

## WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



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

**FROM:** Judy Warmuth – Vice President for Workforce

**DATE:** February 22, 2012

**RE:** Support for Senate Bill 450, relating to a health care workforce survey

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The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) enthusiastically supports Senate Bill (SB) 450, relating to collecting workforce survey information from health care providers.

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.

For background, you may recall that in the 2009-2011 Biennial Budget, the Joint Finance Committee included a provision that a survey be added to the re-licensure process for nurses in Wisconsin. The provision has led to 100% survey participation by the current nursing workforce. The results of this year's survey have allowed healthcare employers and educators to improve their forecasting and their focus on meeting future nursing workforce needs.

As you are aware, a current and chronic shortage of physicians and other health care professionals is a problem that is projected to worsen in Wisconsin without immediate action, prompting our request for the hearing on SB 450. While a voluntary physician survey was conducted this year, 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.

WHA collects vacancy data on hospital clinical positions and also asks members to report the number of clinical staff over age 55. Annual workforce reports on this data show significant numbers of workers are at or near retirement age and that vacancy rates for some positions such as physical therapist and pharmacist remain concerns for hospitals. But the current survey of Registered Nurses also reported that less than 50% of today's RN workforce works in hospitals, pointing out the need for true statewide data.

As with the nursing survey, we believe the increased response rates that will result from instituting additional healthcare workforce surveys at the time of license renewal will allow educational facilities to better predict what categories of workers they should be preparing. The information will also allow health care employers to better plan for their future needs, and ultimately improve overall access to health care by assuring a strong future workforce.

We ask for your support for SB 450 and your help in advancing the bill into 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 health care workforce decisions.