

Speaker Robin Vos Discusses Discharge Challenges, Price Transparency

During a panel hosted by Wisconsin Health News on June 13, Speaker Robin Vos was asked about Republican priorities in this upcoming state budget and a recent proposal from a group of lawmakers that would create separate state-level regulations to enforce federal price transparency requirements on hospitals.

"It's fair to say that all health care providers would like a [Medicaid reimbursement] increase," said Vos. "There are a lot of priorities, and we are trying to see which has the biggest impact."

"I believe that primary care is an area that we have underinvested in the past, so I would like to see a Medicaid increase in primary care," said Vos.

Vos then talked about how the Legislature can address some of health care's most challenging problems and policy areas he has personally worked on over the last several months.

"To the credit of both the nursing home association and the hospitals, we have been trying to work on some acuity rates so if you are a difficult-to-care-for patient, we don't want them in a hospital because a nursing home can't accept them and have the hospital be unreimbursed," said Vos.

"One of the best parts of this job is learning from people who are really smart about their area and understanding their problem," said Vos. "No, it's not fair that the hospital is not getting paid for that patient, because oftentimes they get an entire amount for the patient no matter how long they are in the hospital."

"We want to do something that allows for an acuity rate to say if you are a hard-to-care-for patient, if you have special circumstances, if you're in the hospital you will get paid and if you are in the nursing home you will get paid for the costs of providing that care. I hope we can get consensus on this; it's hard to get there. I don't know if it will be in the budget. We are still negotiating on some of those things even today, but that idea is one that I hope we can wrap our mind around because it will be better for the system and better for the patient."

WHN Editor Tim Stumm asked Vos about legislation circulated by Sen. Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma) that would create separate state-level price transparency requirements on hospitals with fines that are substantially larger than those imposed by the federal government. The legislation, opposed by WHA, was formally introduced this past week as [2023 Senate Bill 328](#).

"I haven't read the bill," said Vos. "I'm a huge supporter of price transparency. I want to make sure that if a consumer wants to know what a procedure costs, then they have every right to know."

But Vos questioned the need for additional state-level regulations when there already exists a regulatory and enforcement process at the federal level.

"The federal government has already mandated this under President Trump, that there is price transparency," said Vos. "My understanding is that you can go on a website now, type in the procedure and you can see what it costs at different places. The idea of price transparency is something that Republicans support, I think it's good for the system—I don't have any problem with that at all. I just don't know if the bill as it's drafted is necessary based on what the federal government is doing."



Robin Vos

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