

# HAPPY SPRING

Hello Partners With Our Lady of Victory Hospital!

The calendar says it is spring, but the weather just doesn't feel like it! But with the weather changing, COVID has calmed down a lot, especially now that COVID vaccinations are being given to nearly everyone. Unfortunately at the time of this writing, we, as Partners With OLVH, are unable to have meetings, fundraisers, or volunteer in the hospital yet.

So... we are planning on having a membership meeting on Tuesday, May 4, 12 noon in the Lion's pavilion in Fandry Park. If you don't get a chance to eat before coming to the meeting, just bring a sack lunch and enjoy a picnic.

With having the meeting during the noon hour, some of our OLVH members will have an opportunity to be with us, depending on the time of their lunch hour. We will hopefully have some time to vote on the scholarships for those members who want or are able to stay to do that.

Partners With OLVH made the February state partners newsletter! Here it is: Partners With Our Lady of Victory Hospital, Stanley: Sent cards from their Partners group to co-workers, friends, relatives, shut-ins, COVID heroes, as well as hospital associates, clinic workers, service workers, ambulance departments, city workers, teachers, etc. Let them know you appreciate yours! Remember to sign your name, your hospital, and volunteer organization.

We will be talking about having a thrift sale in August during the City Wide Thrift Sales, probable on Thursday, August 5 and half a day on the 6<sup>th</sup> since there is a blood drive starting at noon that day. If you are willing to provide the space in your garage, please let me know at the meeting, otherwise I am willing to use our garage if no one else volunteers a space.

Any members who have items to donate for the thrift sale please start getting them ready and price them if at all possible. If you have a large item such as furniture, please take a picture of it, including your phone number, price and any other info you would like. We will post the picture at the sale. If you are unable to get your other items to us please call Donella at 715-644-3638 and we will make arrangements to pick them up. We would like to have all items at the thrift sale site by July 29 so we have time to get the sale set up. Anyone able to help on either day, please call Donella.

The way things are looking at this time, we may not be able to have the book sale in the hospital. The committee members have not talked with the vendors yet. If anyone has any other fundraisers they would like to try, please let us know at the meeting.

We still plan on having the Love Lights again in December, hopefully coming up with some new ideas to add to it to help raise a little more money. The profit the last few years has not been nearly as good as it has been in the past. Be thinking of some ideas for the committee to talk about at a later meeting.

At this time we are not sure when or if we will be able to do any volunteering inside the hospital. COVID has certainly made volunteering very difficult, but hopefully things will be getting better soon! As Partners, we need to find other ways of volunteering and fundraising.

The West Central District Spring Meeting will be a virtual meeting on May 11, hosted by Sacred Heart. Roxanne Novotny and I will be "attending". I will let everyone know about the meeting in the next "newsletter".

## NEWS FROM "REACHING OUT", PARTNERS OF WHA'S FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2021

### A Message from the Partners of WHA President - Spring Tours to be Virtual

What odd times we are living in. Partners connects volunteers across the state, allowing them to share best practices and new ideas to improve the health of their communities. As we enter a new phase of the pandemic with

vaccines available, I hope we can return to our normal volunteering rhythm. For most of us, this enforced sabbatical has been long and frustrating, but we have continued to support our communities by staying home. Partners has continued to connect volunteers with information about health and public policy issues. We continue to network virtually.

We were able to hold our Annual Meeting, election, and installation virtually. On January 13, the officers met to accomplish the one task that can only be done in person – signing the bank paperwork. It was a different experience as we stood in the lobby as one person at a time went into the office with the banker to present identification and be added to the accounts. The process did give time for the “handoff” conversations about the new position that each person was taking. After we finished the individual moments with the banker, we all put our signatures on the various documents that are required. We then adjourned to a large conference room and talked about our hopes for the coming year.

Spring “Tour” will be via virtual meetings with each district, hosted by a local organization. We will elect and install new district chairs. In our current state, it is amazing how wonderful it is to see people on a screen! The meeting dates are included in this newsletter.

As we move through the summer, we hope that most people will be vaccinated. I recently received my first dose of the vaccine and have not had any trouble with my body’s immune response. I hope that you will also take advantage of the opportunity when it is offered.

If things go well, October 5 - 7, 2021 will find all of us together in person at the Marriott West in Madison for our convention, as planned. Terri Donlin is putting together a great slate of speakers and presentations for us. We will get to participate in the easy exchange of ideas and get to meet new people from all around the state!

In the meantime, stay well and know that your volunteer friends are a phone (or virtual) call away! Peg Larson, 920-231-3005 (H); 920-420-1482 (C); [pegvoluntr@hotmail.com](mailto:pegvoluntr@hotmail.com)

### **A Message from the President-Elect Goals Set**

I’d like to extend a very humble “thank you” for entrusting me with the position of President-Elect. It will be my honor to serve you, the Partners organization, and this position with dignity, tenacity, and integrity. Following in the “footsteps” of our new President, Peg Larson, will be a huge challenge, and serving alongside Julie Steiner, State Secretary and John Tully, State Treasurer, is a privilege I respect very much. With the cumulative personal experiences and energies we bring, I have every confidence the entire leadership can guide Partners of WHA through any challenges and changes that are presented.

As President-Elect, I am tasked with duties that include any by-laws changes or updates, tallying and distributing Honor Points, communicating with our seven district chairs, and serving on committees pertaining to Strategic Planning, Finance, and Executive – to be sure, little “grass will grow” under my feet during my term. I have identified several goals that I believe are attainable and will have positive results:

- Having passed our revised bylaws during the annual meeting in October 2019, it now follows, appropriately, to direct the By-Laws Committee’s attention to reviewing and updating all leadership position descriptions along with our policies and procedures. Maintaining the clarity and integrity of all aspects of our by-laws is an ongoing process.
- With several newly installed district chairs, it is important to guide and counsel them in becoming effective leaders. There are many “tools” that can be incorporated; the one I find most successful and appreciated is simply COMMUNICATION – ensuring the district chairs have all the information needed to pass on to their local organizations to make the whole Partners organization strong and fulfilling for our members.
- Honor Points have been a focus of discussion for an exceptionally long time. Revisions will still be discussed.

I have always been extremely proud describing myself as a health care volunteer. We volunteers are an incredible and diverse group so eagerly and passionately giving of our treasures of strength of character, special talents, and time. Collectively, we make such an enormous difference in other’s lives and our communities.

As we move into this new year, the challenges and changes we faced in 2020 still resonate. We have all missed our volunteer duties within our health care facilities, in person meetings/convention, we have learned to maneuver in a “virtual” world, and perhaps most importantly, we realize how very much we miss one another. Sadly, we cannot dismiss the reality of the COVID-19 crisis and the sundry affects that each of us have endured.

Let us be hopeful in 2021. Let us remain positive. Let us remember how eagerly and passionately we want to return to volunteering and in-person gatherings with family and friends. Let us remember together we can move Partners of WHA forward and let us remember respect for all is respect for the WHOLE. Sharon Scott 262-334-6296 (H); 262-707-3259 (C); Email: dick-sharon-scott@prodigy.net

### **Public Policy Education Report**

A past article in Reaching Out addressed the subject of “Impacting the High Cost of Prescription Drugs.” In that article, a number of concerns were expressed to include: 1) a substantial increase in drug spending by hospitals, 18.5% from 2015-2017; 2) concern that “Drug discount Sample Programs” might disguise drug offerings to make users more dependent on name brand vs. generic brands; and 3) the federal government, through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), could not negotiate the price of drugs covered under the Medicare prescription drug benefit.

The October 1, 2020 WHA newsletter, The Valued Voice, featured an action taken by 70 health care leaders who signed and sent a letter to The Honorable Alex M. Azar II, HHS Secretary. The letter was an effort to push back on drug manufacturers’ actions related to the 340B drug discount program. Manufacturers, including Eli Lilly, AstraZeneca, Merck, Sanofi, and Novartis, have recently undertaken actions that appear to be in direct conflict with what is required of them under the 340B program. Specifically, some have announced they will no longer offer their drugs at the discounted 340B rate for contract pharmacies and some have announced they will no longer offer the discount unless 340B program participants provide extensive additional data. The letter stated that the pharmaceutical manufacturers’ actions were in direct conflict with the 340B statute and the intent of Congress to protect access to health care for vulnerable Americans.

A related article appeared on this subject in the December 17, 2020 Valued Voice. Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul joined 27 attorneys general (AGs) in urging HHS to enforce 340B drug discounts, now being denied by a number of drug manufacturers. In the letter, the AGs noted the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) recognizes the important role contract pharmacies play in dispensing drugs to safety-net providers under the 340B program. The letter further stated that drug companies enjoy some of the highest profits in health care and continue to increase prices for safety-net health care providers during a pandemic where patient care and financial challenges exist.

Two actions were taken at the federal legislative level in 2019 to address a multitude of issues. On July 25, 2019, the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act (PDPRA) was approved by the Senate Finance Committee seeking to address issues that affect Medicare beneficiaries. The other was a bill introduced September 19, 2019 by the House and passed on December 12, 2019 – H.R.3, Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act. While both address the pricing of prescription drugs, health care coverage costs and overall public health, H.R.3 requires HHS to negotiate prices for certain drugs under the Medicare prescription drug benefit. While both federal initiatives provide considerable potential cost savings to consumers, much more conversation and analysis will likely develop in the coming months under a new administration. We will stay tuned and provide updates as available.

Bill McCullough, PPE Chair 715-832-7053; Email: webirish2gmail.com

### **Community Health Education Report - Infectious Disease**

Many of us were probably hoping that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) would be a thing of the past as we entered 2021 and life would return to normal. Although that is not the case, so much has been learned about the virus and progress made to help bring an end to this pandemic.

With vaccines now available, it is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that everyone should get immunized against the coronavirus unless one has other circumstances (ie allergic reactions to any ingredient in the vaccines available). If you are uncertain about receiving the vaccine, know that the vaccine does not use the live virus so it does not give you COVID-19 and it does not affect your DNA in any way.

Vaccines in the United States are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after extensive tests for safety and effectiveness. To start, vaccines are developed in a laboratory. If the vaccine shows potential, testing is done on animals before clinical (human) trials begin. The clinical trials are done in three phases using several hundred volunteers to look at side effects, dosage, safety, and if the vaccine is effective. The FDA also inspects the vaccine manufacturing sites to make certain they are complying with good manufacturing standards and regulations.

Once the vaccine is approved for use and administered, vaccine safety monitoring begins with the use of several safety surveillance systems used by FDA and CDC scientists. Data is collected on adverse events (serious side effects) to determine if the adverse event is truly linked to the vaccine and continued studies on safety and long-term effectiveness.

The COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the U.S. through Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna require two doses for full protection. The body needs time to build immunity, about 1-2 weeks after receiving the second dose of vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines will help get us to “herd immunity” and ultimately put this pandemic behind us. So, continue to follow the safety guidelines set forth by the CDC as well as the Wisconsin initiative: “You Stop the Spread.”

It’s important not to let your guard down! • Continue to wear a mask (see Infectious Disease article on Partners of WHA website under Health Education). • Continue to stay at least six feet apart from other people. • Continue to social distance. • Continue to wash hands often. • Continue to have HOPE! For more information on COVID-19, visit any of these websites: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov), and [dhs.gov](https://www.dhs.gov).

Sue Schuelke, CHE Chair 414-630-1183; Email: [sschuelk@charter.net](mailto:sschuelk@charter.net)

### **Convention Theme: “Together We Build a Better Future”**

As convention chair, I am genuinely excited both with the venue selected – Madison Marriott West Hotel and Convention Center and the opportunity to work with the Southern District team to plan an amazing event for all of you. The convention is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 5 through Thursday, October 7, 2021.**

The hotel staff is eagerly awaiting our return and are excited to share the remodeling that has taken place in 2020. Volunteers from the Southern District are in the process of planning an educational, spirited, and enjoyable three days of speakers, workshops, delicious food, and the opportunity to network with fellow volunteers from throughout our great state of Wisconsin.

We all look forward to greeting and renewing friendships and ideas with you!!!! MARK YOUR CALENDARS now to share in the fun and fellowship with your fellow volunteers – each of you are “Working Together to Build a Better Future.” Please stay tuned for more exciting information in the coming months leading up to the convention. Terri Donlin, 2021 Convention Chair 608-225-8337 (Call or Text) or Email: [tmdonlin@yahoo.com](mailto:tmdonlin@yahoo.com)