



WACEP President's Message, April 2021
Bradley Burmeister, MD, FACEP

Thanks to all who were able to participate in last week's virtual Spring Symposium! I will use this opportunity to recap the report I shared during our Annual Membership Meeting.

First, I hope everyone is finding themselves a bit more optimistic this year compared to last year at this time. Even through our annual conference and membership meeting were virtual, I'm thankful that we had an opportunity to get together to continue our important work and to come together as a state.

I certainly look forward to when we can all be together again in person. This year has been incredibly challenging for our entire community. As you all have no doubt experienced, unique challenges have presented themselves in practicing Emergency Medicine. WACEP leadership has been working hard to support you, our members, and all emergency physicians in the state. Specifically, we heard that emergency physician groups were struggling with decreased volumes and revenue and were forced to cut back hours and lay off staff. We worked with the Governor's office to make CARES Act dollars available via CAPP patients. This resulted in millions of dollars to support emergency physician practice in Wisconsin.

We have worked tirelessly both at the state and national levels to mitigate potential risk with surprise billing legislation. Here, insurance companies saw significant potential financial advantage by rate setting potentially allowing out-of-network reimbursement to be even worse than negotiated in-network fees. In fact, many of your peers in WI traveled to DC to discuss concerns with our policymakers, and we think we have pretty good policy going forward.

Through the Emergency Psych Task Force, WACEP continues to work cooperatively with the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association on mental health issues. Together we've made great progress on improving mental health access and building on the relationship between emergency department and psychiatric centers across the state.

Lastly, as hopefully you have heard, we are very excited that emergency medicine has finally been considered in the

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Governor's proposed executive budget for a Medicaid reimbursement rate increase that is planned to be permanent, not linked to Medicaid expansion, and that would improve rates by more than 30% of current rates. Though this move would advance us from last in the nation to just 45th, the move would be a giant step forward and would effectively represent millions of dollars in additional funding to your practice per year if it survives the legislative budget process. Stay tuned for information on how you can help!

I've outlined just a few of the many things that we have been working on as your professional association. None of this would be possible without you, our members. As a membership organization we depend largely on your membership and engagement to allow for our continued advocacy work. Your membership will help us make needed advancements in Emergency Medicine in Wisconsin. We are YOUR voice; we are there to protect you, your practice and your patients. Thanks for your membership!

~Brad

Advocacy Action Alert

WACEP needs your help! As you know, we have been working for decades to obtain an increase in Medicaid reimbursement to help support our work as the state's healthcare safety net. We are honored to take care of anyone who comes to the ED 24/7/365, but currently, Medicaid reimbursement only pays for 40% of the cost of taking care of a Medicaid enrollee patient.

For years, WACEP has continued to communicate our concerns about being able to attract and retain emergency physicians to our state, given that our Medicaid reimbursement is lower than any other state in the nation. Now more than ever after the COVID roller coaster of ED volumes, and after federal support has come and gone, it remains questionable whether our ED safety net is sustainable.

Governor Evers heard us, and his budget bill contains funding to increase Medicaid reimbursement specifically for emergency physicians! We need your help to push this across the finish line as our legislators now consider priorities for their version of a budget bill.

Please watch for a call to action via grassroots advocacy in the next couple of weeks where we will prompt you to send messages to your legislators regarding our specific budget ask for increased Medicaid reimbursement for emergency physicians.

Thank you so much for keeping emergency medicine in Wisconsin strong!

Lisa Maurer, MD, FACEP
WACEP Legislative Committee Chair

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Are you Registered for Doctor Day?

This year, Wisconsin's premier advocacy day for physicians will take place virtually on **Wednesday, May 5**. The lineup for Doctor Day 2021 includes:

Keynote Presentation: Dr. Susan R. Bailey, 175th president of the American Medical Association, will present on What Will Healthcare Look Like Post COVID-19? She will highlight delivery of care, rebounding from physician stress, and the impact of the pandemic on the physician workforce.

Policy & Politics Panel Discussion: Hear from members of the powerful budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance a first-hand account of important budget topics as they are amidst budget negotiations. Issues highlighted will include DHS policy, funding for the Medicaid Program and more and will present differing views on policy and spending priorities for the 2021-23 Biennial Budget and the current legislative session.

Policy Updates / Breakout Sessions

Legal Update: Axley attorneys Guy DuBeau and Aneet Kaur will review the landscape of litigation trends, scope of practice developments and more.

Public Health Update: Milwaukee Health Commissioner Kirsten Johnson will lead a discussion of the local public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Equity Update: Wisconsin has an overall health disparities grade of "D". What are we doing to achieve long-lasting and equitable health outcomes for Wisconsinites?

Special Guest: WI Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes and Interim DHS Secretary, Karen Timberlake.

Priority Issues Briefing

The priority issues for Doctor Day 2021 include Telehealth and Medicaid. Issue papers are being drafted and will be available soon!

Not signed up? [Register Today!](#)

Premium Holiday for State's Medical Malpractice Fund

April 6, Wisconsin Health News

The premium holiday for Wisconsin's medical malpractice fund will continue until mid-2022 to help offset impacts on providers from COVID-19.

Insurance Commissioner Mark Afable notified the Joint Finance Committee last week that he's requesting that fiscal year 2022 rates for healthcare providers participating in the Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund remain the same as the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. [Read more.](#)
