

*PARTNERS OF WHA is committed to advocating for the health of our communities and advancing the success of local health care volunteer organizations, through the coordination and provision of volunteer education, development resources, and leadership opportunities for health care volunteers and their organizations.*

### A Message From Partners of WHA President

## Greetings and Happy New Year!



*Ann Bergmann*

**"The Recipe for Success: Be The Best You Can Be,"** the theme for Partners of WHA 2009-2010, will have great meaning to us as we go about our volunteering duties and responsibilities, conduct our local, district and state meetings, and go about our daily lives with family and friends. The Partners Leadership Team of committee chairs and executive board has met to develop plans for a successful year. Convention 2009 planning is well underway. The complete Partners

Board will meet together in March to conduct important business of our organization.

This spring, two members of the Leadership Team will attend each district meeting. The members of the traveling teams are President Ann and Community Health Education Chairperson Lisa Pepp; President-Elect Mark Schaefer, and Public Policy Education Chairperson Janet Rubenzer-Pike. The Team will provide updated information regarding Partners initiatives and projects, plus they will be presenting an interesting educational topic to help your Partners group **"Be The Best THEY Can Be."**

Also, you'll find published elsewhere in this issue the full roster of board members. Each elected and appointed board member is committed to the work of Partners striving to **Be The Best THEY Can Be** in their leadership positions. Thank you, Partners!

I want to sign-off with this Thought for the Day:

*When we do the best that we can,  
We never know what miracle is wrought  
In our life, or in the life of another.*

*- Helen Keller*

*Ann Bergmann, President*

*803 22 ½ Avenue, Cumberland, WI 54829; 715-822-2122*

*Email: [abergmann@centurytel.net](mailto:abergmann@centurytel.net)*

### A Message From the President-Elect

## Spring



*Mark Schaefer*

I thought the title may grab your attention. It seems most conversations start with something concerning our below normal temperatures and higher than normal

snow fall. However, when we talk about spring, we think of smiles, planning of what we would like to accomplish, and new growth. This is also what we contemplate for our Partners organization. I am delighted that you have entrusted me to the office of President-Elect. I promise that I will be there for you, your Partners organization, Ann Bergmann and her leadership team, and WHA. It certainly helps that I enjoy my wonderful wife, Sheree, also a volunteer at Aspirus Hospital in Wausau.

One of the greatest moments of my life was at our Partners convention in Wausau; in the course of it, I was introduced to the convention co-chair, Sheree. You never realize what will be brought to us during our conventions... smile. She is such a splendid joy in my life and she also brought me into the volunteer organization at Aspirus. This is alongside with my service to Froedtert Hospital and Partners of WHA.

Hang on to the thought of spring on your mind, not only for the fresh growth in your life, but in the Partners

*...continued on page 2*

## 2009 Dates to Remember

March 16-18, 2009	Spring Board Meeting	Madison
April 1, 2009	Advocacy Day	Madison
April 2-14, 2009	Spring District Meetings	Various locations
October 6-8, 2009	Partners of WHA Convention	Stevens Point

**A Message from the President-Elect**  
*...continued from page 1*

organization as well. I look ahead to meeting everyone during Advocacy Day and the district spring tour.  
 God Bless.

*Mark Schaefer, President-Elect*  
 505 Adelmann Ct., Brookfield, WI 53045; 262-797-9911  
 Email: [mschaefer@fmlh.edu](mailto:mschaefer@fmlh.edu)

## WHA Moves to Make Greater Use of Electronic Communications

For decades, WHA has produced a newsletter on Fridays and printed and mailed hundreds of copies. After convening a workgroup and reviewing our communications vehicles, the decision was made to reduce the Association's dependence on paper and send more communications electronically.

All Partners of WHA recipients of the newsletter will receive WHA communications, including the Friday newsletter, "The Valued Voice," by email only starting February 6.

If you are currently receiving a printed copy ONLY of *The Valued Voice* by mail and wish to receive it by email starting February 6, contact Tammy Hribar at [thribar@wha.org](mailto:thribar@wha.org), or 608-274-1820. The Friday Packet is also available 24/7 from the WHA Web site at [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org). The current issue is on the home page of the Web site, and past issues can be found in Publications & Archive.

## 2009 Best of the Best Award to Seek Applications

As I sit here putting together this article for the February issue of the Partners *Reaching Out* newsletter on this cold day in January, it's hard to believe that we are approaching that time to once again make plans for your nominations to select the 2009 "Best of the Best" Administrator Award.

This award was established to honor "on-site administrators, chief executive officers, presidents, executive directors, 1st vice presidents, and chief financial officers of Wisconsin hospitals and medical centers who demonstrate a cooperative, supportive, enthusiastic, and well defined relationship with their volunteer organizations." Fifteen individuals have been awarded this honor since 1994. The 2008 recipient was Mr. Stan Gaynor, CEO of the Black River Memorial Hospital.

Nomination forms will be mailed out to all presidents of Partners/Auxiliary organizations, District Chairs, and Executive Board members in late March, and forms will also be available at the Spring Tour meetings. The deadline for the submission of nomination forms will be June 26, 2009.

If you have submitted a nomination in the past, but were not successful, please resubmit after you have reviewed it in light of the criteria.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

*Arnie Lee, Chairman, Best of the Best Committee*  
 1701 Morgan Terrace, Beloit WI 53511  
 608-362-7825; Email: [Atll1930@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Atll1930@sbcglobal.net)

## Gift Shop Vendor Show to be Held in June

A Gift Shop Vendor Show will be held June 15 from 9 AM to 5 PM in Madison.

It will be at the Alliant Energy Center sponsored by Market Square Shows. Cash and carry will be available as well as ordering from the vendors.

Go to their Web site for a list of attending vendors at [www.marketsquashows.com](http://www.marketsquashows.com). Two shows were held in January also.

## Spring District Meetings

Thursday, April 2, 2009	Southern District	Portage
Thursday, April 2, 2009	Southeastern District	Oconomowoc
Tuesday, April 7, 2009	Lake Michigan District	Green Bay
Tuesday, April 7, 2009	Lake Winnebago District	Ripon
Wednesday, April 8, 2009	North Central District	Rhineland
Wednesday, April 8, 2009	Western District	Adams-Friendship
Thursday, April 9, 2009	Northwestern District	Ashland
Tuesday, April 14, 2009	West Central District	Eau Claire

## WHA President's Report

### Was 2007 "the Good Old Days"?

Will Wisconsin hospitals look back to 2006 and 2007 as the "good old days," at least as it relates to financial performance? The same might be asked of the nation's hospitals. The current economic downturn and balky credit markets have created symptoms not seen by Wisconsin hospitals in well over a decade, if ever. A growing pile of evidence suggests that hospital inpatient and outpatient activity is slumping while bad debt, charity care, and Medicaid business skyrockets. Hospital investment losses are significant and portend negative "total" margins for many, if not most, organizations.

In addition to economic-related factors, Wisconsin employers, as a group, are getting serious about managing their health care costs. Proactive wellness programs mean healthier employees utilizing health care services less. And consumer-driven benefit designs and higher co-payments and deductibles are at least partially responsible for growing hospital and clinic accounts receivables. These trends will not change.

Hospitals and clinics have generally been sheltered from past recessions due to population demographics and widespread and pluralistic benefit coverage. A recent *Modern Healthcare* notes that during the 2001 recession, "community hospitals never stopped hiring more workers and posted (profits)." But that's not happening now. We are already hearing of expense reductions that will have a statewide impact on staffing and capital spending. And Moody's recently downgraded the national health care sector's future performance from stable to negative. Consider the impact that will have on future financings.

***A growing pile of anecdotal evidence suggests that hospital inpatient and outpatient activity is slumping while bad debt, charity care, and Medicaid business skyrockets.***

***If we really needed another reason to support Governor Doyle's hospital assessment initiative, we have it in the form of the new fiscal reality.***

If we really needed another reason to support Governor Doyle's hospital assessment initiative, we have it in the form of the new fiscal reality. The State of Wisconsin's budget dilemma is even worse than is the current private sector's situation. Preserving current programs that cover our most vulnerable patients will be difficult next year. Additional coverage expansions are hard to envision in the context of the next biennial budget. And, of course, there is NO new money for hospitals, other

than through the assessment—an approach that is already in place in our neighboring states. *It is the one glimmer of sunlight in a very dark environment.*

The Doyle Administration has publicly touted the assessment as an early "must do." WHA staff has participated in discussions to fine tune the assessment/payment plan, which is increasingly likely to be in play early next year. Our goal is to align the initiative with WHA Board approved principles that frame our support for the plan. We are cautiously optimistic that when unveiled...the initiative will be an improvement over the approach we supported last year.

*Steve Brenton, President, Wisconsin Hospital Association*

## Treasurer Suggests All to be Fiscally Responsible

I would like to introduce myself as the new WHA Partners treasurer. My name is Bonnie Rose Olson; many people refer to me as the Hat Lady.

As we all know, our economy is in dire shape. What happens in 2009 depends on whether or how fast the economy reverses from its current malaise. Health care providers continue to fret over slow payments from insurance companies. Timely fiscal policy can make a real difference to the U.S. economy. My request to each member of WHA Partners is to be fiscally responsible. Carpool and room together if possible.

I will closely monitor the submitted expenses the next two years. When submitting expenses, a receipt of the charges is necessary.

Thank you to Sue Plimpton for her past years of service and for doing an excellent job as treasurer.

Happy New Year, and may God bless you now and throughout the year. Wishing you 365 chances to love, laugh, and live your best year yet.

*Bonnie R. Olson, Treasurer*  
715-834-1320 or 715-379-6797; Email: [hatladyb@charter.net](mailto:hatladyb@charter.net)

# Governor Doyle Announces Revised Hospital Assessment Proposal, WHA Supports



On January 14, 2009, Governor Doyle announced a revised hospital assessment proposal that will **net millions in increased Medicaid payments for hospitals**. The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) strongly supports this proposal and has worked with the Governor's office for months to make the assessment even better than before. This approach has been part of WHA's long-term Medicaid campaign, "Fair Share for Health Care." You may be wondering about the hospital assessment, so the following is intended to provide you with a few questions and answers. Please read and act!

## What is the Hospital Assessment?

The hospital assessment is a funding mechanism that helps provide more federal aid to Wisconsin to improve reimbursement to hospitals for services delivered to Medicaid patients. The proposal would place an assessment on about half of the hospitals in the state (Critical Access and behavioral health hospitals are exempted). A portion of these dollars would be used to fund Medicaid and BadgerCare, with the majority being put into a hospital trust fund. For each dollar put into trust fund, the state will receive an additional \$1.50 back in federal "matching" funds, which means Wisconsin will gain hundreds of millions in new federal dollars under the proposal. These dollars would then be returned to hospitals in the form of significantly increased Medicaid reimbursements.

## Does Wisconsin Get Its "Fair Share" of Federal Health Care Dollars?

No. Wisconsin is by far one of the worst states in receiving its fair share of federal funding, particularly Medicaid dollars. Wisconsin ranks 44 out of 50 in getting federal dollars for hospital Medicaid payments.

## What Is The "Hidden Health Care Tax" and Who Pays It?

When the State fails to reimburse hospitals adequately for the care they provide to Medicaid patients, those costs must be shifted elsewhere. In 2007, Wisconsin's non-critical access hospitals were paid about 50 cents for every dollar they spent caring for a Medicaid patient. This is called the "hidden health care tax," as unpaid costs are shifted onto individuals and businesses with private insurance.

## Do Hospitals Support This Assessment?

Yes. WHA, representing the state's hospitals, supports the proposed assessment as a viable method of improving dismal Medicaid payments. The state's major business group, the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC), also supports the assessment.

## Where Is The Hospital Assessment Now?

Governor Doyle and legislators have indicated swift action on this proposal (January-February). If you are a member of WHA's HEAT grassroots advocacy program, watch for details soon. If you are not a member of HEAT, join today online at [www.wha.org/speakUp/heatsignup.aspx](http://www.wha.org/speakUp/heatsignup.aspx).

## Who Do I Call If I Have Questions?

Contact WHA's Jenny Boese, 608-268-1816, [jboese@wha.org](mailto:jboese@wha.org) with questions or how you can help.

## WHA 2009 Advocacy Day Set for April 1

*Details and Brochure Now Available Online*

[http://www.wha.org/governmentRelations/advocacy\\_day.aspx](http://www.wha.org/governmentRelations/advocacy_day.aspx)

The November elections brought in a new President and new majority in Congress, both of whom are ready to tackle major health care issues. By attending WHA's Advocacy Day event on April 1 in Madison, you'll hear about these issues firsthand from keynote speaker **Rick Pollack**, executive vice president of the American Hospital Association. At the state level, attendees will hear important insights on state issues from luncheon keynote speaker **Governor Jim Doyle** (invited).

Attending Advocacy Day will provide you up-to-the-minute insights on these important issues and then allow you to meet personally with your legislators or their staffs to discuss. **Mark your calendars today and plan on being in Madison on April 1 for this important event!** A complete program and registration form are available online at [www.wha.org/governmentRelations/advocacy\\_day.aspx](http://www.wha.org/governmentRelations/advocacy_day.aspx)

For registration questions, contact Lisa Geishirt at [lgeishirt@wha.org](mailto:lgeishirt@wha.org) or at 608-274-1820. For all other questions, contact Jenny Boese at 608-268-1816 or [jboese@wha.org](mailto:jboese@wha.org).

## 2009-2010 Partners of WHA, Inc. Board

Titles	Names	Address	City	State	Zip	Telephone	Email
<b>Executive Team</b>							
President	Ann Bergmann	803 22-1/2 Ave.	Cumberland	WI	54829	715-822-3290	<a href="mailto:abergmann@centurytel.net">abergmann@centurytel.net</a>
President-Elect	Mark Schaefer	505 Adelman Ct.	Brookfield	WI	53045	262-797-9911	<a href="mailto:mschaefer@fmlh.edu">mschaefer@fmlh.edu</a>
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<b>District Chairs</b>							
Lake Michigan	Gloria Meyer	7255 Cortland Cr.	Egg Harbor	WI	54209	920-868-1767	<a href="mailto:gmtm@earthlink.net">gmtm@earthlink.net</a>
Lake Winnebago	Betsy Blazek	N6094 Southview Ct.	Green Lake	WI	54941	920-294-0456	none
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West Central	Jan O'Neill	820 Bittersweet Ln.	Menomonie	WI	54751	715-235-8040	<a href="mailto:oneill.jan@gmail.com">oneill.jan@gmail.com</a>
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	Stan Gaynor, 2008 Recipient	Black River Mem. Hospital					
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	Mark Schaefer, Pres. Elect						
	Janet Rubenzer-Pike, PPE						
	Lisa Pepp, CHE						
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	Betsy Blazek	N6094 Southview Ct.	Green Lake	WI	54941	920-294-0456	
	Jennifer Frank/Jenny Boese, WHA Staff						



### 2009-2010 Partners of WHA, Inc. Board

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	Jennifer Frank	WHA Staff					
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Committee Members	Ann Bergmann						
	Mark Schaefer						
	Janet Rubenzer-Pike						
	Lisa Pepp						
	Jerri Kluesner						



## **Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association Resource Center**

### **Submitting a Fundraiser to the Resource Center**

Hospital volunteers across the state would love to hear about your successful volunteer fundraising efforts. To submit a fundraising idea to the Resource Center, please provide the following us with the information:

Organization Name:

Partners of WHA District Name:

Name of Fundraising Effort:

Date Fundraiser Held:

Brief Description of Fundraiser:

Outcome of Fundraiser (financial impact, etc.):

Would You Do This Fundraiser Again?

If a hospital volunteer program would like more information on your fundraiser, who should they contact?

If you have current information you would like to submit or have questions, contact: Partners Resource Center  
c/o Jenny Boese, Wisconsin Hospital Association, PO Box 259038, Madison, WI 53725-9038  
Phone: 608-274-1820 ♦ Fax: 608-274-8554 ♦ [jboese@wha.org](mailto:jboese@wha.org)

## Public Policy Education Report



Janet Rubenzer-Pike

The elections are over and we have a very challenging year ahead of us. Our local newspaper published a story that stated, "As economy goes, so goes hospital charity cases." Hospitals in the Chippewa Valley saw a 6.5% to 7% increase in charitable care from 2007 to 2008 as a result of unemployment or lack of health care coverage, which more than likely reflects what is happening across Wisconsin. We need to recover more "health care dollars" to help meet this new challenge.

The October 17, 2008 issue of the "*The Valued Voice*" announced WHA's newest initiative which is a \$635 million promotion through radio ads. Wisconsin health care costs are \$635 million higher because our state is not capturing its "fair share" for health care. We need to increase our Medicaid Reimbursement; it is a state/federal partnership in which the federal government provides \$1.50 for every \$1 contributed by the state. Wisconsin ranks among the worst in the country in terms of drawing down federal dollars for hospital Medicaid payments.

It is important that our voices are heard and that we work together to make this initiative a reality. We all want to keep our hospitals in our area, and passage of this type of legislation will benefit all of Wisconsin's hospitals. You will be hearing more from me in the coming weeks and months with more information and a "Call to Action."

Smoke Free legislation will be back on the table—please continue to support a "Smoke Free Wisconsin."



Advocacy Day is April 1, 2009 in Madison; plan on attending this important health care event sponsored by WHA. WHA staff will brief everyone on important issues that impact our hospitals and are currently being considered by our legislators or will be introduced in the near future. Take advantage of the opportunity to visit face-to-face with your legislators and let your voice be heard. To show our solidarity as Partners of WHA, Inc., please wear red, white, and blue as we have the past four years.

Happy New Year!

Janet Rubenzer-Pike, PPE Chair  
715-723-2123  
Email: [jrp1ke1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jrp1ke1@sbcglobal.net)

## Community Health Education Report



Lisa Pepp

"Be The Best You Can Be!" Wow! What a challenge and daily theme for all of us! It is within each of us to achieve healthier lifestyles and to reach out to those most in need among us by:

- Education
- Health Promotion
- Life Skills
- Care of the Sick

To do this we must have respect for diversity and human dignity. We need to sustain the whole person and work towards peace of mind, body, and spirit; and try to lead as rich and full of a life as possible.

How do we do this? We start with ourselves – by being the best we can be! How?

- Focusing on wellness
- Achieving healthy lifestyles
- Avoiding common daily stressors in your life
- Keeping up-to-date on studies to improve heart health

It is an honor to serve you in the capacity as CHE chair for the next two years. I look forward to meeting many of you on spring tour and beyond. Feel free to call or email me at anytime. I can send WHALE sticker information!

Lisa Pepp, CHE Chair  
715-834-1320 / Jan.-Feb. 386-467-2302  
Email: [genepepp@nnex.net](mailto:genepepp@nnex.net)

## Great Truths About Growing Old

- Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- Forget the health food. We need all the preservatives we can get.
- When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes first.



## Around the State

### **Aurora Lakeland Medical Center Associates, Elkhorn:**

This volunteer group tried a new venue for sales by having five different vendors at the same time and it was a big success. For the first time, they gave small gifts to patients who had to be in the hospital over Christmas and all were pleased.

### **Partners of St. Joseph's Hospital, West Bend:**

Congratulations for giving the hospital an ambulatory patient transport van in 2008! Hopefully this will provide transportation services to community members who are unable to transport themselves for medical appointments. Volunteers will provide the driving services.

### **Good Samaritan Health Center Volunteers, Merrill:**

The "Holly Time Bazaar" featured grab bag items (new and valued at \$1.00 each) for children and adults; used jewelry; crafts; baked goods, candy, and cookies; raffle tickets; and love lites. The selection was wonderful!

### **Partners of Osceola Medical Center, Osceola:**

Partners asked Osceola Medical Center employees who sell their "wares" such as Pampered Chef, Lia Sophia, Tastefully Simple, etc. to partake in a "Holiday Sale" in conjunction with the opening of their new gift shop, which was advertised in the community. Because this was a fundraiser, 10 percent of the sales would go to the Partners group. Just like shopping in a Mall!

### **Ripon Medical Center Associates, Ripon:**

The "sewing ladies" continue to work their magic with sewing walker bags and ice bags. These items are greatly appreciated by staff and patients.

## Editor's Note:

Just a friendly reminder that deadlines for this newsletter are very important to me and those who help to get *Reaching Out* completed at WHA in a timely manner! If anyone submitting articles for publication would please mark these dates on their calendars, it would be greatly appreciated. I send emails to most of those who contribute on a regular basis about 2 weeks prior to the deadline as a reminder. I depend upon these articles and love it when all send them in as quickly as possible. If there is a delay, you will not receive *Reaching Out* by the first of the month as has been the policy. Thanks for your consideration!

Kay Lyndahl, Editor  
kaylyndahl@aol.com

## Would You Believe?

While on a road trip, an elderly couple stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch. After finishing their meal, they left the restaurant, and resumed their trip. When leaving, the elderly woman unknowingly left her glasses on the table, and she didn't miss them until they had been driving about forty minutes. By then, to add to the aggravation, they had to travel quite a distance before they could find a place to turn around, in order to return to the restaurant to retrieve her glasses.

All the way back, the elderly husband became the classic grouchy old man. He fussed and complained, and scolded his wife relentlessly during the entire return drive. The more he chided her, the more agitated he became. He just wouldn't let up for one minute. To her relief, they finally arrived at the restaurant. As the woman got out of the car, and hurried inside to retrieve her glasses, the old geezer yelled to her, "While you're in there, you might as well get my hat and the credit card."

## Reaching Out Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
May 2009	Wed., April 15, 2009
August 2009	Wed., July 15, 2009
November 2009	Thur., October 15, 2009
February 2010	Fri., January 15, 2010
May 2010	Thur., April 15, 2010
August 2010	Thur., July 15, 2010
November 2010	Fri., October 15, 2010

## Orange Manual Update

There has been an update of the Organization/Leadership section of the Orange Leadership Manual. Pages 103-105 are the pages affected. This is an update of Partners membership and hospital names.

Linda Fish

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