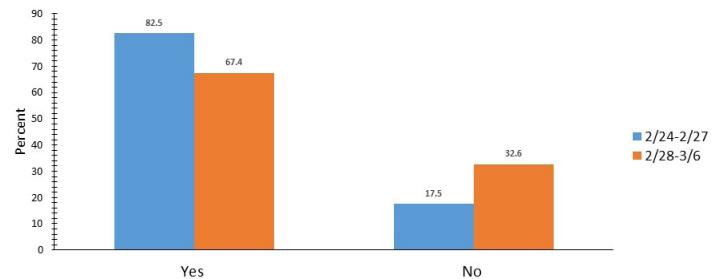
Physician Leaders Council members discussed a number of other issues:

- A continuation of the December 2019 council discussion of the Business Health Care Group's physician profiling initiative.
- WHA's legislative agenda, including a review of WHA's support and opposition on various bills impacting advanced practice clinician practice and regulation. A WHA Act Summary of Act 90 - WHA-developed legislation that modifies Wisconsin advance directive statutes to recognize advanced practice clinician practice – can be accessed by WHA members [here](#).
- WHA's 2020 Board goals.

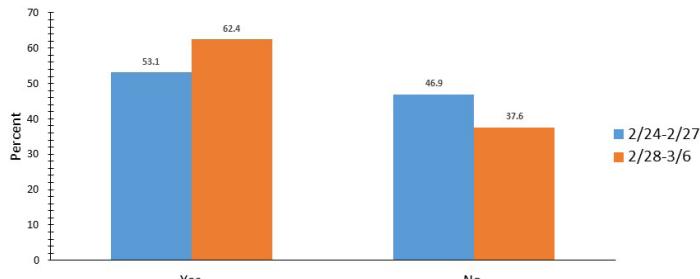
In response to a recent Physician Leaders Council group email survey, the June council meeting will be held in Green Bay. The meeting will be adjacent to WHA's Rural Health Conference, providing council members the opportunity to attend both meetings in-person if they wish.

For more information on the Physician Leaders Council, contact WHA General Counsel [Matthew Stanford](#) or [Dr. Kaufman](#).

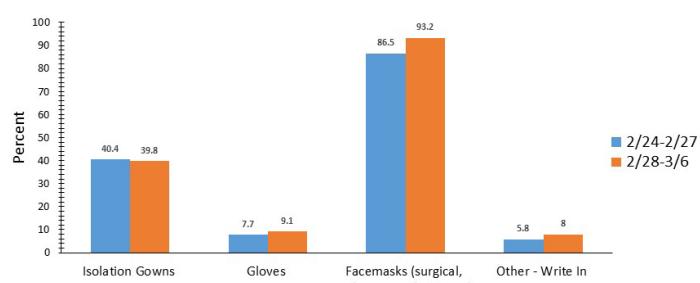
Are there sufficient supplies of appropriate PPE on hand or available?



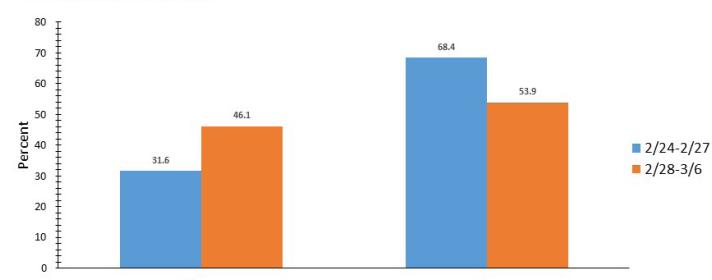
Has your facility encountered any delays sourcing PPE because of shortages or back orders from your current supplier?



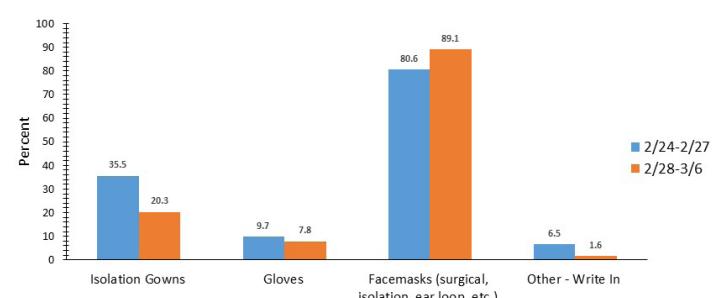
If yes, which type of PPE have you experienced shortages on? Check all that apply.



Has your facility sought out new PPE suppliers within the past four weeks to meet current needs?



If yes, please list which types of PPE required a new supplier.



(President Trump Signs \$8.3 Billion Coronavirus Emergency Response Package . . . continued from page 1)

- Telehealth waivers that would allow Medicare to pay for services regardless of a patient's location, including in a patient's home, during this public health emergency ([current federal law restricts Medicare telehealth coverage](#) only to rural, federally designated health professional shortage areas, and only in health care facilities).

WHA and state officials are in ongoing discussions to better understand how the funding can be used in Wisconsin, and are also evaluating options for other state and federal support. Contact WHA Director of Federal & State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.

WHA Workforce Expert Featured on Wisconsin Health News Workforce Panel

"COVID-19 is going to magnify shortages that are already present," noted WHA Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk at the opening of a Wisconsin Health News Workforce Panel discussion held March 10 in Madison. Zenk and fellow panelists discussed not only the impact of COVID-19, but the compounded health care impact from the aging of the large baby boom generation.



WHA's Ann Zenk speaking at a WHN workforce panel event March 10.

"Health care is facing a shrinking workforce, just like every other industry," Zenk explained, "but we are also already experiencing the increasing demand for health care that aging produces, and that's only going to increase over the next decade."

Other panelists included Dennis Winter, chief economist for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development; Lisa Pugh, The Arc Wisconsin's executive director; Wisconsin Assisted Living CEO Michael Pochowski and State Senator Patrick Testin (R-Stevens Point).

All panelists agreed that difficulty filling caregiver positions, such as certified nursing assistants, is one of the biggest challenges created by competition for a shrinking workforce. Zenk added that hospitals and clinics are also experiencing shortages of advanced practice clinicians (APCs) and physicians. "Not only are we seeing almost constant churn in positions like nursing assistants as individuals are encouraged to embark on career advancement to nursing, advanced practice and medicine," Zenk said, "we're also seeing huge increases in demand for APCs to fill gaps in access created by physician shortages."

Winter noted that "[w]e've got a volume problem. By 2030 it's estimated the demand for employment is going to outnumber the available workers. That's something that's never happened before and it's going to force us to figure out how to increase each worker's productivity."

Zenk concurred. "We are not going to grow our workforce fast enough to keep up with escalating demand," Zenk said, "so we need to make sure we're utilizing the available workforce as effectively and efficiently as possible." Zenk said that team-based care, top-of-license care and technology can increase access but are hindered by regulatory burden. "Relieving the burden that unnecessary regulation places on not only the workforce, but on health care technology like electronic health records, is an essential step that health care organizations, professionals and state policymakers must work on together," Zenk said.

For questions or for more information about Wisconsin's health care workforce issues and solutions, reach out to [Ann Zenk](#).

WHA Touts CMS' Latest Quality Results for WI

Recently released data from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) show that once again Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are outperforming most of the country in several quality of care metrics. WHA shared the positive results of the latest CMS Hospital Compare data with a [memo to the state Legislature](#) and a statewide [press release](#).

The refreshed CMS data include results for the agency's Valued-Based Purchasing program, patient-reported satisfaction scores, hospital readmissions penalties and overall Medicare spending per beneficiary. In just one example of data success, Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems lead the nation in patient satisfaction with information provided at discharge and are sixth overall in CMS' Value-Based Purchasing Program.

"Not only does this mean that patients are receiving higher quality care in Wisconsin," WHA's President and CEO Eric Borgerding and Chief Quality Officer Beth Dibbert said in the memo, "it means that care is being delivered more cost-effectively."

"This quality work is made possible by a public policy environment that supports our health care workforce, rather than imposing distracting or confusing regulatory burden on our frontline providers."

Contact [Beth Dibbert](#) for more information.

WHA's Redwood Shares Physician Improvement Experiences at CMS Quality Conference



Bobby Redwood, MD presenting at the CMS Quality Conference, Feb. 27

On Feb. 27, WHA's Physician Improvement Advisor Dr. Bobby Redwood presented to a packed room of physician, nurse, and quality improvement leaders at the national Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 2020 Quality Conference in Baltimore. His presentation, "Activate Your Greatest Allies: Engaging Physicians in Quality Improvement Work," showcased the WHA quality team's statewide improvement efforts in sepsis and antimicrobial stewardship. CMS directors Paul McGann, M.D. and Jade Perdue, M.P.A. were both in attendance. They offered high praise for the WHA Quality Center's work in physician engagement and invited Dr. Redwood back to speak next year.

In addition to the opportunity to showcase WHA's statewide quality improvement initiatives, the conference's Opioid Epidemic

Master Class provided necessary education and networking to support the WHA Quality Center's 2020 opioid stewardship initiatives. These initiatives include promoting alternatives to opioids for acute and chronic pain, reducing opioid adverse drug events in long-term care facilities, increasing awareness and availability of naloxone rescue therapy, and initiating medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder in primary care clinics and emergency departments.



Shelly Coyle, Nurse Consultant, Division of Quality Improvement Innovation Models Testing, CMS; Paul McGann, MD, Chief Medical Officer for Quality Improvement, CMS; Bobby Redwood, MD, Physician Improvement Advisor, Wisconsin Hospital Association; Jade Perdue, MPA, Director for Division of Quality Improvement Innovation Models Testing, CMS

WHA Continues to Build Support for Correct Surprise Billing Solution

WHA is continuing to build support for Congress acting on a surprise billing solution that protects patients while preserving free-market negotiations between health care providers and insurers.

On Feb. 26, WHA and the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative sent a [joint letter](#) to Wisconsin's House delegation urging them to cosponsor [H.R. 5826](#), the Consumer Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills Act of 2020. WHA has also activated its [HEAT](#) network so lawmakers hear from hospital leaders and grassroots supporters.

As noted in a [recent article in The Valued Voice](#), WHA has supported H.R. 5826 because it is the only proposal moving in Congress that both protects patients and keeps providers and insurers on an even playing field. Other proposals put forward by

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(WHA Continues to Build Support for Correct Surprise Billing Solution . . . continued from page 4)

Congress rely on government-set benchmark rates that would have unintended consequences for patients and the hospitals who care for them. The current House committees that have put forward differing surprise billing proposals have begun to negotiate a final package that could come to the House floor in late spring. WHA will continue to monitor and advocate for Congress to select the right solution.

Contact WHA Director of Federal & State Relations [Jon Hoelter](#) with questions.

WHA-Crafted Training Grant Applications Released

'Grow Your Own' Physicians, Advanced Practice Clinicians and Allied Health Professionals

For hospitals and health systems seeking to expand training opportunities in rural areas and high-demand occupations the time to apply for WHA-created grants is now. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is accepting applications for Graduate Medical Education (GME), Advanced Practice Clinician (APC) and Allied Health Professional training grants.

GME grants, based on WHA's 86% equation, are used to create new programs or expand existing programs. These grants were implemented by DHS in 2013 and were so successful that in 2017 grant programs modelled after the GME grants were created for APC and allied health professionals.

The "Grow Our Own" Equation



To date, these [matching grants](#) have resulted in 151 more GME residency positions, nine new GME programs, nine expanded GME programs, 12 new APC training opportunities and eight new training programs for allied health professionals.

GME Training Grants – now open to any physician specialty

DHS is now accepting applications for the New GME Program Grant. The Grant provides up to \$750,000 over three years for hospitals and sponsoring institutions to develop a new GME Program, establish a fellowship, or create a rural alternative track in **any physician specialty** that is documented as a need in rural areas.

Grant applications can be accessed [here](#). Completed applications are due by noon on April 30, 2020. A Question & Answer conference call is scheduled for March 24 at 10 a.m.

Allied Health Professional and APC Training Grant Applications due May 1

Completed applications for allied health and APC training grants are due by 12 noon on May 1, 2020. Applications for allied health grants can be accessed [here](#). Applications for APC grants can be accessed [here](#).

APC grants are designed to expand clinical training opportunities for Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in Wisconsin in order to increase access to health care in rural areas. The APC grant period is one year. The maximum amount per successful application is \$50,000.

Potential applicants are encouraged to submit questions to DHS about application requirements; please direct questions to [Donna Wong](#) before noon on March 13, 2020. All questions and responses will be posted to the DHS website by March 20, 2020.

Allied health professional grants are intended to expand education and training opportunities for individuals in high need, high demand allied health occupations in order to support rural hospitals and clinics to meet the need for qualified professionals. The maximum amount per successful application is \$125,000 per year. The length of the grant will depend on the length of required training for the targeted occupation(s).

Potential applicants are encouraged to submit questions to DHS about requirements; please direct questions to [Susan Cochran](#) before noon on March 13, 2020. All questions and responses will be posted to the DHS website by March 20, 2020.

After the Question and Answer calls, DHS cannot accept or answer questions.

The time is now to access these state resources made available by WHA-backed legislation, effectively implemented by DHS and successfully utilized by hospitals and health systems across the state. WHA Vice President, Workforce and Clinical Practice [Ann Zenk](#) is available to answer questions and support your application process.