



TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



TENNESSEE
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



JAMES ROSS
President and CEO
West Tennessee
Healthcare
Jackson, TN

I have been honored to serve as THA's chairman of the Board of Directors during one of the most unusual years in the Association's history.

I began my term as chairman by welcoming a new president and chief executive officer, Wendy Long, M.D., and chief operating officer, Will Cromer, to THA. Little did the three of us know that a few months later, the typical schedule of quarterly in-person board meetings would morph into weekly conference calls, frequently with the Governor, as we navigated the challenges and complexities of a worldwide pandemic.

The 2020 legislative session started out normally with certificate of need (CON) reform expected to be THA's most challenging issue. However, the session recessed in mid-March due to the growing COVID-19 pandemic, stalling many legislative issues. Prior to the recess, however, THA did see swift passage of the hospital assessment, an annual priority for the Association.

During the months of March and April, the THA Board met frequently to discuss emerging issues, including ventilator availability, personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages, visitation policies, access to testing supplies and timely test results, and the impact of the Governor's early executive order to stop elective procedures.

We watched as New York and Washington state experienced a surge in COVID patients that we fortunately did not experience in Tennessee until later that summer. The team at THA worked to quantify lost revenue and increased expenses and advocate for the restart of elective procedures.

During these early stages of the pandemic, hospitals began working together at the district level to pool resources and prepare for what was to come. The competitive interests that often dominate markets were set aside as we all worked toward a common goal.

When the state legislature returned to Nashville in late May, lawmakers took up three priority issues for THA – CON reform, telehealth and COVID-19 liability protection. Each of these issues was under consideration on the Senate and House floors on the last full day of session, but all three bills failed to pass in both chambers before session ended on June 18.

By the time the first significant surge in COVID-19 patients began in June, THA had established itself as a trusted partner with the Governor and state officials, and we were able to avoid the additional government-imposed elective procedure shutdowns that were common in other states. Hospitals demonstrated their ability to take the appropriate steps to manage increased patient volume, despite significant staffing challenges.

In August, as we reached the peak of the first surge, Governor Bill Lee called a special session of the legislature that included revised bills on liability protection and telehealth, both of which were supported by THA and passed during the three-day session.

THA hosted its first virtual annual meeting in October following a steep decline in COVID hospitalizations from our August peak. While we ended the year with another even larger surge in COVID cases and hospitalizations, we also ended the year with the arrival of vaccine and a renewed hope for the future.

I have been so proud of the THA CEO, Association staff and their leadership and service to the citizens of Tennessee. I also have never been so proud to be a part of this industry or this Association. You, too, should be admired for Meeting the Need and Making a Difference. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as THA chairman this year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



WENDY LONG, M.D.
President and CEO
Tennessee Hospital
Association
Brentwood, TN

The events of 2020 almost defy the ability to be summarized in an annual report. Hospitals and healthcare workers faced unprecedented challenges – fear of the unknown, shortages of critical supplies and personnel, rapidly changing prevention and treatment protocols, families unable to be with their loved ones, physical and emotional exhaustion, and a previously unimaginable death toll.

Hospital workers were at the center of this country's, and indeed the entire world's, response to a novel and deadly virus. They met every challenge head on, demonstrating a level of caring and courage that more than earned them the title of Healthcare Heroes.

The THA team was honored to support and advocate on behalf of Tennessee hospitals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. From the announcement of the first case of coronavirus in Tennessee on March 5 through the end of the year as the first doses of vaccine began to flow to hospitals, THA worked to ensure hospitals had the information and resources needed to fight the pandemic.

Access to timely and reliable data was a paramount concern early in the pandemic so THA prioritized working with hospitals to improve data collection and produce daily reports that facilitated planning and preparation for the surge in patients that hospitals experienced in July and, more significantly, at year end.

Through weekly meetings with the Governor and almost daily contact with Tennessee Department of Health and Unified Command officials, THA was able to exert substantial influence on virtually all major policy decisions being made at the state level. This included the restart of elective procedures, planning for alternative care sites, distribution of remdesivir, expansion of telemedicine, the creation of the Tennessee Pledge and reopening guidelines through the Economic Recovery Group, and the commitment of state CARES Act funding for COVID-positive skilled nursing centers.

In addition to a focus on key policy and operational issues, THA worked with hospitals to quantify the lost revenue and increased expenses attributable to the pandemic and to seek financial relief at the state and national level. It included negotiating with TennCare to secure advance payment of supplemental pools, developing an emergency 1115 waiver request for distribution of additional funds to support COVID planning and response, advocating with the Tennessee congressional delegation regarding Provider Relief Funds, and working with state officials to create the Rural Hospital Readiness Program and obtain state CARES Act funding for hospital staffing.

While other non-COVID related events took place over the course of 2020 and are highlighted in this report – chief among them the withdrawal by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR) – COVID-19 overshadowed nearly everything else and reminded the entire state of the critical role hospitals play each day in the communities they serve.

I would like to thank THA's Board of Directors for their diligence, commitment and collaboration during this crisis. I also would like to thank all hospitals and healthcare workers in Tennessee for their incredible service over the past year. It has been a pleasure to work with and for you this past year.

THE WORK OF THE TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (THA) IS BASED ON THE SIX PILLARS OF THE ASSOCIATION:

Each year, THA provides support and service to its members in each of these areas, based on annual goals and priorities established by the Board of Directors.

This report provides a summary of the Association's work in 2020.



ADVOCACY



QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY



INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY



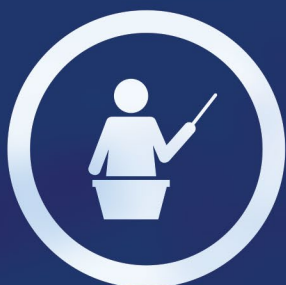
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



EDUCATION



NEUTRAL HEALTHCARE FORUM



ADVOCACY

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In 2020, THA employed two in-house lobbyists dedicated to hospital advocacy at the state legislature and maintained relationships with three contract lobbying firms that allowed the Association to expand hospital impact while coordinating with health system lobbyists to align messaging and advocacy efforts.

THA's state legislative advocacy took place in a year in which the Tennessee General Assembly met and went home three different times. After abruptly recessing in March due to the pandemic, legislators returned in June, adjourned sine die before the end of the month, and then convened again in August in special session.

Ultimately, telemedicine, liability protection, charity care definition changes and hospital assessment legislation supported by THA passed. CON legislation opposed by THA did not pass.

Regular written updates to legislative leadership on hospital COVID impact and response were provided.

THA mobilized grassroots support for state advocacy efforts, including a successful Legislative Day on the Hill and a public relations campaign on [We Care We Vote](#) to encourage hospital employees to vote in this year's elections.

TENNCARE

The TennCare director joined the THA Board at its quarterly meetings in December and September. THA staff met weekly with TennCare leadership to address a range of Medicaid issues for hospitals.

Prior to the pandemic, THA analyzed and [submitted comments](#) on the state's block grant proposal.

As part of the response to COVID-19, THA negotiated [broad administrative relief](#), including suspension of many audit and utilization management (UM) functions. THA also negotiated advance payment of remaining supplemental pool payments and secured accelerated approval of new supplemental pools, collectively allowing an additional \$225 million to be pushed out to hospitals at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

THA also worked with TennCare to develop and submit an emergency 1115 waiver that, if approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), will leverage assessment dollars freed up by the enhanced federal match to make incentive payments to hospitals tied to the COVID-19 impact. This program would make additional dollars available through incentive payments that are tied to COVID-19 impact and based on hospitals' preparation, actual experience relative to such preparation and lessons learned.

THA also developed a strategy for responding to the CMS position on new graduate medical education (GME) funding.

GOVERNOR AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES

THA worked closely with the Governor, Unified Command and the Tennessee Department of Health throughout the course of the pandemic.

The Governor met regularly with the THA Board throughout the spring and summer and THA President and CEO Wendy Long, M.D., was a frequent participant in the Governor's weekly press briefings.

The Association was represented on the [Governor's Coronavirus Response Taskforce](#), as well as the [Governor's Economic Recovery Group](#).

As a result of these relationships, the Association was able to exert considerable influence on important policy decisions, including the allocation of supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile and planning for alternative care sites.

Following an early executive order stopping all elective surgeries, THA negotiated the [restart of elective procedures](#) under terms developed and unanimously endorsed by the THA Board.

THA also proposed a [statewide plan/strategy](#) for remdesivir distribution that was adopted by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH).

THA worked with the Governor's office to develop and launch a [\\$10M Rural Hospital Readiness Grant Program](#), as well as COVID-related executive orders providing hospitals with various flexibilities and protections.

Each state received Coronavirus relief funds through the CARES Act to assist with the state government response to COVID. There were many competing priorities for this funding, but THA was able to secure funding for two important programs through this avenue – [Hospital Staffing Assistance](#) grants that support staffing needs for hospitals with high COVID volumes and [COVID Skilled Care Centers](#) that provide hospitals with options for discharging COVID+ patients who no longer are in need of a hospital level of care.

2020 PAC

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Friends of THA*, the Association's political action committee (PAC), was able to surpass its \$140,000 fundraising goal in July. This success enabled THA to continue to effectively support legislators and candidates who are sensitive to and supportive of hospital priorities, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.



HOSPITAL HEROES

THA launched a new advocacy initiative in the fall to recognize state lawmakers who are champions for hospital issues. The inaugural recipients of THA's Hospital Hero Awards were Sen. Bo Watson (R-Hixson), Rep. Patsy Hazlewood (R-Signal Mountain) and Rep. Kevin Vaughan (R-Collierville). Events to present the awards were hosted by Parkridge Medical Center, CHI Memorial Hospital and Baptist Memorial Hospital – Collierville, respectively.



CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

THA contracts with a federal lobbying firm in Washington and regularly engaged with the Tennessee congressional delegation members and staff throughout the year.

THA collected financial impact data from members to support advocacy efforts and advocated with the congressional delegation for CARES Provider Relief Funding through regular calls and specific asks.

The Association also assisted members with understanding eligibility for the various CARES Act distributions and advocated on their behalf when issues arose. In addition, THA administered the distribution of \$3.6 million in Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) grants that were authorized by the CARES Act.

THA submitted and obtained CMS approval of a supplemental [1135 waiver](#) granting flexibility regarding EMTALA, reporting and discharge planning.

THA and the American Hospital Association (AHA) [advocated against](#) the CMS-proposed Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule (MFAR), which threatened to undermine the hospital assessment and Medicaid funding, and ultimately was [withdrawn by CMS](#). The proposed rule was a major concern prior to the pandemic, but following the onset of COVID, THA argued there could not be a worse time to destabilize the Medicaid program. The withdrawal of MFAR gave hospitals one of their biggest advocacy victories of the year.

THA staff prepared and submitted comments on a variety of proposed rules impacting hospitals, and participated and/or supported litigation involving third-party payments in disproportionate share hospital (DSH) audits, price transparency and defense of challenges to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

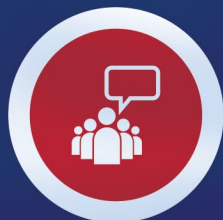
- 2021 IPPS Proposed rule [comments](#)
- 2021 OPPS Proposed rule [formal comments](#)
- [2021 IRF Proposed rule](#)
- Amicus – price transparency: On Feb. 28, THA and 36 other state and regional hospital associations filed an [amicus \(friend of the court\) brief](#) supporting the national hospital associations' lawsuit challenging HHS on the transparency rule.

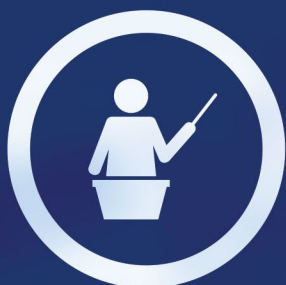
PAYERS

THA met quarterly with managed care organization (MCO) leadership and interacted regularly with payers as reimbursement issues were raised by members.

THA negotiated delay of commercial and reversal of TennCare BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee specialty pharmacy changes.

The Association also assisted members with understanding eligibility for the various CARES Act distributions and advocated on their behalf when issues arose.





QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY

THA developed and shared executive summary reports with hospital leaders showing quality performance compared to Tennessee peer groups and highlighting areas of improvement over time.

THA also expanded efforts to address health disparities through hospital reporting of health equity metrics and sharing of improvement and comparison reports.

THA hosted weekly COVID calls with Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) experts and emailed [daily COVID briefings](#) to members.

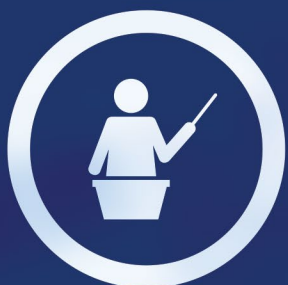
The Association also initiated quality improvement programming and education for Board initiatives, including workplace violence, falls reduction, MRSA reduction, sepsis, opioids, pressure injuries and maternal mortality.

THA conducted infection prevention and quality bootcamps for key skills education and supported 11 recruited hospital teams in the Agency for Health Research and quality (AHRQ) intensive care unit (ICU) project to reduce CAUTI and CLABSI.

THA held weekly calls with chief medical officers, chief nursing officers and infection prevention staff to share COVID response strategies, including visitation policies and evolving testing and treatment protocols and hosted a webinar on personal protective equipment (PPE) conservation.

THA conducted two panel presentations during THA's annual meeting on COVID response and patient safety, and conducted over 30 site visits with hospitals to provide coaching on quality improvement topics and share best practice strategies.

THA facilitated the sharing of surgical best practices among Tennessee Surgical Quality Collaborative (TSQC) hospitals and surgeons at quarterly networking meetings.



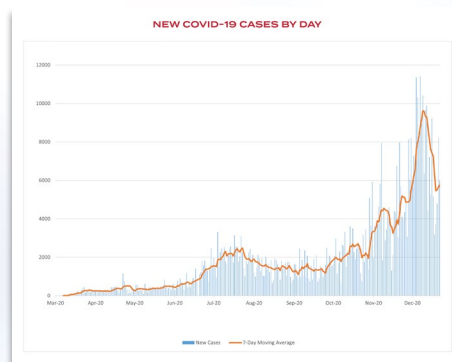
INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

COVID-19 DATA AND REPORTS

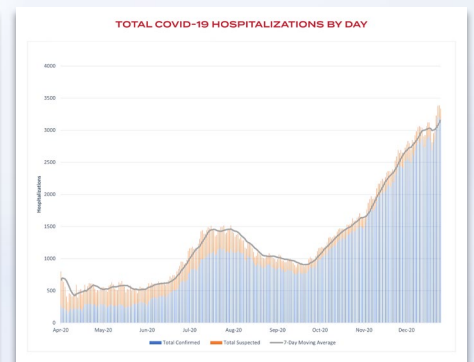
A leader in health data, THA took early action to access healthcare resource tracking system (HRTS) data, develop reports that tracked hospital reporting into HRTS and assist hospitals in becoming compliant with reporting requirements.

THA recognized that access to accurate and complete data would be essential to hospital COVID-19 response efforts and, as such, developed and began to disseminate a [daily report](#) tracking hospitalization trends statewide and a district-level [daily dashboard](#) aggregating case, capacity and hospitalization data to facilitate collaboration at the local level.

Early in the pandemic THA also conducted a survey of hospital bed capacity that collected information on pre-pandemic hospital “normal day” capacity and projected surge capacity.



[Download Cases By Day Chart](#)



[Download Hospitalizations By Day Chart](#)

STATEWIDE HOSPITAL CLAIMS DATA

THA assisted hospitals in meeting quarterly discharge data reporting requirements and provided access to the statewide claims data via THA MarketIQ.

ADMISSION, DISCHARGE AND TRANSFER (ADT) DATA THROUGH CONNECTN

THA fulfilled TennCare’s ADT data reporting requirements via ConnectTN.

In addition, THA provided an event notification service to physician groups and accountable care organizations (ACOs) to improve care coordination post-discharge.

THA also pilot tested using the ADT event notification service to fulfil a 24-hour notification requirement imposed by TennCare MCOs.



PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

COMMUNICATIONS

The Association kept members informed of the constantly changing environment of COVID-19 through daily COVID briefing emails and development of a [COVID section](#) on its website.

THA developed several public messaging campaigns, including [Wearing is Caring](#), [Don't Delay Care/Safe to Return](#), [Masking Makes a Difference](#) and [Thank you TN Hospitals](#).





The Tennessee Center for Health Workforce Development (TCWD) had 39 residency incentive placements in 2020, including 17 family medicine doctors, two internal medicine, five OB/GYN, five pediatricians, three psychiatrists, three psychiatric nurse practitioners and three dentists.

Fourteen residency incentive recipients were approved, and more than 60 additional residents expressed interest in applying when TCWD's funding is secure.

The community and dental incentive awarded five in 2020, with an additional eight applicants awaiting review.

TCWD awarded \$200,000 to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) to assist with recruiting psychiatrists to the four state-run mental health hospitals. TDMHSAS successfully recruited three psychiatrists with the help of the incentive.

TCWD maintained communication with its academic partners throughout the 2020 COVID-19 crisis to understand the challenges faced by institutions educating the healthcare workforce. It met with nursing partners virtually throughout the year and hosted a statewide meeting about nursing workforce issues featuring nurse and healthcare economist Dr. Peter Buerhaus.

A project initially funded by a TCWD grant through the Johnson & Johnson Promise of Nursing campaign was offered to hospitals in the state in 2020. Managing Aggressive Patients (MAPS) was developed by the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center to teach de-escalation techniques specifically designed for nurses and other healthcare professionals.

TCWD was awarded Tennessee's "Community Star" recognition by the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health. This awards recognizes organizations that are working to address the social determinants of health and improve the lives of those living in rural areas and contributions to rural health innovation, education, collaboration and communication.

RURAL HEALTH

THA convened the Future of Rural Hospitals Taskforce to develop strategies and approaches for addressing the financial uncertainty of rural hospitals, especially as it relates to the current pandemic. A report providing specific, actionable recommendations for Tennessee rural hospitals also was developed.

THA launched a series of social media posts focusing on the "Power of Rural" and Tennessee's rural hospitals being the cornerstones of their communities and serving as major economic engines leading up to National Rural Health Day. TCWD also featured a video focusing on the importance of rural hospitals.





TCIS

THA Center for Innovative Solutions

The THA Center for Innovative Solutions (TCIS), a for-profit revenue producing arm of THA, experienced a successful year during 2020 despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Even though TCIS was not able to conduct business as usual through personal meetings with hospital members, it was able to exceed its budgeted revenue for the year by over \$100,000. This mainly was due to TCIS' top two partners, Vizient and Qualivis. They showed strong performance during the year due to THA members' need for additional medical supplies and supplemental staffing.

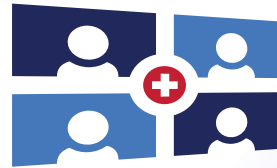
Although TCIS had a reduction in staff in 2020, it was able to continue communicating with THA members through webinars and virtual meetings to understand their needs and match those needs with the portfolio of vendor partners.

The TCIS Board of Directors, led by Chairman Randy Davis, president and CEO, NorthCrest Medical Center, Springfield, provided oversight and direction during this difficult year to ensure the center stayed on track and completed its mission of offering innovative and valuable services to hospitals in Tennessee.



EDUCATION

THA held its first virtual Annual Meeting, with sessions occurring over three days. A business meeting took place on the first day and included the annual change in governance, with Paul Korth taking over the role of chairman of the THA Board of Directors from outgoing Chair James Ross, along with presentations of the 2020 Awards of Excellence.



TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

EXTRAORDINARY TIME. EXTRAORDINARY CARE.

OCTOBER 2020

The second day focused on the *Tennessee Hospital Response and Lasting Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic*. The third day followed up on *The Journey to Patient Safety: 20 years after To Err is Human*.



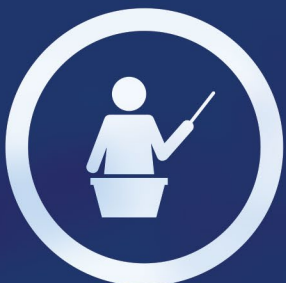
THA offered members a leadership and resiliency webinar series with six nationally known experts who discussed the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and shared their expertise in resiliency, health policy, financial and strategic planning, unconscious bias, health equity and the new healthcare ecosystem.

A trustee webinar series focused on effective governance in a public health crisis.

THA partnered with Turner Construction to offer its first Turner MedTalks breakfast and panel discussion on healthcare consumerism.

Other webinars included:

- EMTALA Webinar Series
- Bringing High Reliability to the Workplace and Bedside in the Midst of a Pandemic
- CMS Medication Management
- CMS Infection Control Worksheet
- Joint Commission Hot Topics 2020L Advance Directives, Contracts, Grievances, Informed Consent and 2020 Changes
- Emergency Management, Environment of Care and Life Safety
- Commonly Cited Deficiencies for Critical Access Hospitals
- Emergency Department Telemedicine Reimbursement COVID-10 Update
- Safe Opioid Use, IV Medication, Blood and Medication Administration Requirements:



NEUTRAL HEALTHCARE FORUM

The THA Board of Directors met weekly or biweekly during the height of the COVID-19 crisis to discuss and strategize on topics such as PPE, testing, collaboration at the local level, approach to elective procedures, surge capacity, difficulties discharging patients, access to remdesivir and vaccination challenges.

THA conducted Assessment 101 training for members of the THA Board of Directors.

The Association completed an analysis of the impact of third-party payments on the disproportionate share hospital (DSH) audit and presented short-term mitigation strategies to the Board.

2019-2020 TENNESSEE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Memphis, TN

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Shelby County Health Care Corporation
Germantown, TN

ROGERS ANDERSON

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ALAN WATSON

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Maury Regional Healthcare System
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Chief Administrative Officer
Ballad Health
Johnson City, TN

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KENNY BOYD

Chief Operating Officer
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DEANN THELEN

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Nashville, TN

MICHAEL OSTAPCHUK

Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN

VANESSA PATRICK

Vice President of Business Development
West Tennessee Healthcare
Jackson, TN

RHONDA SWITZER-NADASDI, DMD

Chief Executive Officer
Interfaith Dental Clinic
Nashville, TN

SCOTT TONGATE

Chief Financial Officer
Macon County General Hospital
Lafayette, TN