



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WHA COUNCIL ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A strong workforce continues to be integral in ensuring healthy outcomes for those we serve. The efforts to sustain our health care workforce are critical to the health and vitality of all Wisconsinites.

As an executive for a rural hospital, I have experienced firsthand how shrinking reimbursement, rising costs and continued workforce shortages can lead to service changes and even hospital closures. As the chair of the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Council on Workforce Development, I have had a front row seat in WHA's efforts to grow, recruit, support and sustain the health care workforce. Their work and the work of this council is essential to performing our shared mission of meeting the health care needs of the communities we serve.

I've been privileged to lead my organization to meet these challenges and expand the services needed by the region. I've been inspired by the can-do attitude of the care teams and dedicated professionals serving Wisconsin citizens.

I also know that continued support and investment by our state leaders, our partners in education and our hospitals and health systems is essential. Health care is contending with an aging population that needs more frequent and intense attention. At the same time, these demographic forces are shrinking the available workforce. Increasing health care needs, hospital bed shortages and nursing home bottlenecks, if unaddressed, can lead to delays in patient care and rising financial pressures. The situation is compounded by payer shifts from private insurance to Medicare reimbursement that falls short of covering the cost of providing care.

Yet, due to the work of my hospital colleagues and WHA, I have hope for the future. A career in health care is one of the most rewarding and impactful endeavors that exist. In my opinion, it is the greatest job in the world! I am confident my fellow health care leaders, along with our partners in education and government, will act based on WHA's recommendations to grow and sustain the health care workforce needed to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

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