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Thursday, September 24, 2026

WHA and Workforce Leaders Weigh in on Workforce Burdens

Hospital and health system leaders had two opportunities to interact with WHA on the burden regulations can place on Wisconsin's health care workforce. On Sept. 18, 2026, the WHA Council on Workforce Development spent most of their two-hour meeting discussing legislation that has reduced burden, proposals that could add burden and navigating a state law intended to reduce the burden of violence in the health care workplace. Then on Sept. 22, WHA General Counsel Matthew Stanford and WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk led an educational webinar and discussion on "External Burdens Weighing Down You and Your Workforce."

In their meeting on Sept. 18, the workforce council heard from the WHA government relations team that the state's new "next-of-kin" law was being utilized to break down long waits for post-acute care, and that hospital leaders were helping their community partners in adult protective services and nursing homes understand the new law that allows family members to better assist incapacitated family members. The group also discussed the Sept. 1 implementation of the new state law, 2025 Wisconsin Act 17, that creates a license and recognized roles for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), and how some components of the new law have employers, physicians and APRNs stuck "between a rock and a hard place." The group spent the second part of their meeting discussing internal and external efforts to protect the health care workforce, including how the enhanced penalty for violence or threats of violence against health care workers is playing out in their community. As one member noted, "The law properly focuses on intentional violence against health care workers and can be helpful for that," adding "but this is only a small portion of the incidents we encounter. A far larger portion are individuals struggling with dementia where the law does not, and should not, apply." The council agreed that this is becoming an increasing concern, especially as access to care outside of the hospital is becoming increasingly difficult for these patients.

The Sept. 22 webinar led by Stanford and Zenk provided a second opportunity for human resources, patient care and physician leaders to consider the impact of burden on their workforce and opportunities to ease that burden. Stanford and Zenk provided an overview of workforce trends, regulatory burden and the challenges hospitals face as a baseline for the discussion. Attendees were polled on internal and external sources, such as hospital policies (internal), Joint Commission requirements and state and federal law and administrative rule, and the level of understanding leaders and the health care workforce had about the source of requirements that can produce frustration and burnout. Stanford noted, "Not understanding the external sources and pressures behind the day-to-day workplace frustrations they face can be as much a source of burden and burnout as the regulatory burden itself." Attendees and WHA left the webinar better informed on the impact of burden on the workforce, a better direction to promote a common understanding and a more focused path for solutions.

Stay in touch regarding regulatory burden and the workforce by reaching out to Ann Zenk or Matthew Stanford.

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- Experts Share Updates on Upcoming Health Insurance Coverage Changes at WHA-Sponsored Conference
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- Fast Facts from the WHA Information Center: September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

EDUCATION EVENTS

Oct. 15, 2026

Substance Use Disorders Management Boot Camp

Oct. 15, 2026

Culture College – Breakthrough Strategies for Creating and Sustaining a Magnetic Culture

Oct. 20, 2026

Wlpop Virtual Training: Session 1