Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers

An Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Landmark Initiative

Working together to make Wisconsin the best destination for our health workforce to thrive – because a thriving health workforce creates better health outcomes for all.

Medical College of Wisconsin

Michael Stadler, MD - Associate Professor of Otolaryngology

Dr. Stadler is an associate professor of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), where he has provided head and neck cancer care to patients since 2012.

Prior to applying his experience and passion to this role, Dr. Stadler served as chief medical officer at Froedtert Hospital and associate dean for clinical affairs at MCW from 2019-2024, where he helped oversee clinical operations while also having accountabilities over the quality and safety of care delivery at the hospital. Prior to this, he served as chief of the otolaryngology practice at the Veterans Administration hospital in Milwaukee, while also having served as chief of the division of head and neck oncology and reconstruction at MCW.

Dr. Stadler is the Health Workforce Wellbeing Landmark Initiative Champion with Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment.

Currently, he divides his time between his workforce advancement role, teaching first-year medical students, and clinical practice.

AHW: History & Purpose

- Established from restricted fund **(~$318 million each)** to MCW School of Medicine and UW School of Medicine from conversion of **Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin**
- Oversight, use of funds, public reporting requirements guided by order of the Wisconsin **Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI)**
- Our Vision: Advance Wisconsin to be **the healthiest state in the nation**

1999
Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin announces conversion

2000 - 2002
Creation of AHW formalized by OCI order, MCW Consortium established

2003 - 2004
MCW Consortium approves inaugural Five-Year Plan, first funding awards

2009
Launch of 2009 - 2014 Five-Year Plan

2014
Launch of 2014 – 2018 Five-Year Plan

2019
Launch of 2019 – 2023 Five-Year Plan

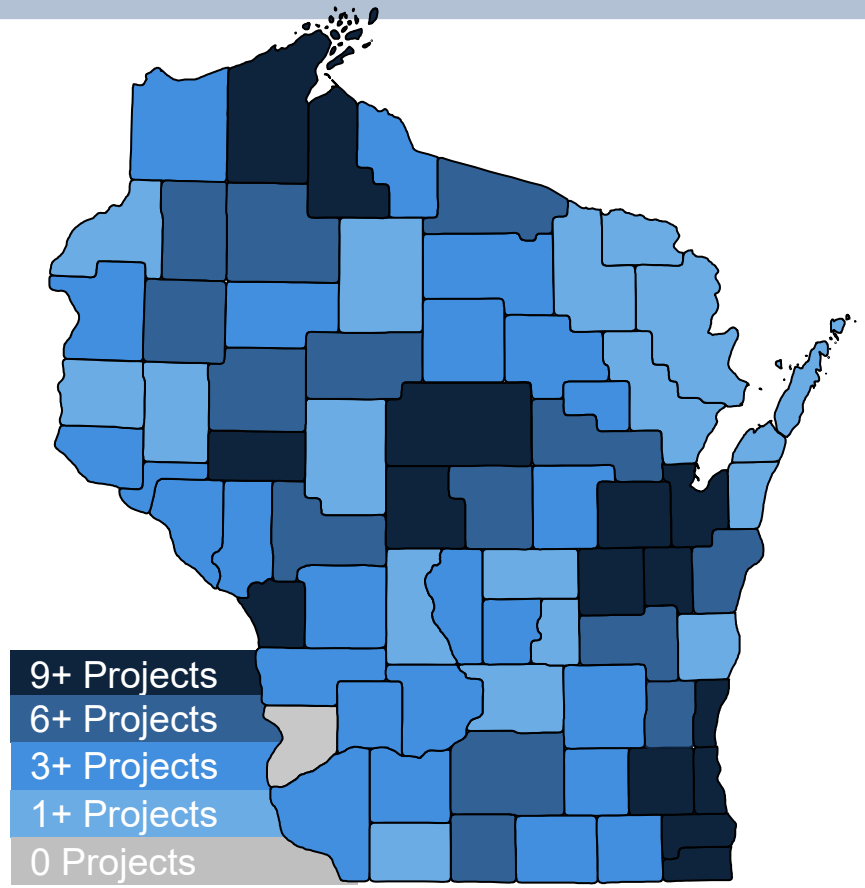
2024
Launch of 2024 – 2028 Five-Year Plan

Investing Across Wisconsin

Active Today

$80 Million INVESTED

186 Active PROJECTS



Projects to Date

Since 2004

$375 Million INVESTED*

889 WI-Based PROJECTS*

*As of June 30, 2025

Landmark Initiatives

Hypertension Control

Childhood Behavioral Health

Health Workforce Well-Being

Health Workforce Well-Being

Summary of need:

- A thriving workforce is essential for delivering safe, high-quality, patient-centered care.
- Record levels of burnout and increasing workplace stressors persist across all groups of health professionals.
- Significant and ongoing health workforce shortages place an enormous burden on our remaining health workers and thus jeopardizes the health of those within the state.

Summary of opportunities:

- There is growing consensus about how the needs of all healthcare and public health workers can, and must, be supported.
- Proven national strategies tailored for Wisconsin and implemented across geographies, sub-specialties, and systems will help maximize program reach and success.

Governor's Task Force on Healthcare Workforce Report (2024)

- *"More clinicians are leaving healthcare professions than are entering"*
- *"Burnout is driving clinicians from healthcare faster than the state can license replacements"*

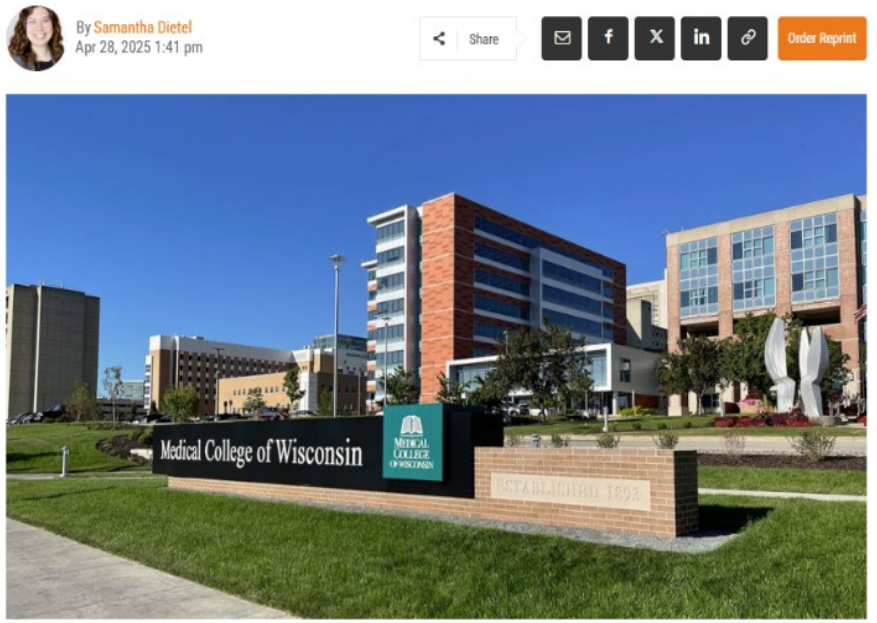
- The taskforce recommended that the state establish a comprehensive clinician well-being and retention program designed to support the healthcare workforce and keep them practicing at the highest level of safe practice

Health Workforce Well-Being

- **$3.2 million** award to the Wisconsin Hospital Association to develop a long-term professional well-being improvement plan focused on Wisconsin's healthcare workers with partnership from the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation.

- **$2.5 million** award to Wisconsin Medical Society to work with other healthcare associations to establish the Wisconsin Healthcare Professional Services Program.

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment awards more than $5.6 million to support health care workforce



The Medical College of Wisconsin, located at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center in Wauwatosa.

Wisconsin Hospital Association

Nadine Allen, MBA, CPHQ - Chief Quality Officer

Nadine Allen serves as Chief Quality Officer for the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA), providing strategic leadership for statewide quality and patient safety improvement initiatives. She oversees WHA's participation in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) 13th Statement of Work (13 SOW) through the Superior Health Quality Alliance and manages WHA's CheckPoint website, which publicly reports over 40 hospital quality measures.

Allen represents WHA on several state advisory groups focused on advancing healthcare quality. She also serves as Vice Chair of the Superior Health Quality Alliance board and Secretary of the 211 Wisconsin board. Prior to joining WHA in 2017, Allen held leadership roles in healthcare quality and performance improvement.

Workforce Well-Being – Background

- **Legislative Briefings & Reports** – Provides insights & policy solutions on workforce challenges
- **Strategic Development & Advocacy** – "Grow Our Own" grants, regulatory reforms, and *So Many Options* recruitment campaign
- **Workforce Sustainability** – Expanded educational pipelines, addressed nursing program barriers (faculty & clinical sites)
- **State Policy Leadership** – Governor's Council on Workforce Investment; to advance recruitment, retention & training capacity
- **WHA's Council on Workforce Development and Physician Leader's Council**
- **AHW Endowment Seed Grant –** conducted statewide workforce well-being assessment
- **AHW Landmark Initiative –** 5-year statewide workforce well-being effort

Initiative Overview

Aims

- **Aim 1:** Build a Collaborative Coalition & Develop a Long-Term Well-Being Plan
- **Aim 2:** Develop a Sustainability and Evaluation Framework
- **Aim 3:** Lead the “Caring for Wisconsin’s Caregivers” Initiative
- **Aim 4:** Leverage Partnerships for Evidence-Based Action
- **Aim 5:** Deliver Ongoing Communication and Engagement

AHW Landmark Initiative: Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers

ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN ENDOWMENT

Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation

Stefanie Simmons, MD, FACEP - Chief Medical Officer

Stefanie Simmons, MD, is the Chief Medical Officer at the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation and a board-certified emergency medicine physician. She was the primary advisor to CDC NIOSH for the Impact WellbeingTM guide for healthcare leaders, leads multi-state programs to improve the operational environment of care and remove barriers to mental health care, and serves as a national thought leader in healthcare worker well-being. She has served as the Vice President of Patient and Clinician Experience for Envision over 7 years, serving 26,000 physicians and advanced practice providers with a focus on professional wellbeing, including translational research and programs designed to bring well-being best practices to clinical environments. She served as lead clinical faculty for the Clinician Experience Project Wellbeing program.

J. Corey Feist, JD, MBA - CEO and Co-Founder

J. Corey Feist, is a healthcare executive with over 20 years of experience. He is the CEO and Co-Founder of the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation and has recently served as the CEO of the University of Virginia Physicians Group, the medical group practice of UVA Health composed of 1200+ physicians and advanced practice providers.

Corey has authored numerous publications on the need to support the well-being of the healthcare workforce. He has served as an expert in multiple forums, including as a keynote speaker, panelist, and moderator as well as provided formal testimony in the United States Congress. His advocacy efforts resulted in the first federal law focused on improving health worker well-being, Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act. In 2023, Corey and his wife, Jennifer, were both awarded the Surgeon General's Medallion for Health, the highest honor the US Surgeon General can present to civilians, for their efforts at the Foundation.

Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers

Working Together to Put Wellbeing First for Healthcare

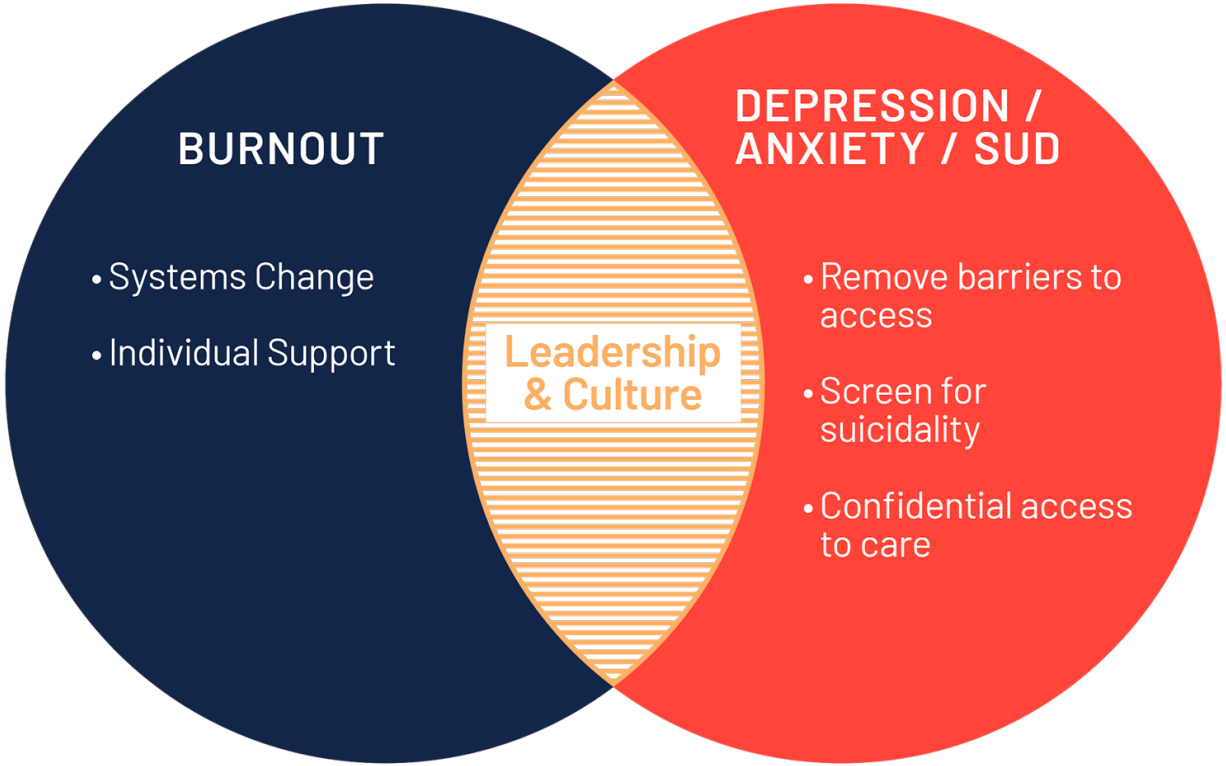
Wellbeing First for Healthcare

We envision a world where seeking mental health care is universally viewed as **a sign of strength** for health workers.

We believe every health worker should have **access to mental health care and professional wellbeing support** that they may need, at every moment in their career.

We are dedicated to addressing the operational practices and processes driving health worker burnout, while changing how the healthcare industry supports health workers' mental health.

Our Workforce Is Asking For Comprehensive Solutions



Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers

Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers builds a learning community to assist hospitals and medical groups in improving workplace policies and practices that reduce burnout, normalize help-seeking, and strengthen professional wellbeing—**accelerating impact to improve health workers' wellbeing and mental health**.

Guided by experts, hospitals and medical groups participate in three phases of our national technical assistance program to **implement the evidence-informed strategies in the *Impact Wellbeing™ Guide***

www.cdc.gov/niosh/healthcare/impactwellbeingguide/index.html

Caring for Caregivers

1. Break Down Barriers for Help-Seeking
2. Learn the Wellbeing Systems Approach
3. Integrate Wellbeing into Operational Improvement

Our Three Phase Approach

1 Breaking Down Barriers to Help-Seeking

- Intrusive, stigmatizing questions on credentialing and licensing applications **prevent many health workers from seeking mental health care** for fear of losing their jobs.
- **Auditing and updating applications removes barriers to care**, and communicating about this change sends a clear message of support for health workers' mental health and wellbeing.
- **Coordinated, state-level advocacy accelerates** change for both credentialing and licensing applications.

1 Champion

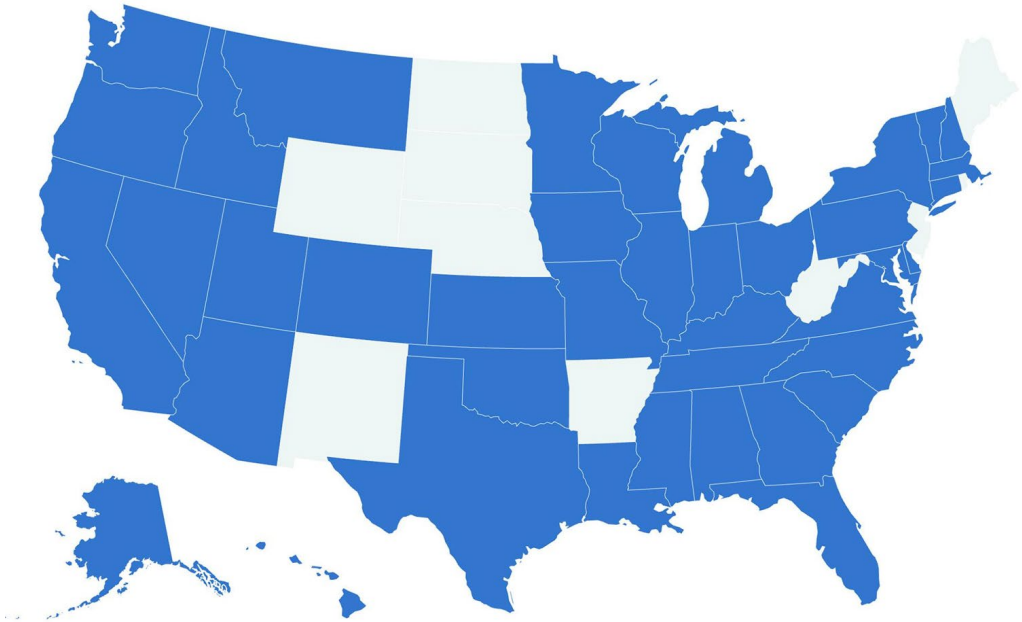
- Use the Credentialing Toolkit for Hospitals and Health Systems to
  1. **Audit** all credentialing applications, addendums, and peer review forms.
  2. **Change** any invasive or stigmatizing language around mental health.
  3. **Submit** applications to verify they are free from intrusive questions

Once applications are verified, organizations are recognized as a Wellbeing First Champion and provided a toolkit to **Educate and Communicate** these changes to their workforce and assure them it is safer for them to seek care.

Break Down Barriers to Help-Seeking

Our Impact

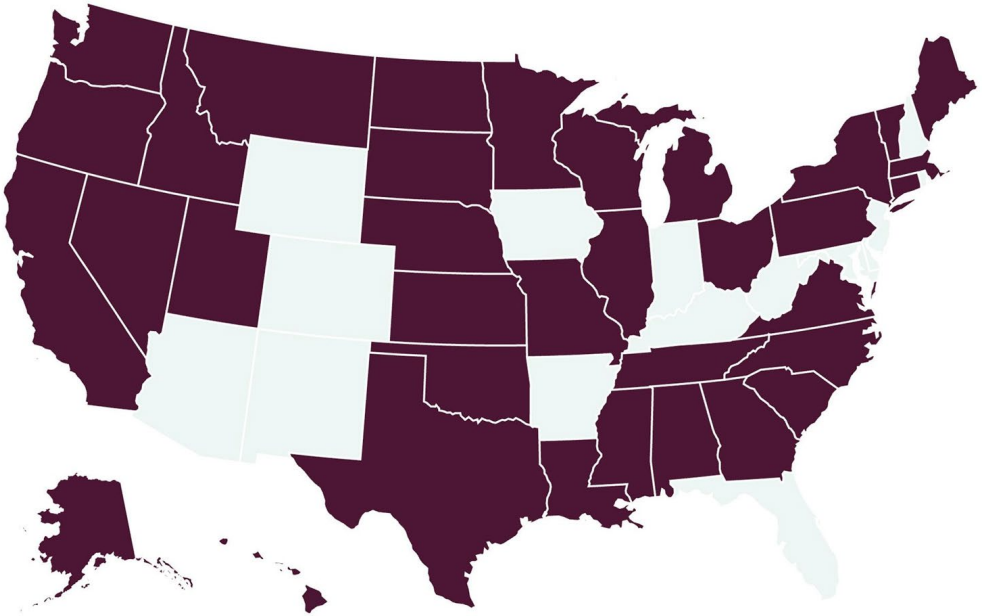
Wellbeing First Champions for Credentialing



- As of Sept. 19, 2025, **1,850 hospitals, medical centers, clinics, & other care facilities** verified their credentialing applications do not include intrusive mental health questions—benefiting nearly **357,000 credentialed health workers**.
- Also, 2 insurance companies (PacificSource Health Plans and Providence Health Plan) verified their credentialing applications—benefiting 52,000+ health workers.
- Additionally, Jackson and Coker Locum Tenens, Envision Healthcare, Vituity, and LocumTenens.com verified their internal applications and forms—benefiting 38,000 health workers.

Our Impact

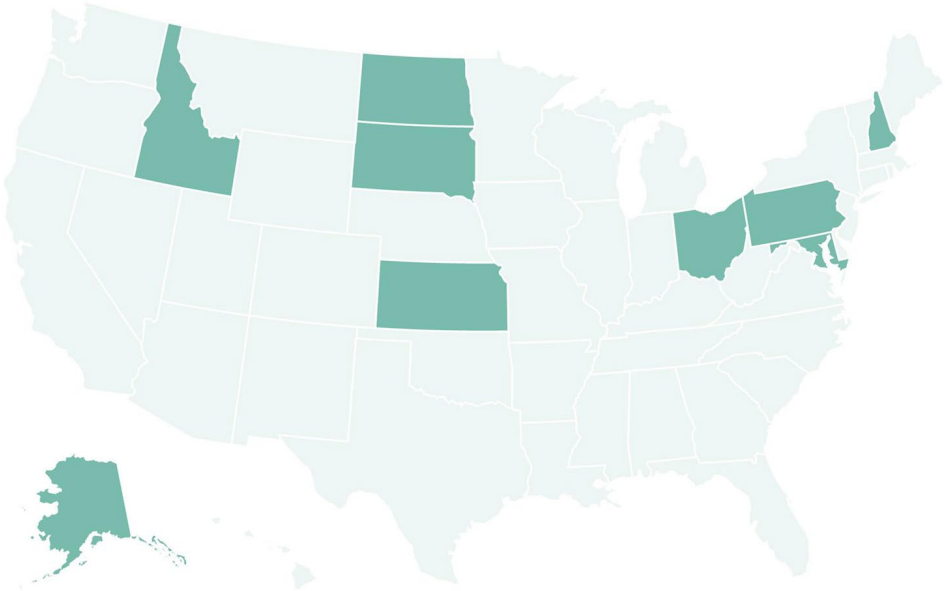
Wellbeing First Champions for Medical Licensing



As of Sept. 19, 2025, **40 medical licensure boards** verified their licensure applications do not include intrusive mental health questions—**benefiting more than 1 million physicians**.

Our Impact

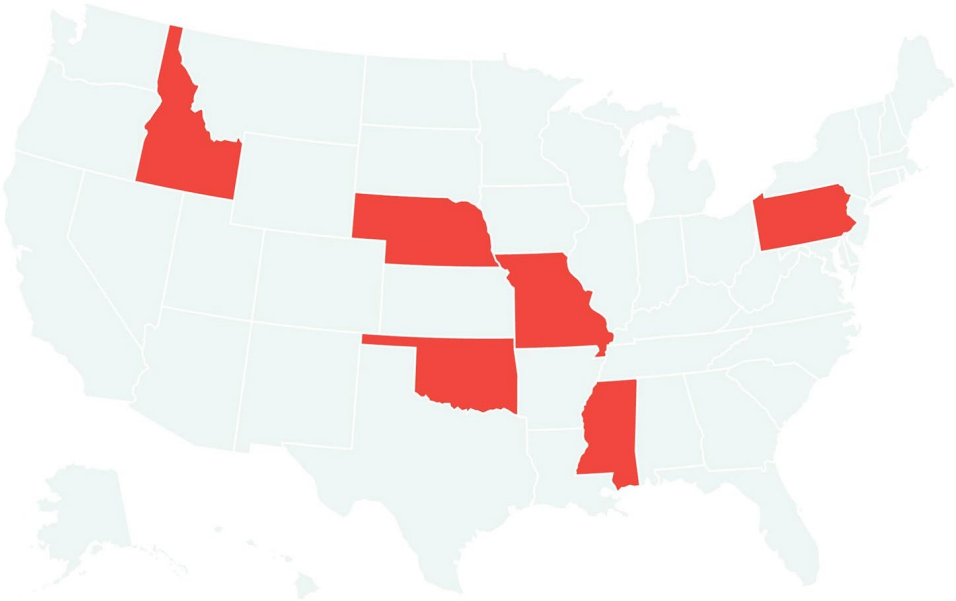
Wellbeing First Champions for Pharmacy Licensing



As of Sept. 19, 2025, **9 pharmacy licensure boards** verified their licensure applications do not include intrusive mental health questions—**benefiting 155,000+ pharmacy professionals**.

Our Impact

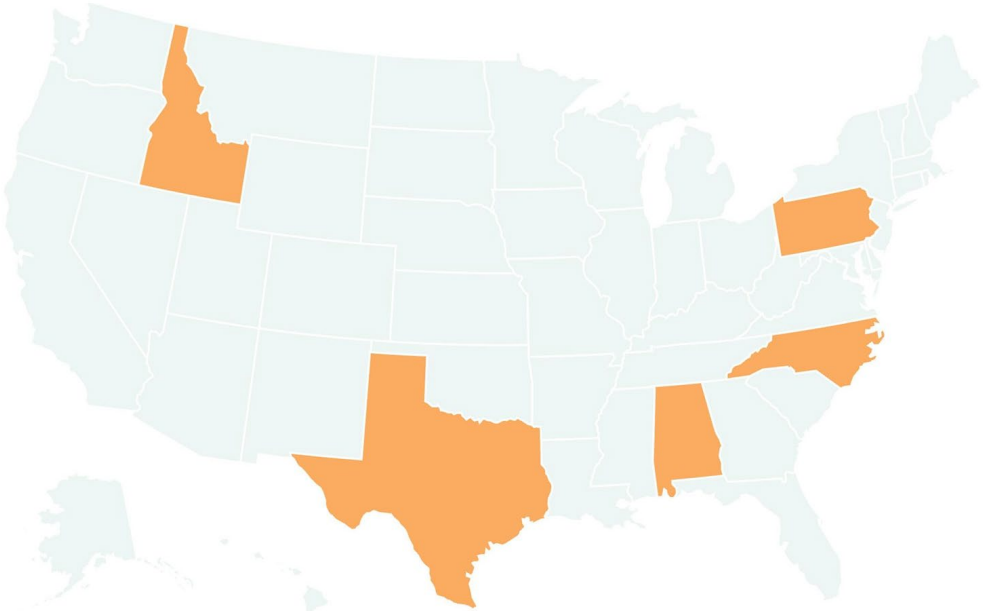
Wellbeing First Champions for Nurse Licensing



As of Sept. 19, 2025, **6 nursing licensure boards** verified their licensure applications do not include intrusive mental health questions—**benefiting nearly 580,000 nurses**.

Our Impact

Wellbeing First Champions for Dental Licensing



As of Sept. 19, 2025, **5 dental licensure boards** verified their licensure applications do not include intrusive mental health questions—benefiting nearly **65,000 dental professionals**.

Our Impact So Far…
Wisconsin's Champions

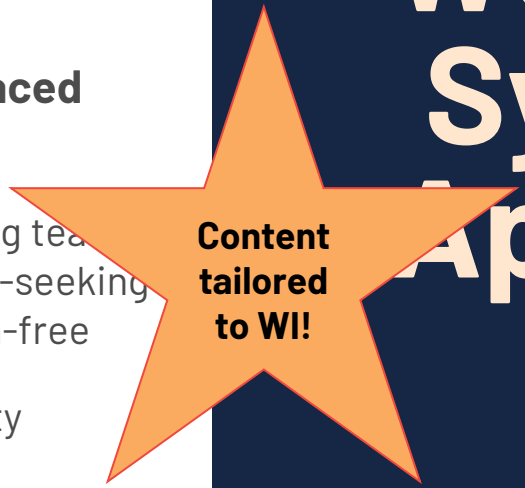
- **36 Wisconsin hospitals** verified their credentialing applications do not include intrusive mental health questions–benefiting **11,000+ credentialed health workers**.
  - Advocate Health/Aurora
  - Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin

- Additionally, University of Wisconsin, Children's Wisconsin, Marshfield Clinic System, Wisconsin Board of Nursing,Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board, and Wisconsin Pharmacy Examining Board are actively underway in updating and verifying.

2 Learn

- Assemble a **Professional Wellbeing Team** to participate in leadership training to gain the knowledge necessary to be an effective leader in improving professional wellbeing.

- The **3-hour on-demand, self-paced courses** includes content on:
  - Reviewing current operations
  - Building a professional wellbeing tea
  - Breaking down barriers for help-seeking
  - Prioritizing two-way and stigma-free communication
  - Integrating wellbeing into quality improvement



Learn the Wellbeing Systems Approach

2 Our Impact
Learn the Wellbeing Systems Approach

Nearly 100 leaders across 12 health systems completed the Wellbeing Systems Approach leadership development and training

"The wellbeing leader module gave me ideas on who I need to align and partner with to have an impact and to truly gain traction."

"Clearer in my mind the importance of gathering data on a regular basis and regularly reporting to team members, leadership and board members."

"Renewed sense to streamline workflows and improve training as well as introduce tools to make documentation easier."

"I had not thought about administrative burden separately, it always seems it has been part of the job!"

3 Apply

- Accelerate a quality improvement project that evaluates improving professional wellbeing with **technical assistance and a peer-to-peer learning community**.

- Professional Wellbeing Teams implement the **WELL-OPS process improvement technique** that:
  - Serves as a professional wellbeing lens to view operational change
  - Encourages engagement, community, and sustainability
  - Leverages and integrates into organizations' existing infrastructure and frameworks

Integrate Wellbeing into Operational Improvement

3 WELL-OPS Approach

- **W** – Who is on the Team?
- **E** – Evaluate Current State
- **L** – Learn What's Possible
- **L** – Line Up Measurement
- **O** – Operational Planning
- **P** – Produce Results
- **S** – Share What Works Where it Works

Augusta Health reduced their workforce's administrative burden by using Ambient Notes technology—
reducing physicians' documentation time by 10 minutes per patient visit, while improving patient experience ratings.

Carilion Clinic is optimizing prescription refill preferences in their EHR—**reducing clinicians' administrative burden of medication ordering and refilling**.

Centra Health decreased their workforce's cognitive burden by addressing EHR alert fatigue—**reducing unnecessary inpatient alerts by 52% and unnecessary ambulatory alerts by 73% per month.**

Our C4C Communities

We partner with organizations to guide effective leadership and culture transformation that creates better workplace environments for health workers' wellbeing and mental health.

Caring for New Jersey's Caregivers

in collaboration with

MSNJ Medical Society of New Jersey

New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

To health! NJHA New Jersey Hospital Association

NJSNA New Jersey State Nurses Association

Caring for North Carolina's Caregivers

in collaboration with

NCCPRW North Carolina Clinician and Physician Retention and Well-Being Consortium

NCHA North Carolina Healthcare Association

NCMS North Carolina Medical Society

NCNA North Carolina Nurses Association

Caring for Virginia's Caregivers

in collaboration with

Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association — An alliance of hospitals and health delivery systems

MSV Medical Society of Virginia

VNA Virginia Nurses Association

HIMSS Virginia Chapter

Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers

in collaboration with

WHA Wisconsin Hospital Association

Wisconsin Medical Society

WNA Wisconsin Nurses Association

MCW Medical School

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment

and many more...

Caring for J+C's Caregivers

in collaboration with

Jackson + Coker Locum Tenens

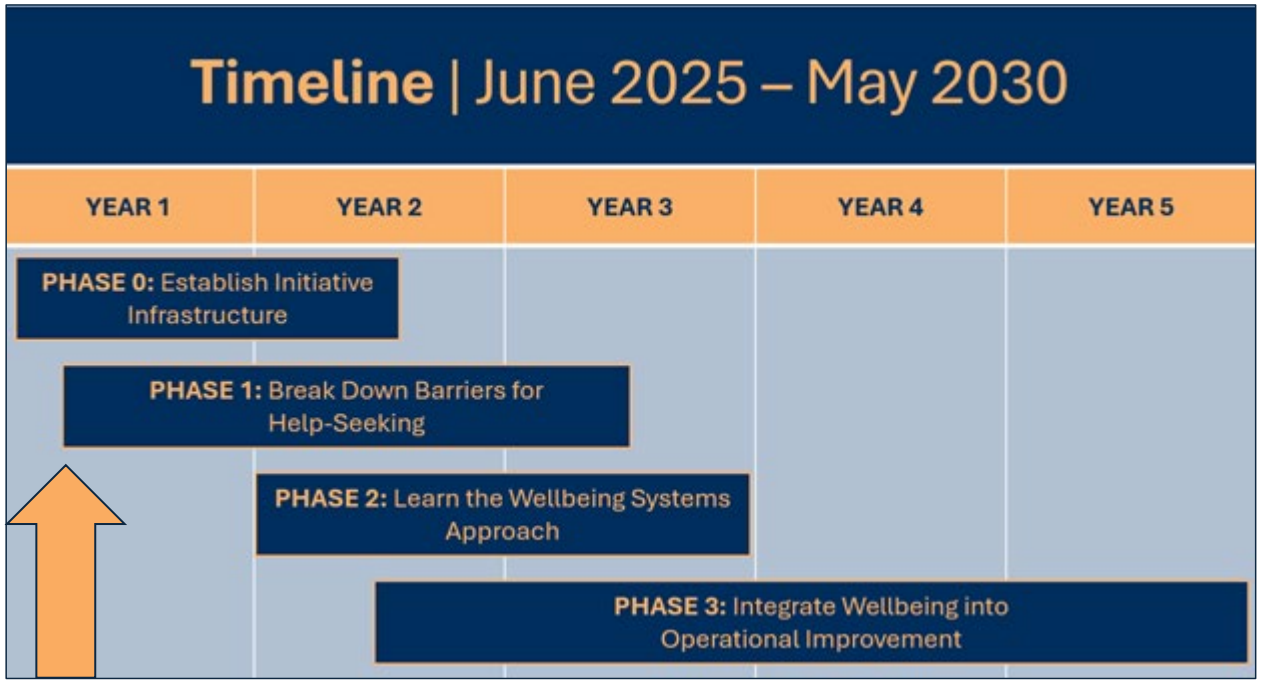
Caring for Caregivers is supported by

J&J Foundation

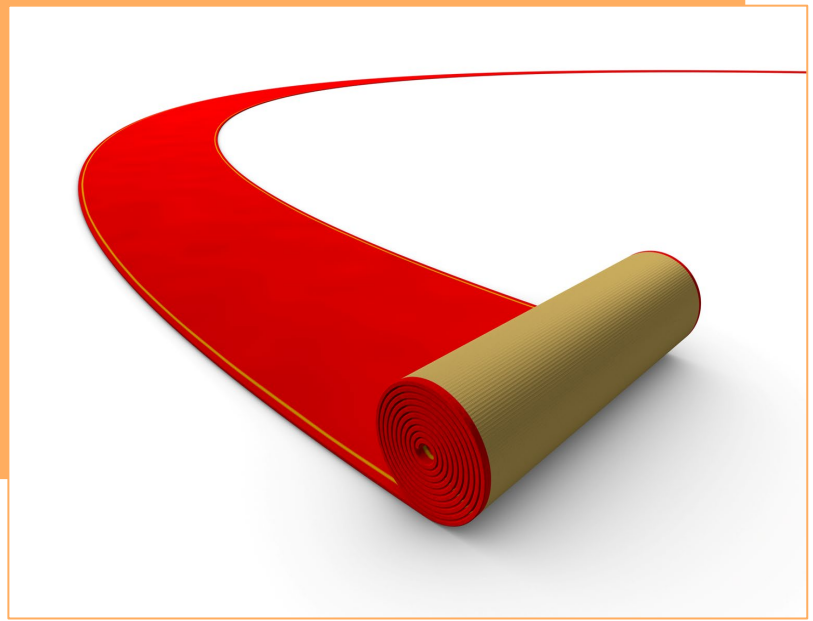
The Physicians Foundation

stryker

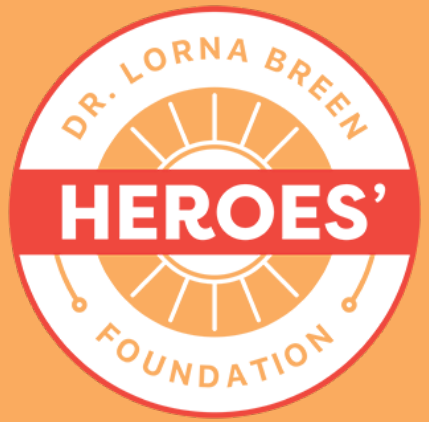
Program Timeline



Step One Roll Out



- Webinar for hospital leaders.
- Webinar for CMOs/Med staff services team.
- Continued socialization



Thank You

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers Well-Being First Champion Challenge for Credentialing Kickoff

Learn how to get started in our first phase of collaborative work – Well-Being First Champion Challenge for Credentialing

When: January 14, 2026 from 12:00-1:00 CT

Who: CMOs, Medical Staff Services/credentialing team colleagues, and others leading workforce well-being efforts in hospitals, health systems, and organizations.

Keep in touch!

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