



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



TENNESSEE
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION



THA Center for Innovative Solutions



TENNESSEE CENTER FOR
HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

THA PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Wendy Long, M.D.
President and CEO
Tennessee Hospital Association
Brentwood, TN

THA began 2021 by achieving the goal of 100 percent membership among acute care hospitals in Tennessee – and never has it been more critical for hospitals throughout the state to have a forum to plan, debate and collaborate.

THA was active in promoting masking and vaccination messaging, and sharing COVID hospitalization data with the public, while the THA board tackled difficult issues such as vaccine mandates and workforce challenges.

After a year of only virtual gatherings, the board began meeting again in person in March. In October, THA held its first in-person annual membership meeting in two years, with enhanced educational offerings and numerous tributes to the frontline staff battling the COVID pandemic. THA's Agenda 21 program also returned in full swing, with a record number of minority and female graduate-level healthcare administration students placed in summer internships in Tennessee hospitals.

Although COVID-19 continued to dominate the healthcare landscape in 2021, the return of some level of "business as usual" brought other important issues to the forefront. As foreshadowed in the prior legislative session, the Tennessee General Assembly pursued comprehensive certificate of need (CON) reform and THA successfully advocated to preserve CON requirements for the services prioritized by the Board of Directors.

THA also fought back a proposed TennCare cut to 340B reimbursement and began work with TennCare on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)-required changes to the graduate medical education (GME) funding methodology.

Following CMS's September disapproval of the emergency 1115 waiver request that TennCare had submitted in fall 2020, THA's Supplemental Pools Task Force continued its work to identify funding strategies to better address hospital uncompensated care costs. This work culminated in proposals to reclassify directed payments, implement a quality incentive program, and pursue a one-time directed payment using assessment funds accumulated as a result of the enhanced match associated with the public health emergency.

THA also doubled down on its federal advocacy strategy in 2021 with the hiring of a full-time vice president of federal relations to spearhead ongoing efforts related to the area wage index and 340B eligibility criteria, as well as advocacy related to new areas of concern, such as provisions of the Build Back Better bill that would result in severe cuts to supplemental payments for uncompensated care.

Clearly, 2021 was a year full of challenges, opportunities and accomplishments. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Paul Korth for his leadership as chairman of the THA board and to the entire board for their engagement and dedication.

THA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Paul Korth
Chief Executive Officer
Cookeville Regional
Medical Center
Cookeville, TN

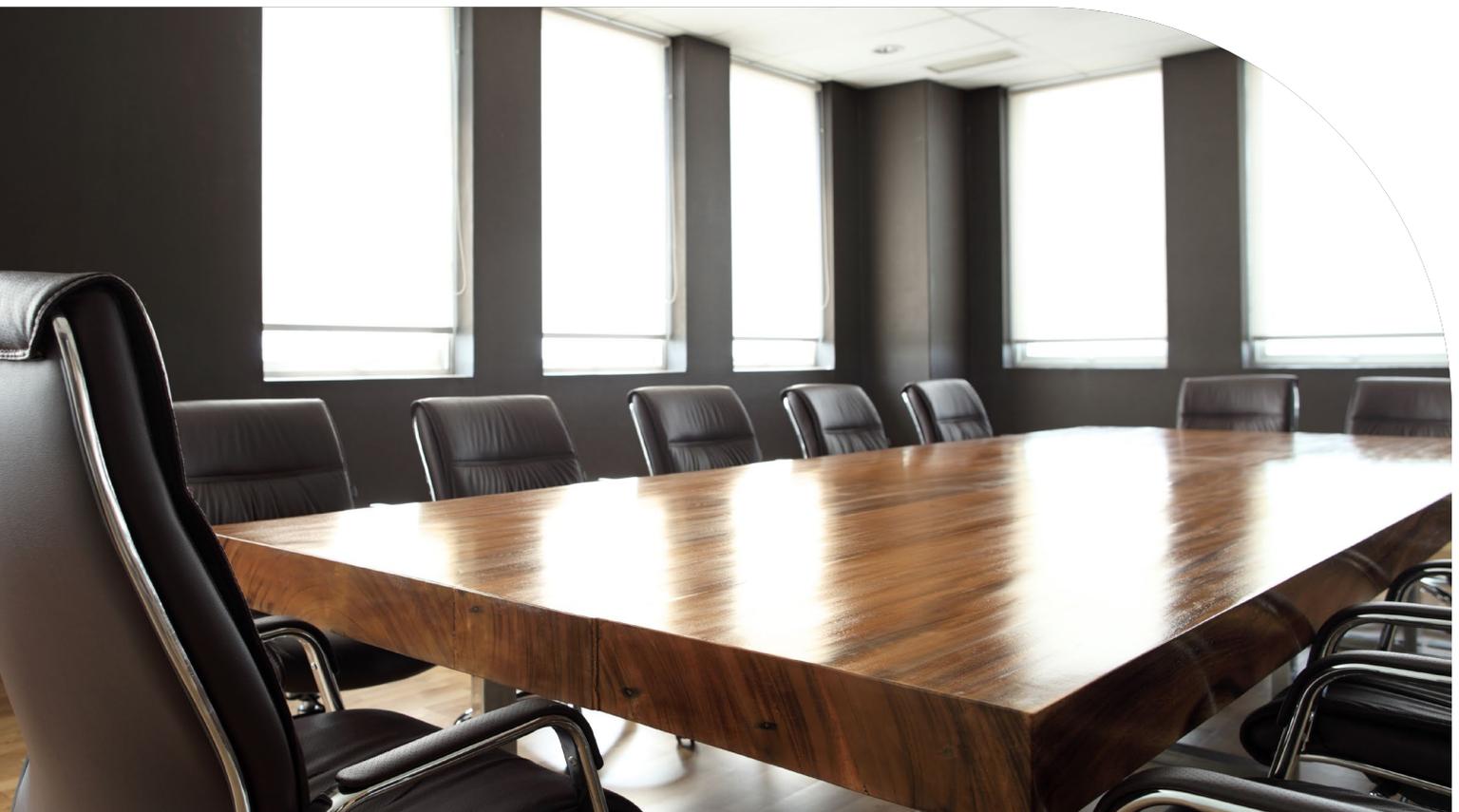
Tennessee rang in the New Year with a record-setting number of COVID hospitalizations that taxed the healthcare system to a near breaking point.

Fortunately, vaccinations had begun to become available in late 2020 and early demand, which far exceeded supply, contributed to a sharp decline in cases and hospitalizations through the first half of 2021.

As the year progressed, vaccine hesitancy became a major issue, with Tennessee ranking among the least vaccinated states in the country. This contributed to a second, even larger, surge in late summer as the delta variant took hold and affected a younger population. As the year came to a close, hospitalizations once again were increasing due to the arrival of the omicron variant.

Through it all, THA supported Tennessee hospitals by working with state officials to facilitate the distribution of vaccine and monoclonal antibody treatment to hospitals, advocating for coronavirus relief funds and, subsequently, American Rescue Plan Act funds for staffing assistance grants, and seeking and obtaining administrative relief to expedite discharge to post-acute care.

It was an honor to serve as chairman of the THA Board of Directors during a year when hospitals once again were front and center in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud of the work of the board and the THA team, and humbled by the commitment of hospital staff across the state as they continue to meet the challenges associated with the pandemic head on, each and every day.



THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (THA) ARE BASED ON SIX PILLARS:



ADVOCACY



QUALITY AND
PATIENT SAFETY



INFORMATION
AND TECHNOLOGY



PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES



EDUCATION



SERVING AS A
NEUTRAL FORUM

THIS REPORT LISTS THE MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION IN 2021.



ADVOCACY

State Advocacy

THA had a very successful legislative year during the regular session in winter and spring, seeing broad support for the Association's position on nearly every priority issue. THA brought and passed two pieces of legislation this session:

PUBLIC CHAPTER 340

Public Chapter 340 makes graduate nurse licensure a permanent category under the law and allows for a more efficient onboarding process for new nurses.

PUBLIC CHAPTER 459

Public Chapter 459 enacts the annual voluntary hospital assessment, which generates more than \$1.7 billion for the TennCare program.

THA also successfully worked to restore a proposed reduction in the TennCare budget that sought to reduce the reimbursement amount for certain medications administered by 340B covered entities.

Certificate of Need Reform

Lawmakers again sought to make numerous changes to the certificate of need (CON) program in 2021. Between the 2020 and 2021 session, THA's Board of Directors adopted a new position on CON reform in an attempt to compromise with legislators in a way that reflected their desire to make significant reforms to the current law, while addressing hospital concerns about unbalanced competition from non-hospital providers and continuation of the program as a whole.

THA's efforts to strike a deal with lawmakers ultimately proved successful, with an amendment fully reflecting the Association's position receiving broad support in both chambers. While the final CON reform legislation did not maintain all aspects of the current law, THA's compromise approach proved successful in preserving the program for the immediate future. The favorable outcome for THA also further established the Association as a valued partner on state policy matters with legislative leadership.



COVID-19 Special Session

In October, lawmakers returned to Nashville for a three-day special legislative session to address a host of issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the provisions included in an omnibus bill passed in the early morning hours of Oct. 30 were prohibitions on vaccine mandates by private businesses and governmental entities.

THA was successful in working with legislative leaders ahead of the special session to ensure hospitals were excluded from the prohibition as it relates to any federal requirements for vaccination issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). While a conditional exemption, the provision ensures the ability of hospitals to comply with any conditions of participation that would require healthcare workers to be fully vaccinated.

The final legislation also included a surprise provision to require visitation for COVID-19 patients, which was intended to apply only to end-of-life scenarios despite the language of the bill being broader in its application. THA will work with Governor Bill Lee and legislative leadership to clarify this intent in the 2022 regular session.

Legislative Day on the Hill

The Association hosted its first ever virtual Legislative Day on the Hill in March, which included live conversations with Governor Bill Lee, as well as Lieutenant Governor Randy McNally and House Speaker Cameron Sexton. The more than 100 hospital leaders who took part in the event also heard briefings on THA's priority issues and joined a live call to action in support of the Association's legislative agenda via Phone2Action (P2A), a digital advocacy tool launched by THA this year.

Phone2Action

Throughout the legislative session, THA engaged members in grassroots support by leveraging the Phone2Action platform for direct interaction with state lawmakers. THA issued five state calls to action during the 2021 legislative session.

Tools for the Legislative Session

In January, THA published a tool kit with helpful information related to hosting in-person and virtual events with legislators.

In preparation for THA's Day on the Hill, the team created and distributed 133 district cards to each member of the General Assembly unique to each legislator's district containing information related to the hospitals each lawmaker represents.

Friends of THA

The 2021 Friends of THA fundraising campaign surpassed its \$150,000 goal, raising more than \$157,000 to support candidates for state offices. This year's fundraising efforts were led by Jason Little, president and CEO, of Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation, Memphis, who also served as THA's chairman-elect.

Hospital Heroes

In 2021, THA honored Sen. Shane Reeves (R-Murfreesboro), along with Reps. Bob Ramsey (R-Maryville) and Gary Hicks (R-Rogersville) as Hospital Heroes for their dedication, commitment and support of hospitals in Tennessee.



Rural Health

THA worked with the Tennessee Office of Rural Health to secure \$5,425,000 through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) COVID-19 Testing and Mitigation Program to provide one-time funding to support 22 rural hospitals for testing education, establishment of alternate testing sites, test result processing, arranging for the processing of test results and engaging in other activities within the CDC Community Mitigation Framework to address COVID-19 in rural communities.

A request for funding was developed and distributed to eligible Tennessee hospitals to provide approximately \$350,000 for the purchase of medical equipment, enhancing high technology efforts and expanding healthcare services through THA's DUI Interlock Grant Program.



Federal Advocacy

- Congress remained focused on COVID-19 throughout 2021. THA provided and regularly updated its COVID-19 legislative priorities with key legislative requests, as well as areas of concern. In regularly sharing THA's priorities with Tennessee's congressional delegation, the Association was able to seek their support for issues like the provider relief fund, rural health aid and the telehealth waiver.
 - THA also expressed its opposition to the possibility of repurposing provider relief fund dollars and the extension of the Medicare sequester. This information complemented THA's continued response to numerous COVID-19-related questions from Congress on issues like hospitalization rates and medical supply shortages.
 - When the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) fell silent on Tennessee's emergency 1115 waiver request to support hospitals with pandemic preparedness and response, THA was able to get the entire Tennessee delegation to sign on to a letter urging the agency to immediately review the request.
 - THA held a series of virtual meetings with each member of the delegation to both flag hospitals' priorities and hear their healthcare areas of focus. In these meetings and in federal priorities letters throughout the year, THA articulated the need for a legislative or regulatory fix to the Medicare area wage index, protection and financial assistance for rural hospitals, support for the 340B drug discount program, support for workforce assistance grants and other steps to address physician and health professional shortages. The Association also sought support for the pending CMS emergency and graduate medical education (GME) TennCare waivers.
 - THA urged the extension of the federal public health emergency (PHE) declaration and requested at least a six-week notice before it concludes. The PHE declaration was last renewed on Oct. 18, 2021, and will remain in effect through at least Jan. 16, 2022.
 - THA conducted a call to action for Tennessee's congressional delegation to voice opposition to the surprise billing regulations after the Biden Administration released proposed rules that did not align with the intent of the No Surprises Act, in which Congress carefully tried to balance a fair process to end the practice of surprise billing.
 - The Association also organized a call to action for members when the Build Back Better Act included a provision that excluded uncompensated care claims for expansion population individuals from reimbursement in uncompensated care (UCC) pool waivers and would cut disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments for non-expansion states from 100 percent to 87.5 percent of their allotment.
- With incredible outreach from hospitals to members of Congress against these harmful provisions, THA worked with Reps. Jim Cooper (D-TN) and Steve Cohen (D-TN) to lead a letter urging congressional leaders to remove this provision. In total, 21 House members representing seven states signed on to the letter. THA thanked Reps. Cooper and Cohen for their leadership on this issue.
- THA hosted a webinar on the "Rural Health Clinic Legislative Update" for member hospitals and provided issue overview and legislative recommendations to all rural hospital CEOs and U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN).
 - The Association conducted virtual legislative visits with several members of Tennessee's congressional delegation and their staff to provide legislative priorities and policy statements as part of the 2021 National Rural Health Association's Policy Institute.
 - THA provided recommendations and comments to Sen. Blackburn regarding the development and implementation of the new Rural Emergency Hospital (REH) model, which passed, in part, due to THA's advocacy efforts as part of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2021.



STAFF PROFILE

Curtis Vann

Vice President of Federal Relations

To bolster the Association's federal advocacy efforts, THA hired Curtis Vann as THA's first ever vice president of federal relations in September. Vann will guide THA's federal advocacy strategy and help members track the ever-changing federal policy landscape.

In addition to keeping members updated on federal legislative and regulatory developments and advocating THA's priorities, he already has connected with the staff from each member of the delegation and will be regularly traveling to Washington, D.C., and across the state to meet with congressional staff, member hospitals and other healthcare organizations.

Medicaid/TennCare

- THA and members successfully advocated to stop a 340B cut in the TennCare program from impacting physician-administered drug reimbursement. THA worked with its 340B members to fully understand the impact and provided data to the state that revealed the overall impact to providers was greater than estimated. THA and members also communicated to the state the many administrative challenges that providers would face when trying to fully implement the state's changes regarding new modifiers. In addition, THA was able to advocate for TennCare to push the implementation timeframe for necessary modifiers to Dec. 1 from the originally proposed date of May 1.
- THA submitted comments on the TennCare III waiver (block grant) expressing member concerns about provider reimbursement protections, structural limitations in the current program to allow for appropriate growth and expansion of access to care, and the uncertainty of graduate medical education.
- THA worked with the Division of TennCare to reimplement the primary care physician (PCP) waiver. This waiver allows physicians, other than the patient's defined PCP, to see the patient without their claim being denied, increasing access for patients in Tennessee during a very difficult time.
- THA also worked with the Division of TennCare and CMS to clarify the 30-day preadmission screening and resident review (PASRR) waiver approved as a part of Tennessee's 1135 waiver application pertaining to the COVID-19 PHE could be applied at the beneficiary level. This clarification allowed new nursing facility admissions to be exempted from the PASRR requirement during the waiver period. This waiver, like the post-acute authorization waivers, allowed for decreased administrative burdens and increased throughput for hospitals across the state.

Managed Care/Commercial Payers

Post-Acute Authorization Waivers: As the public health emergency (PHE) continued through 2021, THA worked with the Division of TennCare, as well as all major commercial and Medicare Advantage payers, to implement, or reinstate, post-acute transfer authorization waivers. These waivers assisted hospitals and post-acute providers by reducing administrative burdens, allowing for decreased lengths of stay and increased throughput, which was critical as hospitals needed every available bed.

No Surprises Act: THA worked with the American Hospital Association (AHA), various law firms and many other organizations to stay abreast of the developments as the No Surprises Act implementation rules were published. THA held various webinars on this topic so members could be educated and kept informed of the latest information. Materials from the AHA and other sources, including implementation guides and relevant CMS issued forms, also were shared.

Exchange Webinars: For many years, THA has held webinars with the various insurance carriers offering plans on the health exchange in Tennessee. THA was able to provide that education, with all six carriers participating in education webinars between Oct. 22 and Nov. 1. Assistants and navigators from across the state joined these sessions to hear from each carrier about their offerings on the exchange, including coverage areas, out-of-network benefits (if any), provider directory instructions, plan designs and other information.

TDCI TennCare Oversight Complaints and Independent Review Process Webinar: THA hosted a webinar to educate members on the process of filing provider complaints or independent review requests to the TennCare Oversight Division of the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI). This webinar was focused on educating members about the process, as well as providing them with practical procedures and examples from organizations that have been very successful in overturning denials and resolving issues with the various TennCare managed care organizations (MCOs).



STAFF PROFILE

Rodney Adams

Vice President of Research and Reimbursement

Rodney Adams joined THA as vice president of research and reimbursement this fall following the retirement of Gwyn Walters. He works closely with the Association's state and federal government affairs teams and financial policy department on all finance and reimbursement issues.

Medicare and Regulatory Issues

- Financial analysis was shared with members on all major prospective payment system (PPS) regulations for both the proposed and final rules for FFY2022, including the inpatient prospective payment system (IPPS), outpatient prospective payment system (OPPS), skilled nursing facilities (SNF) PPS, inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) PPS, inpatient psychiatric facility (IPF) PPS, home health payment updates and long-term healthcare facility (LTCH) PPS.

THA hosted regulatory webinars on the proposed Medicare IPPS and OPPS rules as well as the IRF rule, and submitted formal comments on behalf of members.

- The Association hosted in-depth educational sessions for members on the Medicare quality pay-for-performance programs and financial analysis reports THA shares with members. The two sessions reviewed the Readmissions Reduction Program (RRP) and Hospital-Acquired Condition (HAC) Program and the impact each has on hospital revenue.

Financial analysis on Medicare quality program trends, value-based purchasing, HAC, RRP and Medicare spend per beneficiary also were distributed to member hospitals to provide a comparative and comprehensive review of quality data collected by CMS and monitor expected performance and payment.

- THA worked with the American Hospital Association (AHA), various law firms and many other organizations to stay abreast of the developments as the No Surprises Act (NSA) implementation rules were published. THA held various webinars on this topic so members could be educated and kept informed of the latest information. Materials from the AHA and other sources, including implementation guides and relevant CMS issued forms, also were shared.

In addition, THA submitted comments outlining member concerns regarding Part II of the interim final rules for the implementation of the NSA, providing input to the departments regarding the independent review process and good faith estimates, as well as the patient provider dispute process.

- THA once again held its annual compliance conference, where over 400 attendees were educated on various compliance topics by some of the most trusted experts in the country.
- THA also partnered with law firm Bass, Berry, & Sims to present the 7th Annual Healthcare Fraud Conference. Over 550 attendees from 39 states participated in this virtual event.





QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY

- The Tennessee Center for Patient Safety (TCPS) created a report, *COVID Impact on Patient Safety Events – Tennessee Trends in 2020*, comparing patient safety events in 2020 to events in 2019 focused on healthcare-associated infections, pressure injuries and sepsis. The report compares the 2020 trends to the surges in COVID hospitalizations by quarter. The report also includes a comparison of Tennessee performance to a recent national report for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- TCPS provided emerging clinical guidance to hospitals and the state director of surveys based on the new phenomenon of “COVID skin.” Staff met with the director of state surveyors about “COVID skin,” which has the appearance of a stage 3 or 4 pressure injury and could be misdiagnosed and incorrectly treated, or falsely identified by a surveyor as patient neglect. The director elevated this information to the CMS regional office so it could be included in surveyor education. TCPS also provided “COVID-skin”-related materials for inclusion in surveyor education.
- TCPS hosted a webinar by national expert Joyce Black of the National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel on the phenomenon of “COVID skin” for hospital representatives and state surveyors.
- TCPS represented Tennessee hospitals and health systems on the Tennessee Department of Health Long-Term Care Task Force, advancing the use of monoclonal antibody infusions for eligible patients.
- TCPS and the THA Council on Inclusion and Health Equity identified vaccine hesitancy as contributing to COVID-19 disparities. In response, a vaccine advocacy toolkit was distributed to hospitals statewide, with guidance on making it applicable in their facilities and communities.
- A webinar by Noah Ivers, M.D., co-author of the COVID-19 vaccine toolkit and international vaccine hesitancy, was held. Over 150 individuals participated in the webinar, *Building Vaccine Confidence, Acceptance and Advocacy among Healthcare Workers and Communities*.
- Joseph Betancourt, M.D., senior vice president, equity and community health, Massachusetts General Hospital, presented a program on *Lessons from 2020: COVID-19, Racism and Structural Equity* to Tennessee hospitals.
- TCPS held a virtual *Quality Bootcamp* for 67 hospital quality professionals, nurse managers and unit-level leaders.
- Twenty Tennessee small and rural hospitals were recruited to participate with THA in the CMS national project, Hospital Quality Improvement Collaborative (HQIC), for a four-year period. The focus of HQIC is to reduce patient harm, address the opioid epidemic and improve care transitions for patients and communities.
- In the 26th year of THA’s Agenda 21 program, 12-week summer internships in executive leadership were arranged for 11 graduate-level minority health administration students in 10 Tennessee hospitals.

- The THA Sepsis Collaborative was convened monthly and addressed topics such as treatment guidelines for COVID sepsis patients, maintaining standard work during the pandemic and preparing for changes to the CMS SEP-1 core measures.
- TCPS developed a 2021 Surviving Sepsis Campaign Adult Treatment Guidelines gap analysis tool that was nationally shared.
- The THA PSO successfully achieved its 4th tri-annual recertification and continues to provide services to 52 member organizations.
- The THA PSO presented at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) national PSO conference and an ECRI-ISMP PSO Best Practices event and was interviewed for an AHRQ PSNet website feature, which will be published in late 2021.
- Since Tennessee continues to have high rates of MRSA infections, TCPS identified the hospitals in the state with the greatest opportunity for improvement in MRSA reduction and conducted site visits to 11 hospitals to provide support on preventing hospital-onset MRSA bloodstream infections. A MRSA prevention and reduction refresher educational event was held for hospitals with national expert Susan Huang, M.D.
- TCPS served as the state lead for the AHRQ ICU Safety Project, a national endeavor to foster the implementation and adoption of the Comprehensive Unit-Based Safety Program (CUSP) to reduce central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) and catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) in adult intensive care units. Eleven ICU units from Tennessee hospitals joined their counterparts across the country to participate in this project.
- TCPS initiated work toward post-acute care and network models to address quality and costs. The workgroup of hospital and health system post-acute care network directors is focused on initiatives that strengthen network performance and reduce hospital readmissions and post-discharge spend.
- Through a grant from the Tennessee Department of Health focused on *Maternal Mortality Reduction*, TCPS led work addressing hypertensive and cardiovascular disorders during pregnancy as the leading underlying causes of pregnancy-related deaths in Tennessee. TCPS worked with the emergency departments of 19 non-delivering hospitals to improve identification, assessment and treatment of pregnant or post-partum women.
- The most recent health equity survey was administered in October 2021, with 85 percent of member acute-care hospitals completing the survey. Hospital leadership receives a health equity data report twice a year, showing progress in each of the seven measures and providing statewide comparison data. The results are used by THA to plan education, provide resources and identify hospitals at the advanced level for best practice sharing.
- TCPS administers the AHRQ Hospital Survey on Patient Safety (HSOPS) survey free of charge to measure employee perceptions of patient safety and help hospitals and healthcare systems assess the culture of patient safety at their organization. Hospitals receive aggregate reports with comparisons to national benchmarks to identify strengths and opportunities for targeted improvements, as well as tools to create an action plan. In 2021, TCPS administered the AHRQ Survey on Patient Safety Culture for 36 hospitals, with 11,278 surveys completed.





INFORMATION SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY

COVID-19 Reporting

THA continued to support hospitals in their COVID response by providing daily reports that aggregate case, testing, hospitalization and vaccination-related data at a statewide and regional level. These daily dashboards are sent directly to hospital c-suites each weekday. THA also began publishing a weekly version of these reports on its website and shared them via THA's social media channels.

Statewide Hospital Claims Data

THA continued to assist member hospitals in meeting quarterly discharge data reporting requirements via its Health Information Network (HIN). This year, the data collection portal was upgraded to simplify the data reporting process and enhance security.

Hospital Admission, Discharge and Transfer (ADT) data through ConnectTN

In addition to continuing to fulfill TennCare's ADT reporting requirements on behalf of the 130+ participating hospitals, ConnectTN was upgraded this year to assist many hospitals in meeting new CMS CoP requirements related to patient event notifications.

THA also completed a pilot program with TennCare, MCOs and 15 hospitals to test whether ADT data provided via ConnectTN can be used to fulfill inpatient notification requirements. With the success of this pilot program, work has begun towards a statewide rollout plan in the coming year.

exploreTNhealth



To assist Tennessee hospitals and other stakeholders in understanding sub-county level community health status, THA provides Tennessee zip code level health rankings through exploreTNhealth.org. exploreTNhealth delivers up-to-date information on the health and social well-being of populations living across Tennessee's 95 counties and 600 zip codes. This year, the website was updated to include data generated by Tennessee hospitals between fiscal years 2016 and 2018, the 2018 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2018 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Communications and Marketing

In 2021, THA continued work to support Tennessee hospitals' marketing and communications efforts, as well as highlight positive stories of care. Two digital toolkits were created and shared with all marketing, communications and public relations contacts at hospitals across the state: a [Vaccine Toolkit](#) and [Don't Delay Care toolkit](#).

"I Got Vaccinated" stickers were created and over 135,000 were distributed across the state. Along with the toolkit and stickers, THA released a vaccine PSA, encouraging vaccination for those eligible.

During National Hospital Week, THA shared four exceptional stories of care from Tennessee hospitals to say #ThankYouTNHospitals and recognize the hospital workers across Tennessee who continue to provide high quality care to patients throughout the pandemic.



Lucy's Story

TriStar Hendersonville Medical Center
Views: 4,083



Meggen's Story

Henry County Medical Center
Views: 3,754



Darel's Story

Jackson-Madison County General Hospital
Views: 6,977



Ali's Story

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Views: 3,702



#ThankYouTNhospitals PSA

Views: 242

THA commissioned a local Nashville songwriter to write a song dedicated to Tennessee hospital workers, titled "[You are the Difference](#)." This song and video puts the spotlight on the work all healthcare workers across the state of Tennessee have done this year under very difficult circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic.





THA Center for Innovative Solutions

- The THA Center for Innovative Solutions (TCIS), through its traveling nurse program, Qualivis, provided nurses of all specialties to over 21 Tennessee health systems and hospitals during the first quarter of 2021 to deal with the nursing shortage related to the Covid-19 pandemic. That work accounted for over 242,000 hours of nursing care to Tennessee patients. In turn, it generated over \$235,000 in revenue for TCIS, which flows back into THA to support its hospital members.
- TCIS created a CIO Council to understand the many issues that concern hospital chief information officers around the state. A virtual meeting is held every other month that allows them to share information with their counterparts about critical problems they encounter in their facilities.
- TCIS rebuilt its team in 2021. Anne Brandner is vice president for business development, Chris Bernstein is director of marketing and Laila Karim is the new executive assistant.
- TCIS welcomed several new innovative vendor partners in 2021:
 - Realtime Medical Systems:** Connects hospitals virtually with their skilled nursing facility partners
 - Virtusense:** Uses artificial intelligence to prevent falls in the hospital setting
 - Franklin:BI:** Provides business intelligence to hospital strategic planners
 - Critical Alert:** Brings the scalability and reliability of cloud-computing to patient communications, nurse call, clinical surveillance and analytics on a single platform.
- TCIS participated with a vendor partner in a campaign to raise money for a toy drive. Bernhard Energy, along with the American Society of Healthcare Engineering (ASHE), conducted a statewide program that provided toys to children's hospitals in Tennessee.
- TCIS had a successful year in generating revenue. As of August, TCIS exceeded its revenue projections as compared to the 2021 budget. This revenue supports all of THA's member-oriented programs and helps keep membership dues at a reasonable level.



The Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development (TCWD) increased its numbers of incentives awarded and physicians placed over its 2020 performance, despite the challenges to education and training posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. TCWD's success included:

- 42** Physician Placements in rural areas or with underserved populations
- 42** Residency Incentives awarded to current medical residents intending to practice in rural or underserved areas of Tennessee following graduation
- 22** Community Incentives awarded to rural practice sites for clinician recruitment assistance
- 250** Total Clinician Placements celebrated in July

TCWD increased the maximum amount of its Community and Dental Incentive from \$30,000 to \$50,000 per application. The incentive is available up to twice per year to most hospitals and other clinical practice sites that treat TennCare and/or uninsured patients. The funds are earmarked to assist the facility in recruiting and/or retaining dentists, psychiatrists, psych nurse practitioners and primary care physicians, including family medicine, internal medicine, IM/PEDS, OB/GYN and pediatrics.

TCWD secured new funding of \$7.5 million annually from TennCare for its workforce and incentive programs and support for graduate medical education (GME).

TCWD supported the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in the development of the Managing Aggressive Patients Training Program (MAPS), which uses simulation to train select employees from local hospitals in de-escalation techniques. The new trainers then use their newfound skills to teach coworkers at their place of employment. The MAPS program is available statewide and can be offered virtually or in-person.



EDUCATION AND MEMBER SERVICES

Over 300 people attended the in-person THA Annual Meeting, which included concurrent sessions ranging from patient safety, financial management and legislative updates to cybersecurity and mental health.

THA offered several webinar series opportunities focused on governance and other topics of interest to hospitals. Webinars included:

- CMS Critical Access Hospital 5-Part
- CMS Acute Care Hospital 5-Part
- CMS Emergency Preparedness
- The Final Frontier: Tracking the Push for Price Transparency in Healthcare
- Crisis Management Series 3-Part
- THA Fall Compliance Virtual Conference
- Small and Rural Hospital Virtual Conference
- Governance Webinar Series 4-Part

- Leadership Webinar Series 4-Part
- The Great Resignation
- Emergency Services: Complying with CMS Hospital CoP
- Documentation Update: Vital Components for Compliance
- Medical Staff, Telemedicine and Other Changes: Meeting CMS CoP and TJC Standards
- EMTALA Update

THA hosted educational sessions by the American Hospital Association (AHA) on a “Federal Update about Rural Hospital Advocacy and Policy” and National Rural Health Association on “Landscape of Rural Health” during the Association’s Small and Rural Hospital Conference.

State hospital associations in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee joined together to offer the Mid-South Critical Access Hospital webinar series designed for c-suite leaders and management team, along with community leaders, to share topics of interest to rural healthcare providers.





NEUTRAL FORUM

- THA diligently worked throughout the regular legislative session on all COVID-19 vaccine and other pandemic-related bills to ensure hospitals can maintain the ability to protect vulnerable patient populations and employees through vaccination.
- Throughout the regular session, several bills or policies were proposed, which could impact Tennessee hospitals and their efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. THA worked to either appropriately amend or outright oppose the measures that would have negative impact and lobby in support of measures that would have positive impact. This work was in addition to the extensive efforts of THA's lobbying team during the October special session focused on COVID-19.
- The Association maintained regular communication with leadership in the Governor's Office and Tennessee Department of Health related to hospital needs throughout the pandemic. This work included extension and re-initiation of numerous executive orders that supported hospital response to surges in inpatient admissions.
- The THA Board of Directors worked hard to support Tennessee hospitals in discussions about difficult issues throughout the year, such as implementing vaccine mandates and exploring ways to ensure enough staff was available to care for patients. The board held a special call to finalize and give support to several Medicaid finance proposals that staff and the relevant THA committees have been developing for some time. The board gave approval to staff to move forward with submitting proposals to TennCare related to reclassing directed payments, establishing a quality incentive program, and distributing a COVID directed payment to hospitals that leverages the currently available enhanced federal match.
- The Tennessee Center for Patient Safety (TCPS) analyzed patient safety performance and the impact of COVID-19 on hospital-acquired conditions and shared data and trends with the THA Board of Directors. In response, TCPS implemented best practices sharing and patient safety organization (PSO) safe tables.
- TCPS engaged hospitals to share successful practices for managing the COVID-19 pandemic, including hosting regular sharing calls for key groups — chief medical officers (CMOs), chief nursing officers (CNOs), infection preventionists (IPS) — with their peers.
- The THA PSO conducted safe tables on patient safety topics and compiled key learnings for distribution to members. Topics included patient safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency department boarding of inpatients, caring for behavioral health patients in the general acute care setting and safety considerations with use of temporary staff.
- THA hosted Bechara Choucair, M.D., the White House COVID-19 vaccine coordinator, as he met in-person and virtually with hospital representatives from across the state. Several member CEOs and chief medical officers (CMOs) attended and there was great dialog related to Tennessee hospitals' COVID-19 response. THA appreciated the opportunity to co-host this successful event with the American Hospital Association (AHA).

TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Korth, Chairman

Chief Executive Officer
Cookeville Regional Medical Center
Cookeville, TN

Jason Little, Chairman-Elect

President & CEO
Baptist Memorial Health Care
Corporation
Memphis, TN

James Ross Immediate Past Chairman

President & CEO
West Tennessee Healthcare
Jackson, TN

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