



WISCONSIN EMERGENCY CARE IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY

DOCTOR DAY | JANUARY 2024

On the Front Lines During Difficult Times: Emergency Physicians are the FIRST to care for patients suffering from heart attack, acute mental illness, trauma, and stroke. Emergency Physicians provide care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

WACEP Opposes SB 145/AB 154, the APRN Bill, as Currently Drafted.

WACEP supports a team approach in healthcare delivery. Patient safety relies on physicians, nurses, physician assistants and others working together.

The APRN bill as it currently stands creates a substantial shift in healthcare care delivery and will have negative impacts on patient safety unless there is additional negotiation and significant improvement on the bill. We hope to see continued movement and ultimately compromise on this legislation. WACEP also strongly supports the inclusion of the provisions contained in the compromise proposed in the Governor's executive budget which would require Emergency Departments to be staffed at all times by an Emergency Physician. All Wisconsin residents, especially those living in the most rural parts of the state, deserve access to an Emergency Physician when their lives are on the line. It is commonplace for a physician to do one or more of the following procedures on an average shift, which a nurse practitioner would not be prepared to do safely:

- Perform an intubation so a patient can be hooked up to a ventilator when they stop breathing.
- Diagnose the cause of a cardiac arrest and lead resuscitation measures working to restart the heart.
- Interpret EKGs to diagnose heart attack or life-threatening heart rhythm.
- Use a needle to emergently go through someone's chest to take fluid off someone's swollen and failing heart.
- Drain fluid off an injured or infected lung cavity, which can happen in the most severe cases of rib fractures or pneumonia.
- Place a catheter in a neck vein to give potent medicines for patients with sepsis or other conditions causing dangerously low blood pressure.
- Provide appropriate care for a child in respiratory distress.

Although some patients can be cared for appropriately without these procedures, an in-person emergency physician is of the utmost importance to patients who need more advanced care.

Medicaid Reimbursement: Thank You for significant progress on improving emergency physician rates!

In the 2021 budget process, emergency physician codes were increased for the first time in three decades. In the 2023 budget process, they were increased again to 40% of the Medicare rate. WACEP thanks the Wisconsin Legislature and Governor Evers for prioritizing these desperately needed increases. While there is still room for improvement compared to other states, we are hopeful that the increases over the last two budgets will help attract more board-certified emergency physicians to our state, increase specialty coverage, and improve access to care. Thank you again for your continued support.

Please Support – Post Partum Benefit Extension: WACEP is part of the strong coalition working to extend post-partum benefits to twelve months. This provision was contained in the Governor's budget and has been introduced as SB 110/AB 114 authored by Senators Joan Ballweg and Mary Felzkowski and Representatives Donna Rozar and Tony Kurtz with more than 60 bipartisan cosponsors.

