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Thursday, October 23, 2025

WHA Submits Testimony on Surgical Smoke Legislation

On Oct. 22, WHA submitted written testimony on Senate Bill 442, which requires hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) to implement policies to prevent exposure to surgical smoke in operating rooms by requiring the use of a smoke evacuation system during any surgery likely to generate surgical smoke.

WHA's testimony highlighted that this legislation is unnecessary because Wisconsin hospitals are already furnished with the appropriate equipment to remove surgical smoke in operating rooms and therefore already compliant with the requirements set forth in the legislation. In addition, WHA remains concerned with and cautions legislators against adopting state-level hospital mandates on an industry that already abides by onerous regulatory requirements at both the state and federal levels.

The bill author, Sen. Cabral-Guevara, acknowledged that surgical smoke isn't much of a problem in Wisconsin hospitals, but rather seems to be an issue in ambulatory surgery centers.

WHA expressed appreciation to Sen. Rachael Cabral-Guevara for addressing concerns WHA had previously heard from providers that smoke evacuation equipment may impact dexterity, efficiency or visibility during certain surgery operations and cause noise that can prevent communication amongst the care team. In response to these concerns raised by WHA, Sen. Cabral-Guevara included language in the bill that will not require the use of a surgical smoke evacuation system if the surgeon concludes that its use is not necessary or advisable under the circumstances.

In the Department of Health Services' written testimony, they acknowledge that "while this legislation would enhance safety, DHS recognizes the potential for significant financial and operational impacts on existing hospitals and ASCs, particularly in the cost of updating infrastructure to comply with the new standards."

This bill now awaits any further action by the Senate committee and has not yet been assigned to a committee in the Assembly.

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EDUCATION EVENTS

Oct. 30, 2025

careLearning Overview: Learning Management System (LMS)

Nov. 6, 2025

Hospital Board Education

Jan. 28, 2026

2026 WHA Health Care Leadership Academy