

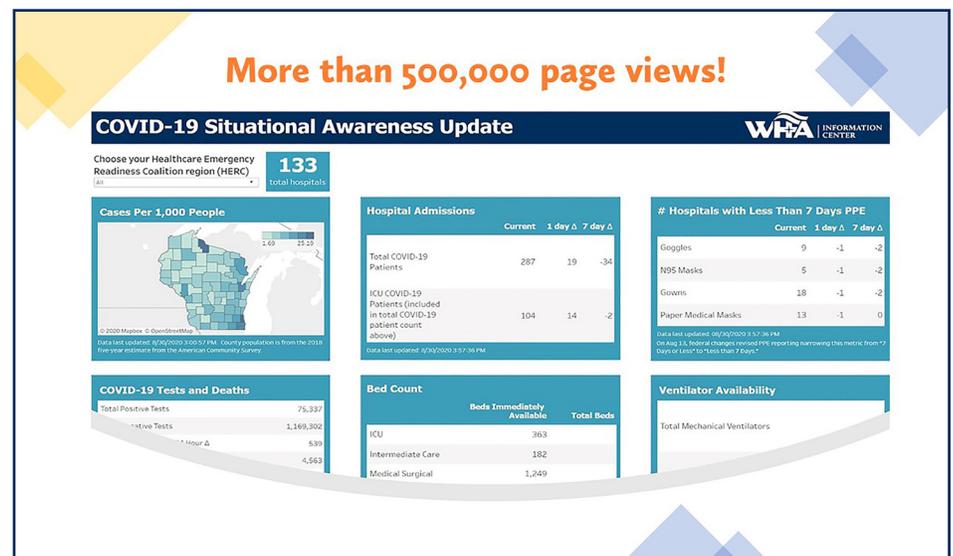
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WHA COVID-19 Dashboard Accessed More than 500,000 Times

Since being launched in early April, [WHA’s COVID-19 dashboard](#) has been a go-to source for robust, up-to-date information about the pandemic’s spread in Wisconsin and how it impacts the state’s health care system. In just five months the dashboard has been accessed more than 500,000 times – showing how the resource has been an important destination for the public, the media and policymakers to better understand COVID-19 in Wisconsin and how it impacts hospital capacity.

(continued on page 6)



EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

September 17, 2020

HHS Begins Clarifying Reporting Requirements for Provider Relief Funds Webinar

September 22, 2020

Telehealth/Remote Patient Monitoring for Surveillance and Management of Postpartum Hypertension and Beyond: Development & Implementation Strategies Webinar

September 24, 2020

Opioid Epidemic Case Study – Meeting the Increasing Challenges of the Opioid Epidemic in America Webinar

“Keep it Up, Wisconsin!” WHA and Coalition Release Another COVID Safety PSA

As Wisconsinites continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it brings heading into the fall season, WHA again joined a diverse coalition of Wisconsin’s leading advocacy organizations to launch a statewide public service message on TV and radio urging the public to continue practicing preventive measures aimed at reducing the spread of the virus.



The coalition represents Wisconsin health care leaders, businesses and local governments and includes:

(continued on page 2)

("Keep it Up, Wisconsin!" WHA and Coalition Release Another COVID Safety PSA . . . continued from page 1)

- Wsconsin Hospital Association
- Wisconsin Counties Association
- Wisconsin Grocers Association
- Wisconsin Medical Society
- Wisconsin Realtors Association
- Wisconsin Restaurant Association
- Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin

The message encourages Wisconsin residents to continue wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands often and thoroughly – all of which can help slow the spread of the virus and help Wisconsin’s economy and public health recover from the novel coronavirus.



Behind the scenes: Veronica Scott-Fulton during the filming of the latest WHA PSA.

Featuring real people, not actors, in the real estate and health care industries, the PSA urges the public to “keep it up” when it comes to safety measures.

“Keep practicing good hygiene by frequently washing your hands with soap and hot water,” Veronica Scott-Fulton, chief nursing officer for SSM Health Wisconsin says before closing the PSA with words of encouragement, “Keep it up, Wisconsin!”

Others appearing in the piece include Mary Duff, a licensed Wisconsin realtor and Wisconsin pharmacist Matthew Mabie.

The public service announcement started yesterday running on statewide television and radio and can be viewed here: [PSA - Keep It Up, Wisconsin!](#)

Members are encouraged to help amplify this important message by sharing the new PSA on their digital and social channels. “Keep It Up, Wisconsin!” is the sixth PSA WHA has released since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the PSAs can viewed in [WHA’s Video Library](#).

For more information, contact WHA Vice President of Advocacy [Kari Hofer](#).

WHA Members Meet with White House COVID-19 Leader

White House Coronavirus Coordinator Deborah Birx, M.D. came to Verona on August 31, meeting face-to-face (while masked and socially distanced in an EPIC conference room) with leading state health care representatives to discuss Wisconsin’s COVID-19 experiences. Two of those attendees included former WHA Board Chair and SSM Health - Wisconsin President Damond Boatright and WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding.

WHA highlighted the challenges Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are facing regarding acquisition of adequate COVID-19 testing supplies and obtaining timely and useful results, stressing that testing capabilities are important for allowing Wisconsin hospitals and health systems to continue providing care in both COVID and non-COVID areas.

“We’re pleased WHA was asked as one of the state’s health care leaders to have face time with Dr. Birx,” Borgerding said. “Those opportunities don’t happen all the time, and it speaks to the respect our leading policymakers have regarding WHA’s knowledge and expertise.”

Other attendees included UW System President Tommy G. Thompson, EPIC Systems CEO Judy Faulkner and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Regional Director Douglas O’Brien.



Damond Boatwright, Dr. Deborah Birx, Eric Borgerding

Our Collective Health Depends on our Individual Actions in Confronting Coronavirus

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel asked several people across Wisconsin, including WHA's Chief Medical Officer Mark Kaufman, MD, to write a short essay on what they believe the next six months will hold for Wisconsin as we continue to battle the coronavirus. MJS asked, "Where do you hope we'll be regarding COVID-19? In your line of work, what have you learned over these past six months that you can apply in the next six? How has the world changed and are those changes long-lasting?" MJS posted the essays online [here](#). Dr. Kaufman's essay, printed with permission from MJS, follows.

My hope is that, six months from now, we will have largely contained the COVID-19 pandemic in Wisconsin with just sporadic outbreaks of new cases, allowing sustained in-person school attendance, businesses to re-open statewide and a return to something close to our pre-COVID lives. What are the odds? Well...it depends.

The development of rapid, inexpensive home testing for Covid-19 would greatly help us control the spread of infection. When that will occur is not clear. While there is feverish work across the globe on COVID vaccines, it will be challenging to complete the large-scale clinical trials necessary to assess safety and efficacy before year end. Even if that happens, ramping up vaccine production and distribution to inoculate millions of Americans will be a very big lift.



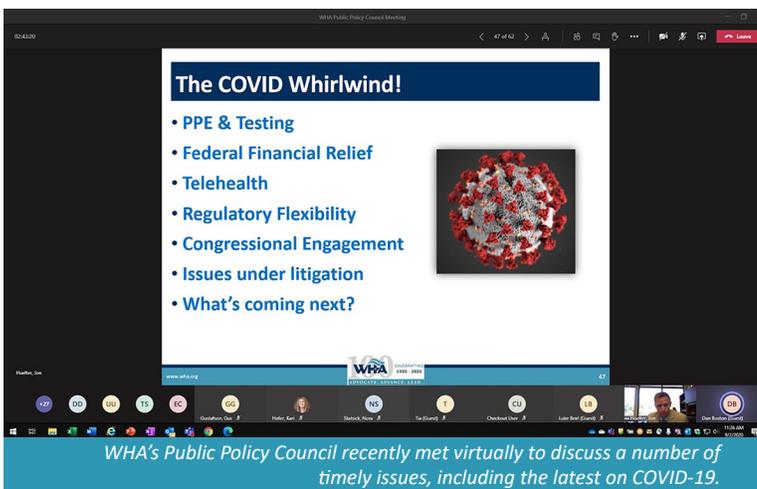
So, without rapid testing and absent a safe, effective and widely available vaccine, where we will be in six months largely depends upon our individual and collective accountability to do what we know will work: wear masks; physically distance; and practice good personal hygiene. This is a message WHA continues to publicly stress.

Hospitals and health care providers have learned much over the past six months. We are conserving resources and implementing new strategies to keep patients and providers safe as we co-exist with COVID. We know how to better care for very ill patients with Covid-19, which is reflected in the stable, very manageable levels of hospitalizations since April. Hospitals are able to provide excellent care for patients with Covid-19 while, at the same time, care for all the other health needs of Wisconsin citizens.

Thanks to welcome and effective regulatory relief, hospitals and providers are leveraging telehealth and other virtual platforms to meet patients' needs during these COVID times. Many innovations in health care delivery will persist after this pandemic has passed.

Finally, we have learned that the world is small and that pandemics are real, no matter where one lives on this planet. Our collective health depends upon our individual actions. We are interconnected as never before. When and how the Covid-19 pandemic ends is up to each of us...and all of us.

Public Policy Council Discusses Elections, State Budget and COVID Response



Members of WHA's Public Policy Council met on September 2, roughly two months prior to the November 2020 general election, to learn about WHA's biannual work to engage candidates running for office and discuss recent policy actions at a state and federal level, largely to provide relief and support for hospitals and health systems responding to COVID-19.

WHA's political team briefed the council about competitive races for the state Assembly and state Senate and how they could impact the makeup of the Legislature going into 2021. WHA also briefed the council on various election-related activity, including one-on-one virtual meetings with candidates and feedback from candidates on health care issues.

"Our government relations team does not stop during the 'off-season,'" WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding said. "If anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has created even more relevance and demand for the policy knowledge, expertise and influence that our team brings to issues impacting Wisconsin's hospitals. WHA's role as the leading health care voice in Madison and with our state's congressional delegation has been strongly reaffirmed during COVID and will be critical as we face a very challenging state budget." *(continued on page 4)*

WHA Senior Vice President of Government Relations Kyle O'Brien discussed the status of Wisconsin's current state budget and how that might impact key WHA priorities moving into the next legislative session. While the Medicaid program has a small state revenue surplus, lawmakers remain concerned with the long-term impact of COVID-19 on the state's finances.

"WHA and our members have faced similar advocacy headwinds before," O'Brien said. "But 2020 is different, as hospitals have been the state's most critical partner in responding to the COVID-19 needs in every corner of Wisconsin. As we've done in years past, WHA will work hard alongside our members to remind elected officials how hospitals have stepped up to serve our state's patients during the COVID-19 pandemic and how lawmakers can support hospitals through funding and regulatory relief in the upcoming legislative session."

Director of Federal and State Relations Jon Hoelter was joined by Dan Boston, president of Health Policy Source and one of *The Hill's* "Top Lobbyists," to discuss the prospects of future COVID legislation from Congress and WHA's influence with leaders at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the state's congressional delegation. Hoelter briefed the council on weekly conversations WHA has with leading staff from Wisconsin's delegation and WHA's work to engage members of Congress through virtual roundtables with district hospitals.

"You [WHA] are engaged in conversations that other state hospital associations aren't because of your ability to stay above the political fray and successfully navigate the complicated politics of COVID," Boston said. "That's a benefit to you and your members."

WHA Foundation Announces 2020 Global Vision Community Partnership Award Winners

WHA Foundation, Inc. is proud to announce the two recipients of the 2020 Global Vision Community Partnership Award.



The purpose of the Global Vision Community Partnership Award is to recognize and reward community partnership projects that work with a WHA member hospital to meet an identified community health need in an innovative or creative manner.

Cultivate Mental Wellness Program, Aurora Medical Center - Grafton

Cultivate Mental Wellness uses a public health framework to promote mental health and to eliminate stigma surrounding mental illness, while also supporting a community's resiliency. Under this framework, communities build a culture where individuals seek answers, get diagnosed, and have access to the care they need. Each Cultivate Community works to accomplish objectives through a four-phase process – Kindness, Empathy, Support, and Resiliency. There are several strategies a Cultivate Community implements to move through each phase, including building awareness and understanding of mental health and building and equipping the community with sustainable resources. Cultivate Communities promote mental health training and educational opportunities, policy change, ongoing data collection, expansion of funding for mental health, and increased access to mental health services and resources. Current pilot communities in Wisconsin participating in the program include Port Washington/Saukville and West Bend.

School Based Behavioral Health Program, Gunderson St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics - Hillsboro

The School Based Behavioral Health Program was developed to address the barriers that exist in providing mental health services for school aged students in the community. Utilizing Qualified Treatment Trainees (QTT) this program has proven to be sustainable and successful. A QTT is an individual who holds a master's degree in Social Work and is completing the required 3,000 hours of supervised therapy services in order to obtain the Licensed Clinical Social Worker credential with the State of Wisconsin. This program is currently serving the Hillsboro School District, the Wonewoc-Center School District and the Royall School District. According to program participants, the program has been a "win, win, win" for the students, families, and the schools. It is an excellent example of using creativity and collaboration to remove barriers to care.

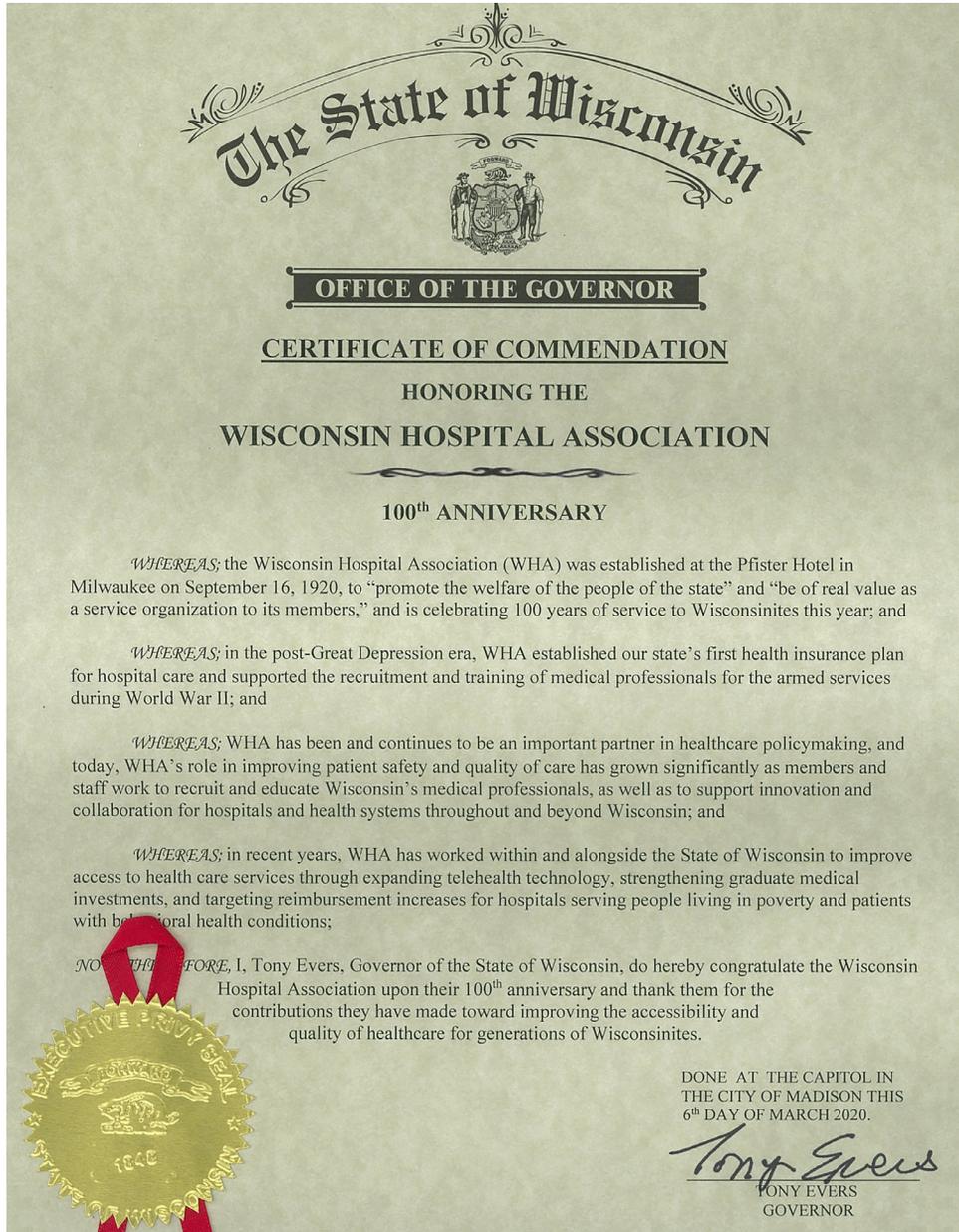
Award winners each receive a plaque of recognition and \$2,500 to continue to fulfill the mission and activities of these valuable programs.

WHA Foundation Inc. thanks all nominations submitted for the Global Vision Community Partnership Award.

A Continued Commitment to Health Care Advocacy

WHA is known as a leader in health care advocacy, providing expert input to federal and state policymakers that helps inform sound policy. To help honor WHA's 100th year, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers issued a special commendation praising the organization and its members for this advocacy work, including the following language:

WHEREAS, WHA has and continues to be an important partner in healthcare policymaking, and today, WHA's role in improving patient safety and quality of care has grown significantly as members and staff work to recruit and educate Wisconsin's medical professionals, as well as to support innovation and collaboration for hospitals and health systems throughout and beyond Wisconsin.



That partnership with policymakers happens in a bipartisan manner throughout each two-year state legislative session and annual session of Congress. And health care advocacy will continue to be a major priority as WHA begins its second century.

(WHA COVID-19 Dashboard Accessed More than 500,000 Times . . . continued from page 1)

“WHA’s hospital and health system members understand how the latest facts and data are so important – not just for understanding the overall effects of something like the COVID-19 pandemic, but also for helping inform future decision-making,” WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding said. “That the site has been accessed so often also shows that people want clear, unbiased information about the pandemic, and that they care about how hospitals and health systems can continue to be available for their health care needs.”

The dashboard, populated with information received by the state’s seven Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalitions (HERCs) and case- and testing-related data from Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services, also displays trends such as daily positive COVID-19 test results and the amount of important medical equipment – like ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE) – are available at hospitals. The dashboard is also interactive, with the ability to display both statewide data and those of individual HERCs.

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Optimize Your WHA Website Viewing

With the Internet Explorer (IE) browser no longer supported on Windows 7 operating systems, WHA’s websites work best with Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge browsers. Using IE may result in errors on some parts of the website.