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WHA Statements: Signing of Advance Directive Legislation (AB 287) and Harm to a Health Care Worker (SB 163)

The following statement regarding this morning’s enactment of AB 287, which bolsters the state’s advance directives law, can be attributed to WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding:

“WHA thanks Representatives Patrick Snyder and Steve Doyle, and Senators Howard Marklein and Janis Ringhand for authoring AB 287 and Governor Tony Evers for signing this needed legislation into law. Removing outdated regulatory barriers and allowing our advanced practice clinicians to help patients with their treatment wishes makes good sense. AB 287 enables care providers to practice at the top of their license while encouraging greater collaboration and team-based care. This legislation is good for Wisconsin families, patients and providers, and it’s another in a growing list of examples of health care and elected officials working together in Wisconsin to enact sound health care policy.”

Background:

A WHA legislative priority, Assembly Bill 287 addresses a regulatory bottleneck in Wisconsin’s health care workforce that results in unnecessary delays in acting upon a patient’s advance directive wishes for treatment. The new law helps address these delays by recognizing the education and training of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to make the medical diagnoses necessary to activate the patient’s written medical wishes. Under the law, a physician must still confirm the diagnosis; a patient retains the option of requiring two physicians to complete any needed assessments.

The following statement regarding this morning’s enactment of SB 163, which increases the potential maximum penalty for causing intentional bodily harm to a health worker, can be attributed to WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding:

“In the face of increasing violence against health care workers, it is encouraging that a large bipartisan group of legislators and the Governor are coming together and agree that such actions are unacceptable, especially when perpetrated against the dedicated women and men who care for our families and loved ones. WHA thanks Senators Dale Kooyenga and Tim Carpenter, and Representatives Gae Magnafici and Cindi Duchow, the bipartisan authors who drafted and championed the Health Care Worker Protection Bill, and Governor Evers for promptly signing this important legislation into law.”

Background:

Senate Bill 163 increases the possible maximum penalty for this crime from a Class A misdemeanor to a felony. Originally drafted to cover harm involving nurses, the bill was amended – at WHA’s urging – to apply to all acts committed against any licensed health care professional working in a hospital.