

WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



October 1, 2008

TO: Special Committee on Emergency Management and Continuity of Government

FROM: Bill Bazan, Vice-President, Wisconsin Hospital Association

RE: Issues affecting hospitals in a time of a declared disaster

Thank you to all members of this special committee. My name is Bill Bazan and I am representing our Wisconsin hospitals and health care systems when it comes to hospital emergency preparedness. I also am a liaison with the State Division of Public Health and the Hospital Emergency Preparedness program. I am pleased to share with you two major issues that could influence our hospitals' ability to respond adequately to the needs of the residents of Wisconsin in times of an emergency.

Two broad issues have surfaced that need attention.

1. **A REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS:** Currently there is no vehicle for all preparedness partners to be at the same table when it comes to collaborative disaster planning. There is still somewhat of a "silo mentality" wherein there is still too much fragmentation. Emergency Management needs to be at a regional table to develop with all partners a comprehensive, collaborative planning process. From the hospital and health care system perspective, we are open to whatever geographic region would be used for regional planning.
2. **STATUTORY WAIVERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY WISCONSIN:**
 - Provision of payments to providers who experience catastrophic costs caring for and treating victims in a public health emergency.
 - Requirements for guardianship (a lengthy process) in case of a patient's incapacity and the need for palliative or nursing home care for that patient. Requirements should be waived/modified in a public health emergency.
 - Health care facilities would need a waiver if they were to exceed the number of licensed beds in case of an emergency.
 - Some managed care changes: a) that copayments be made prior to service; b) pre-authorization of services; c) providers should not be restricted by preferred provider networks in a public health emergency.

These are only a few samples of State statutes that need modification/change. There are also federal laws needing amendment. WHA strongly suggests that a work group be established that would develop a list of state and federal statutes that need a waiver connected to them for public health emergencies.