

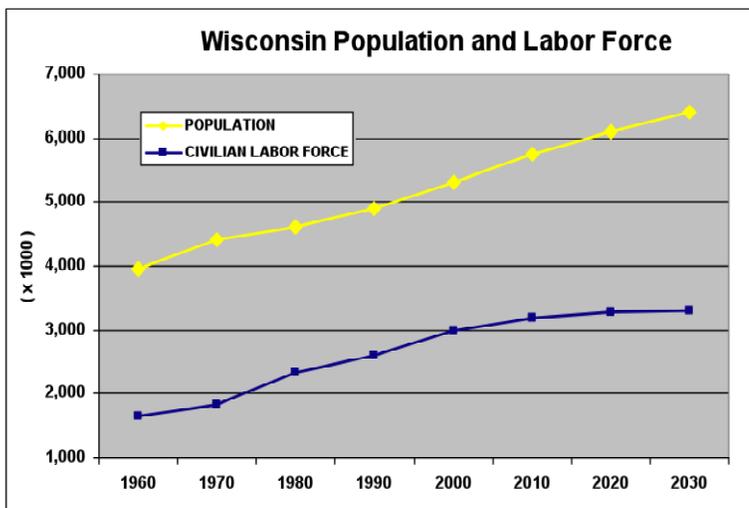
TO: Senator Terry Moulton, Chair  
Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Small Business, and Tourism

FROM: Jeremy Levin, Director of Advocacy  
Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative

DATE: February 22, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT** Senate Bill 450 – Relating to collecting workforce survey information from health care providers

The Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC), owned and operated by 34 rural community hospitals, thanks you for this opportunity to express our support for Senate Bill 450, which seeks to survey healthcare professionals at the time of licensure renewal. SB 450 is a Joint Legislative Council bill that was introduced as a work product of the 2010 Interim Legislative Council Study Committee on Health Care Access, chaired by Senator Olsen. This proposal, WLC: 0066/2, was unanimously reported out by the study committee.



The adjacent figure shows the projected Wisconsin population and its corresponding labor force. This is a very general projection that does not take into the occupations or geographic distribution of that projected labor force. To get into that level of detail survey data would be necessary.

The October 2008 Report from the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce, *Who Will Care For Our Patients?* estimates the future supply and demand of physicians from a number of separate projections for the years 2020 and 2030. The report found the most likely scenario shows a small shortfall in 2030 for all physicians, with the **worst-case shortfall of 44%**. However, for **primary care** physicians, the most likely scenario predicts shortfalls of 8% by 2020, and 14% by 2030. **The worst-case shortfall is 57%**.

Source: Dennis K. Winters, Chief, Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 9/07.

More recently in the Wisconsin Hospital Association report *100 New Physicians a Year: An Imperative for Wisconsin*, it projected the “daunting challenge of addressing a conservatively estimated shortfall in Wisconsin of 2,000 physicians by 2030.” Even less is known in regards to the adequacy and geographic distribution of dentists, dental hygienists, psychologists, physical therapists, physician assistants, pharmacists, or clinical social workers.

RWHC has long supported the collection of better healthcare workforce data, in the 2009-2011 Biennial Budget, the Joint Finance Committee included a provision nurses in Wisconsin had to be surveyed at the time of re-licensure. This was a compulsory provision and lead to 100% survey participation by the current nursing workforce. The results of the 2010 survey have allowed healthcare employers and educators to improve their forecasting and their focus on meeting future nursing workforce needs. The survey is currently open for the 2012 renewal and again, all nurses are expected to participate.

Recently a voluntary survey was conducted this renewal year for physicians; it was completed by only approximately 30% of physicians. A return rate that small unfortunately does not allow for the same analysis, strength of conclusion, and projections as the 100% response rate of the nursing survey.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on and express our support on SB 450. We encourage the Committee to act on the bill, so that it might become law before the end of the current legislative session. This proposal will ultimately provide Wisconsin’s health care educators and employers with better workforce forecasting data and help ensure prudent healthcare workforce decisions.