

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 the Partners of WHA President

Reflections



Jan Molaska

Bright leaves are falling as if waving good bye to summer. Bonfires, pumpkin carving, football games, flannel shirts, hot chocolate, and soft comfy blankets – it must be fall!

Many individuals usually look at fall with disdain because they know WINTER is coming. Rather than looking forward with “disdain,” let’s first look back with pride on our accomplishments.

These last few months have been a whirlwind of activities. Spring tour and district meetings were well attended, and local organizations provided input for the Strategic Planning Committee to address. Many individuals attended Advocacy Day, and when asked to respond to HEAT alerts and other political issues that affect health care in our communities, once again members of Partners made their voices heard. The Convention in Appleton – “Volunteers - Our Precious Gems” was well attended. After three years of drafting and revising, bylaws for Partners were overwhelming passed. Rob Toonkel, keynote speaker, and Ali Starr, closing speaker, received very positive comments on the evaluation forms. The diversity and quality of workshops also received high marks. Most of all, those attending for the first time as well as “seasoned” participants indicated how organized and smoothly everything seemed to go. Thank you again to Sharon Scott, convention chair, and members of the Lakes and Southeastern districts for the time, energy, and commitment they dedicated to making this a memorable convention.

This snap shot of the past year shows we have a great deal to be proud of. Partners of WHA continues to be a strong organization that supports health care volunteers through education and advocacy. We have approximately 8,550 members, have donated in excess of \$1.9 million to our hospitals, and awarded more than \$370,000 in scholarships. We continue to recruit new members and support local organizations as needed.

So, what do we have to look forward to? We have begun to tell our stories and share the accomplishments of our local organizations statewide. The Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. (WHA) is proud to continue providing organizational and financial support to our Partners organization. WHA continues to express their gratitude and insistence that the Partners organization is a vital component of advocating for health care in Wisconsin.

(Continued on page 2)

A Message from the President-Elect

Bylaws Approved

It was great to see everyone at Convention. With one day of meetings with the board members and 48 hours of wonderful friends and motivating speakers, I am reenergized to move Partners forward with the new bylaws. The new document is on the [website](#) for you to print and put in your Leadership Handbook. While you are there, check to see if the rest of your book is up to date.

Over the winter, we will work on making certain that the job descriptions and policies and procedures are in line with the new bylaws. As I mentioned during Convention, the next step will be to review your district bylaws to make sure they are not in conflict with the new state bylaws. My perception is that very few changes, if any, will be needed. Thank you all for your dedication to this project.

During the next year, I look forward to continuing to learn the leadership skills that our president has and to working with all of you to provide the support your volunteers need. If you have ideas, comments, or questions, please contact me. Thank you for your support.



Peg Larson

Peg Larson
920-231-3005 (H); 920-420-1482 (C)
Email: pegvolumtr@hotmail.com

Convention Wrap-up



THANK YOU, Southeastern and Lakes District volunteers for hosting an outstanding Partners of WHA convention!!!

With the large number of completed convention evaluation forms, your fellow Partners certainly agree!!!

Attendance for convention activities totaled 263 and voting delegates numbered 114. For those unable to attend, a few highlights included:

- Keynote speaker Rob Toonkel, empowering us to cleverly entwine creative wording that leads to enthusiasm and retention of the volunteer base – examples: “Dinner with the President..followed by our annual meeting”; “Shopping Extravaganza” rather than “Annual Holiday Sale,” will reward the organization many times over.
- Closing speaker Alison Starr shared an enthusiastic presentation of “emotional intelligence” defined as recognizing, understanding, and managing our own emotions is the key to both personal and professional success.
- The revised Bylaws were passed with 97 yays to 8 nays. Nine (9) ballots were not returned.
- We welcomed and acknowledged 15 first-time convention attendees.
- Nineteen workshop sessions included a valued and educational presentation by Kathy Moe’s gift shop “Revival” and “WOW;” Lisa Hare’s “Mindfulness;” and Atty. Elaine Shanebrook’s, “Wills and Trust.” Fundraising was presented by two previous WAVE award recipients; Cyber Security was presented by Officer Meghan Cash of the Appleton Police Dept; Leadership was led by several directors of volunteer services; John Edwards, previous Oak Creek Police Chief during the Sikh Temple shooting presented on staying safe; and numerous other sessions were presented on H.E.A.T., current legislative affairs, parliamentary procedures, understanding suicide risks, new medical technology, and of course, Joe Tofferi, the “keep moving” expert, returned for an encore presentation.
- Congratulations to Tim McKeveitt, president and CEO at Beloit Health System in Beloit, recipient of this year’s Best of the Best award.
- W.A.V.E. recipients:
 1. Partners of Beaver Dam Community Hospital, Inc. – Community Service Program
 2. Volunteers of Howard Young Medical Center – In-Service Program
 3. Aspirus Volunteers, Medford – Fundraising
 4. Partners of Marshfield Medical Center, Ladysmith – Community Outreach and/or Collaboration program

The new addition, “Wheel of Gems” raffle did quite well for its inaugural debut. Originally publicized as a value of \$500 with one winner take all, through the generosity of businesses and other donors the gift cards grew to a \$1,000 value allowing for two winners. This raffle replaced the wine raffle.

Additionally, new evaluation forms were introduced allowing attendees the opportunity to evaluate the overall convention and individual workshops separately, enjoy the talents of Ron Williams playing musical selections on his keyboard, and for the first time we received permission from Kathy Moe, gift shop presenter, and Alison Starr, closing speaker, to publish their PowerPoint presentations on the Partners website. Please visit Partnersofwha.org, click on the Convention 2019 tab, then click on the presentation.

As Convention chair, I wish it possible to thank each of you personally for attending. That being an insurmountable task, please accept how honored and privileged I am to have planned and executed this year’s convention. The goal was to honor your suggestions/input, provide educational and valued workshops, and most of all provide an atmosphere for networking, greeting familiar faces, meeting new volunteers, and celebrating “**Volunteers, Our Precious Gems.**”

Sharon Scott, 2019, Convention Chair

262-334-6296 (H); 262-707-3159 (C); Email: dick-sharon-scott@prodigy.net

A Message from the President...continued from page 1

Yes, winter is coming. We can look with dread or can view it as a time for reflecting, relaxing, and calming both mind and spirit. Bright rays of sunlight sparkling off the fresh snow spread a feeling of peace, a chance to stay home, and enjoy indoor or outdoor activities with family and friends and just relax.

This is the time for members of Partners to develop goals and devise strategies to achieve these goals. This is a time to recruit new leaders and to rejuvenate the spirit and commitment of all volunteers.

Please remember if there is ever anything I can do for you or need from me, I am only a phone call or email away.

Kahlil Gibran said, “Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers.”

With gratitude for all you do.

Jan Molaska

715-359-9303 (H); 715-581-9304 (C)

Email: jmolaska@gmail.com

Perceptions of Administrators

The organizational purpose of the Partners of WHA is to support health care volunteers through education and advocacy for the health of our communities. This support from the Partners of the WHA for our partner/volunteer group at Vernon Memorial Healthcare, the Friends of VMH, has played a very important role in the success that Vernon Memorial Healthcare has enjoyed over the years. The Friends of VMH, with the crucial support of the Partners of WHA, are a very important member of the Vernon Memorial Healthcare team.

There are many reasons why a health care organization is successful. It starts with providing quality care and service to all, providing the ultimate experience for staff and patients alike. This success starts with having great staff, great infrastructure/facilities, and the latest technology and support from the communities we serve. I truly believe the reason for our success is the people that are part of the VMH team. The Friends of VMH are dedicated members of our team who continually strive to enhance and support the experience our patients and staff receive. Vernon Memorial Healthcare strives to be the best community health care system in the region, and the Friends of VMH play an important and strategic role in this goal. The dedication and support of the Friends is key to our success at VMH. This support and the work of the VMH Friends does not go unnoticed.

What does this crucial support from the Friends of VMH look like at Vernon Memorial Healthcare? It begins at the VMH front door, where every person entering our facility is greeted by a friendly and knowledgeable volunteer! If necessary, our volunteer will escort our visitor to the desired location on our campus. This is one of the reasons VMH has once again received the Outstanding Patient Experience Award from Healthgrades for 2019. This tremendous service and experience does not stop with our patients and visitors but is delivered to our staff as well! The Friends of VMH host numerous events throughout the year to support and show appreciation to our staff. Events such as a staff appreciation luncheon, brat & hot dog dookout, spud bowl, and taco luncheon, just to name a few. These events are very much appreciated by our staff.

The support of the Friends does not stop there. A dedicated group of volunteers operate the VMH Gift Shop, which allows the Friends of VMH to donate tens of thousands of dollars to support our mission in providing the latest equipment and technology.

VMH could not accomplish what we do without the Friends of VMH. I know our Friends would not be as successful as they are without the education and support received from the Partners of WHA. Together, we are all building healthier communities!

Kyle Bakkum, CEO, Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua, WI
Email: kbakkum@vmh.org

Partners Tell Their Stories

As Board President, I introduced a project need at one of our luncheons that are held four times a year at Little River Country Club in Marinette, Wisconsin. The project involved small pieces of material, stuffing, and two pieces of Velcro. They are called Port-A-Pillows and are used to go over the seat belt to protect the ports used in chemotherapy for cancer patients. After explaining the project and their use, I asked if there were any volunteers who would like to help in making them. The pattern and an example pillow are available to use.

After the meeting, a volunteer came up to me and said she would like to do it. Wonderful news, indeed! So, within a few weeks, a bag of beautiful port-a-pillows appeared in our volunteer coordinator's room. Immediately they were brought to our Cancer Care Unit and were well received by staff and patients alike.

As the weeks went by, so did more port-a-pillows appear, sometimes at the door at the office and also at our coordinator's residence. This volunteer brought in her quilting ladies on the project and they have become our "sewing angels" that have produced hundreds and hundreds of pillows in every imaginable color and design. We have expanded the use to our Cardiology Unit as well. Some of them liked them so well that they are using them on their backpacks. Our "sewing angels" are indeed angels. I am sure that there are many patients in our communities that are extremely thankful for their hard work in making their life just a little bit better.

Shirley Olson, President
Aurora Medical Center-Bay Area Volunteer Services, Marinette, WI

SCAM ALERT!! SCAM ALERT!! SCAM ALERT!!

Once again, I am hearing that members are receiving emails supposedly coming from Peg Larson or myself (and potentially other officers) requesting individuals to purchase gift cards or send money. This morning, I received two emails saying "Are you working today? Please let me know if you have a spare moment to talk." These messages were sent to me supposedly from my own email.

As a reminder, PLEASE be ever vigilant when receiving emails or other requests. Unfortunately, there are individuals that spend most of their time trying to come up with ways to perpetrate scams.

Under no circumstances are any individuals or organizations to send money or information without checking with your district chair or officers of the Board. Please be sure to check email addresses to determine if it is actually coming from me or other members of the Board. When receiving an email that asks you "to call me" – please email and let me know.

This is just a reminder to be very, very cautious and check with others before replying or acting on any requests you might receive. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to contact Peg Larson or myself.

Jan Molaska, President,
Partners of WHA
715-359-9303 (H)
715-581-9304 (C)
Email: jmolaska@gmail.com

Parliamentary Points

On behalf of the Wisconsin State Association of Parliamentarians and the Madison Unit of the National Association of Parliamentarians, I wish to share the upcoming public workshop with all members of Partners of WHA. The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, November 23, 2019 at the Verona Town Hall Community Room starting at 9 AM to 4 PM located at 7769 County Highway PD, Verona, Wisconsin. The title of the workshop is:

I've Been Elected - Now What?

A One Day Public Leadership Workshop & Lunch

It is being presented by the Madison Unit of Parliamentarians and Wisconsin Association of Parliamentarians Education Committee Officer Training - using Robert's Rule of Order in Meetings.

Who should attend: (current and future) elected officials, presidents, chairs, vice presidents, vice chairs, clerks, secretaries, treasurers, student leaders, and anyone who wants to know Robert's Rules of Order and increase their knowledge.

Workshop Program:

9:00 AM - Registration & Refreshments

9:30 AM. - Part 1 Officer Training - The Office of President & Vice President

10:00 AM. - Part 2 Officer Training - Agendas, Minutes & Scripts

11:00 AM - Part 3 Officer Training - The Office of Secretary

12:00 noon - Recess for Lunch - Lunch provided by the Madison Unit

12:30 PM - Part 4 Officer Training - The Office of Treasurer and More

3:00 PM - Closing Statements - How to have a very efficient meeting!!

3:30 PM - Adjournment

Registration fee is \$50/person and the student discounted fee is \$25/student. Registration includes refreshments, lunch, workshop educational materials, and provisional membership to both the Madison Unit of Parliamentarians and the Wisconsin State Association of Parliamentarians. Information on how to become a parliamentarian and a regular member will also be shared.

Please contact me at my email address below to register.

Robert Schuck, Registered Parliamentarian
Email: robertschuckrp@gmail.com

Dates to Remember

March 18, 2020: Advocacy Day, Madison

March 19-20, 2020: Spring Board Meeting, Madison

2020 Spring Tours:

~~March 31, 2020~~, Tuesday – West Allis **March 24, 2020**

~~April 1, 2020~~, Wednesday – Janesville **March 25, 2020**

~~April 2, 2020~~, Thursday – Boscobel **March 26, 2020**

April 7, 2020, Tuesday – Stanley

April 8, 2020, Wednesday – Antigo

April 9, 2020, Thursday – Waupaca

April 15, 2020, Wednesday – Ashland

April 19-25, 2020: Volunteer Week

April 19-22, 2020: AHA Meeting

October 6-8, 2020: 2020 Convention - Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

WHA - Crafted Telehealth Bill Progresses

WHA's telehealth bill has been making its way through the legislative process this fall. After hearings in both the Assembly Committee on Medicaid Reform and Oversight, September 24, and the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, October 9, the bill awaits committee votes before it can go to floor votes in both chambers.

Telehealth has the potential to increase access to care and improve patient outcomes without increasing costs. Even after improvements provided in Governor Tony Evers' budget, Wisconsin's Medicaid telehealth laws still lag those of 20 other states and Medicare.

This bill started with WHA's Telemedicine Workgroup and has received strong bipartisan support in the Legislature with more than 60 co-sponsors, a result of effective lobbying from WHA's government relations team and advocacy from our HEAT network.

Updates, such as how to watch the hearings, and other resources are sent out via the HEAT network. If you are not already a HEAT member, sign up online at www.wha.org/ActionCenter.



WANTED: YOUR VOICE

Stay informed and join thousands of others in standing up for affordable, accessible, high-quality health care in Wisconsin.



Save the Date: WHA's Advocacy Day

Advocacy Day is just four months away! Save the date now for a day of learning and advocacy in action among 1,000 other hospital employees, trustees, and volunteers. The event will be held March 18, 2020 at the Monona Terrace in Madison. There is no cost to attend and breakfast and lunch are provided! More information on the event and how to register coming soon! Visit www.wha.org/AdvocacyDay.

[Kari Hofer](#), Vice President of Advocacy, WHA

Call for Candidates for Elections 2020

Partners Bylaw 10.1.9 Article IX Section 3 states the following: No officer shall be elected without having served on Partners Board for one year. The positions that will be elected at the convention in October 2020 will be President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Incumbent members must also submit a form. Qualified candidate applications will be accepted until March 21, 2020. The form (Candidate Questionnaire from the 2020 Committee) needs to be completed to seek a position on Partners Executive Board.

The form is available on the Partners website: www.partnersofwha.org. Please send the completed form to Bonnie R. Olson's email: bonnie.o.ppfwha@gmail.com or home address below. The completed applications/questionnaire will be sent to the committee members. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at Partners Convention in October 2020.

The nominating members are Linda Fish, rolnfish@charter.net; Dorothy Revnew, drevnew@wi.rr.com; and Phyllis Malin, phylal@mwt.net.

[Bonnie R. Olson](#), Immediate Past President of Partners of WHA
E2257 Jaybee Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701
715-834-1320(H); 715-379-6797 (C)

Tim McKevett Named 2019 Best of the Best Recipient



L to R: Arletta Trejo, Partners Best of the Best Committee chair; Tim McKevett; Jan Molaska, Partners President

Tim McKevett, president and CEO of Beloit Health System, was named the recipient of the Partners of WHA Best of the Best Administrative Award for 2019. He is responsible for all operations and strategic direction of the Health System. He has over 30 years of health care experience, starting his career as an administrative intern at Beloit Memorial Hospital.

McKevett was presented the award at the Partners of WHA State Convention in Appleton, October 2, 2019 by Arletta Trejo, Best of the Best Committee chairperson. The award recognizes an onsite hospital executive who demonstrates a cooperative, supportive, enthusiastic, and well-defined relationship with his or her volunteer organization.

McKevett's volunteers in partnership praised him for all the cooperation he has shown them, and for helping start some programs for and with them. They feel he regards all the volunteers and hospital staff as his "family" and takes an active role in their projects and events. He is also very active in other organizations in the community. He is married to Lisa and they have three boys and one grandchild.

I want to thank my Committee for their help in choosing our recipient this year. The Committee members were Bev Lazar, Jennifer Derks, Donnell Christianson, Randy Abraham, and Leigh Ann Larson, WHA. It was a pleasure serving on this Committee.

Arletta Trejo, Chair
920-887-1422; Email: artrejo@charter.net

HAVE Award goes to Madison Hospital

On September 15, 2019, SSM Health-St. Mary's Hospital, Madison was presented with a Hospital Award for Volunteer Excellence (HAVE) at the Association for Hospital Volunteer Resource Professionals (AHVRP) conference.

The in-service category award was presented to them with their "Patient Hand Massage" program. The in-service category recognizes organizations that design and implement innovative services to address needs or challenges within their health care organization.



SSM Health-St. Mary's Hospital, Madison, is honored with AHA's Hospital Award for Volunteer Excellence

Members of the SSM Health-St. Mary's Hospital Auxiliary support the healing ministry of their health system by providing patients with a complimentary hand message, intended to improve overall comfort and enhance their experience while in the care of their hospital. The Patient Comfort Hand Message is unique in that it provides the patient with one-on-one attention from a fully-trained volunteer who is present and focused on being a caring listener and human connection.

In 2018, prior to receiving the HAVE Award, SSM Health-St. Mary's Hospital, Madison was awarded a Wisconsin Award for Volunteer Excellence (WAVE) for this same program at the Partners of WHA Convention.

Congratulations to St. Mary's!

*Congratulations to the
Partners of WHA 2019 Honor
Point Award Winners!*



WAVE Award Winners



Community Service Program

Partners Emergency Department Service Project

Partners of Beaver Dam Community Hospital, Beaver Dam



In-service Hospital Volunteer Program

Hospital Elder Life Program

Auxiliary of Howard Young Medical Center, Woodruff



Fundraising Program

Volunteer Community Brat Fry

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics, Aspirus Volunteers



Community Outreach and/or Collaboration Program

First Aid & Trauma Kits

Partners of Marshfield Medical Center, Ladysmith

Convention Photos



Partners Presidents, Past and Present - L to R: Mark Schaefer, Bonnie Olson, Ann Bergmann, Linda Fish?, Sue Lynch, Jan Molaska



CEO panel participants, L to R: Aspirus Wausau Hospital COO, Tonya Darner; Ascension Calumet Hospital CEO, Jennifer Derks; Bellin Psychiatric Center President, Sharla Baenen; Partners of WHA President, Jan Molaska; WHA President and CEO, Eric Borgerding.

More Convention Photos



The officers of Partners of WHA - from left to right: Julie Steiner, Treasurer; Sharon Scott, Convention Chair and Secretary; Peg Larson, President-Elect; Robert Schuck, WI Association of Parliamentarians; and Jan Molaska, President



L to R: Jan Molaska, Keynote Speaker Rob Toonkel, Sharon Scott



Partners 2019 Convention Committee



Public Policy Education Report



Bill McCullough

A very large thank you to all the volunteer Partners who attended the Partners Convention hosted in Appleton in early October and attended the CEO panel discussion. I trust you came away with a better understanding of a variety of health care issues. Certainly, our guest CEO panelists offered considerable insight and applicable knowledge of the subjects presented for discussion. Eric Borgerding, president and CEO of WHA, introduced and moderated a variety of questions submitted including Medicare for All, workforce retention, mental health, consolidation of health care services, volunteerism, and telehealth.

Medicare for All: Two of the three CEOs on the panel stated their hospitals are currently reimbursed at 65% of the cost to care for Medicare patients. Medicare for All would significantly impact reimbursement for services provided. As a consequence, the largest fixed expense, labor, would have to be reduced, resulting in a compromised level of ongoing services. Panelists stated their hospitals are currently analyzing inefficiencies, collaborating with other hospitals, and exercising cost controls. Many Wisconsin hospitals are critical access hospitals (CAHs), that currently receive additional funding for their status. A reduction in that funding would likely cause many CAH hospitals to fail and patients would be required to travel further to receive appropriate care. The American Hospital Association is not in favor of Medicare for All due to concern over the potential failure of many rural hospitals.

Workforce Retention: This is a complex and continual problem given the low entry-level employee wages at or below \$12 per hour. The panel offered that they are moving to an affordable wage of \$15 per hour. The challenge is to find employees who will feel valued at earning \$13 or less per hour. Hospitals are implementing cross training of staff and offering scholarships at the Technical College and University levels. Statistics reveal those who graduate from a state college and UW medical school and then intern there are 86% more likely to stay in Wisconsin. There is a struggle to recruit and retain RNs after a couple years of employment. Some hospitals have come to rely on nurse practitioners and sharing staff with sister hospitals. WHA states the importance for medical practitioners to “leverage themselves to the top of their license.”

Mental Health: The Panel discussed the need for early conversations with medical school students to recognize and discuss the need to build a workforce appropriate to the behavioral health needs of today. Psych residencies have opened up under the current Wisconsin Budget, and WHA has lobbied for a matching grant program to help retain Medical students in the State. Under the new Wisconsin Budget, there is a plan to graduate 12 new Psychiatrists per year. With shortages that continue, primary care and psychiatrists are working toward collaboration of care during patients’ same-day clinic visit to promote understanding and importance of treating mind and body as a unit of care. Mental health services are necessary for all age groups, including geriatrics. Telehealth services can play a meaningful role here. There is also grant funding to school districts, providing funds to place a psychologist on school premises twice weekly, and will fund QPR (question, persuade, refer) training.

Consolidation of Health Care Services & the Role of Volunteers: It is critically important to put the patient into the conversation about what is best. In an acquisition, the decision making moves out of the community and the local identity is lost. Important to look for partnerships vs. acquisitions to increase buying power, resource sharing, and contracting power. Someone was heard to say, “Bigger isn’t better; better is better.”

Each panelist shared the importance of volunteers, as they represent the voice of the community. In some locations, patient advocates sit on service teams to offer the voice of the patient. In one organization, the 50,000 volunteer hours equated to almost \$1.5 million in value.

A new workplace violence prevention act has been recently introduced to protect health care workers.

Telehealth: There is a new bill that would require Medicaid to cover telehealth in the same way as in-person services in terms of both coverage for patients and the reimbursement for the providers who perform services. Telehealth involves the delivery of health care remotely via a computer, tablet, smartphone, or other device. This service is used for virtual office visits, telestroke services, remote patient monitoring, and remote evaluation of patient information. In the area of mental health, this service can work efficiently in collaboration with a hospital or mental health facility for after treatment service and for services to school-age children.

ADVOCACY DAY 2020. Mark your calendars for **March 18, 2020**. HEAT, if you are a member-great! If you are NOT, go to WHA.org and sign up. Let your voice be heard.

Bill McCullough, PPE Chair
715-832-7053; Email: webirish@gmail.com

Community Health Education Report



Sherry Jelic

This year our focus is mental health as a wound that is not always visible. The exact cause of many mental health issues is often not definite, but through research reports we are learning that many of these conditions are influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors. That's a big statement, so it may be helpful to look at some specifics.

BIOLOGIC

- In our brain, we have nerve cell circuits, or pathways, that connect particular brain regions. These pathways communicate through chemicals called neurotransmitters. Some mental illnesses have been linked to abnormal functioning of these chemicals, while other conditions are results of defects or injury to certain areas of the brain.

- Mental health issues sometimes run in families, susceptibility passed on through genes. Mental health conditions do not occur from genes, but from the interaction of multiple genes and other factors such as stress, abuse, or a traumatic event. This combination can then trigger an illness in a person who has an inherited susceptibility.
- Certain infections have been linked to brain damage and the development of mental illness or the worsening of its symptoms.
- A disruption of early fetal brain development or trauma that occurs at the time of birth, for example, loss of oxygen to the brain, may be factors in the development of certain conditions.
- Exposure to toxins, such as lead, may play a role in the development of mental illnesses.
- Long-term substance abuse, in particular, has been linked to anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

PSYCHOLOGIC

- Psychological trauma suffered as a child, such as emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, can influence development of mental health conditions. An important early loss, such as the loss of a parent, neglect, or poor ability to relate to others can also be psychological factors.
- Feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, anger, or loneliness can trigger mental health challenges in all ages.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Death or divorce, a dysfunctional family life (including substance abuse by parents), changing jobs or schools, or social/cultural expectations can be factors in developing anxiety, isolation, depression, or actions of self-harm.

People with problems need support and an encouraging word from others. It is important however to not "own" the problem. Even though we want to make things better, we can't solve everything. We can encourage but not force a person to seek help or change habits.

One of the critical needs we all have at any age is people we can talk to. This is especially true for those struggling with mental health challenges. Too often, we may think we don't have the ability to help. But the truth is that we are capable, and have more to offer, than we realize. Listen and allow people to talk about their feelings. Our empathy, kindness, and non-judgmental attitude go a long way to help that person feel accepted and able to express their thoughts.

Sherry Jelic, CHE Chair

608-235-9526; Email: sjelic@msn.com

Strategic Planning Committee Update

Committee members have been working on the goals set for 2019/20. Annual forms have been revised. They will be on the website to use and district chairs should use the new forms. The forms will be easier to understand and complete.

A Survey Monkey is on the website home page for members to complete. The results of the survey will help determine changes, if any, to awards, convention, and activities of the Partners of WHA.

The Committee will continue to focus on communications within all levels of the Partners of WHA, hospital administrations, and directors of volunteer services. Leadership development and identification is being researched and developed. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me or a committee member.

Jaci Fuller, Chair

715-225-3978; Email: tomnjaci58@gmail.com

Around the State

Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital Auxiliary, Superior:

This Auxiliary has been busy! In June, they had a "Pop Up" book and popcorn sale in their lobby making \$73. In August, they held their first \$6 Sale (almost everything) where auxiliarians brought in things that sold for \$6 for a total of \$2,208.

Volunteer Services at Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River:

Volunteer-made Christmas stockings, filled with special treats, trinkets, and ornaments are being made for their Hospice patients. Another Christmas event will be offered to employees and the public for Christmas present wrapping in exchange for a donation to Hospice.

Partners of Stoughton Hospital, Stoughton:

A Restyle, Repurpose, Recycle Auction took place in October to support scholarships to Stoughton High School graduates and other hospital projects. Partners got their volunteers to bring items in that were no longer being used and were restyled, repurposed, or recycled to create a "treasure" for the auction. Food was also available.

Fort HealthCare Partners, Fort Atkinson:

Medical fraud is big business and the latest scam involves genetic and DNA testing. DO NOT give in to supplying anyone who asks to swab your cheeks or give them your phone number. Medicare ONLY pays when it is medically necessary and ordered by the person's own physician and the need is documented. If in question, call the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol at 888-818-2611. Medicare never calls and asks for a phone number or asks for personal information. Good advice for everyone!

Kay Lyndahl, Editor

Welcome New Liaison to Partners of WHA



Leigh Ann Larson

Hello! My name is Leigh Ann Larson and I am the new vice president of education and marketing with Wisconsin Hospital Association. I am thrilled to be with WHA and to begin my work with Partners of WHA!

I was born and raised in the Madison area graduating from DeForest High School. I earned my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (Go Eagles!) in secondary education/speech communications and English. I have worked in adult education and health care almost my entire career. I was with Dean Health Plan for 10 years as their learning and development manager. I then spent one year with St. Mary's Janesville Hospital in a temporary role assisting them with the hiring and onboarding of their staff as they were working toward opening their doors in January of 2012. I then spent 7 years at Group Health Cooperative-SCW as their learning and development manager.

Currently, I live in McFarland with my husband, Mathew, and our children. Anissa is 20 and will be a junior at Carroll University and our son, Garrett, is 16 and will be a junior at McFarland High School.

I am excited to work with Partners and to learn about how we can collaborate to better serve the hospitals, communities, and patients of Wisconsin. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in the future!

Leigh Ann Larson, Vice President of Education and Marketing with Partners of WHA

608-274-1820; Email: llarson@wha.org

Reaching Out Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
February 2020	Tues., Jan. 14, 2020
May 2020	Sun., April 12, 2020
August 2020	Wed., July 15, 2020
November 2020	Sat., Oct. 10, 2020

Partners *Reaching Out* is published four times a year by Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. Visit the Partners website at www.partnersofwha.org. Direct questions or comments to:

Kay Lyndahl, Newsletter Editor
 Summer: 1909 S. Lake Michigan Drive
 Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
 Phone: 920-746-5122

Winter: 2418 Kensington Greens Drive
 Sun City Center, FL 33573
 Phone: 813-633-6624
 Email: kaylyndahl@gmail.com