Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.

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Kolste Receives WHA 2016 Health Care Advocate Award

MADISON (March 31, 2016) ---- State Rep. Debra Kolste (D-Janesville) received the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) Health Care Advocate of the Year Award March 30 at WHA's Advocacy Day event in Madison.

Kerry Swanson, President/CEO, St. Mary's Janesville Hospital, presented this year's award to Kolste in recognition of her collaborative efforts with hospitals and health care systems on several key WHA priority issues.

"Deb has been a valued partner with WHA," Swanson said. Swanson said Kolste's bipartisan accomplishments over the past two legislative session have supported the efforts of Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems to deliver better care for patients.

Swanson noted Kolste's work as a co-lead author on Act 153, bipartisan legislation that provides over $2 million in funding to test alternate payment models in the state Medicaid program to encourage mental health care coordination within an integrated health system and promote psychiatric consultations between providers.

Swanson highlighted Kolste's efforts to address physician workforce needs in Wisconsin through her strong support of the bipartisan Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Act – which will enable many physicians who come to Wisconsin to begin serving patients more quickly through an expedited licensure process – and for a bipartisan increase in graduate medical education funding that is helping to increase the number of physicians trained in Wisconsin.

"Representative Kolste has been an important voice in the Legislature on several of WHA's priority issues," according to WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding. "Deb's knowledge, insight and passion for health care has helped advance bipartisan health care legislation ranging from supporting behavioral health care coordination to addressing Wisconsin's physician workforce needs to enabling modern population health analyses."

Kolste represents Wisconsin's 44th Assembly District, and was first elected in 2012. Among other committees, Kolste serves on the Assembly Committee on Health, the Committee on Workforce Development and on the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia.

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