

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

Phil Connors – do you recognize that name? Many may not recognize the name but I’m thinking some of you remember the movie. In 1993, Bill Murray starred in the movie “GROUNDHOG DAY.” It is the story of a weather reporter named Phil Connors. Phil is a self-centered inconsiderate weatherman who was sent to report on a weather forecasting groundhog in a town call Punxsutawney. Following his weather report, Phil is trapped in the small town by a snowstorm and then

relives the same day over and over again.

Lately, I feel like Phil Connors must have felt. I keep thinking this current situation is a dream and I will wake up from it any minute now. But I wake up each morning and it is the same as the day before. I am blessed – I wake up to live another day. Worldwide, over 75,000 individuals did not wake up and the death toll continues to climb.

The world as we knew it, is no more. Plans that were made have mostly been cancelled. For our Partners organization, Advocacy Day, the spring Board meeting and the district meetings were all cancelled or postponed. We are attempting to reschedule visits to the districts for September and October. We continue to plan for our convention, which is scheduled for October 6 - 8, 2020.

These are uncertain times, but even still there are some things we are certain of. We are certain that those affected with the coronavirus are suffering as are their families. Not being able to be with a loved one during a serious illness or at the time of death is heart wrenching. We are certain that the doctors, nurses, hospital personnel, first responders, store clerks, and all others on the front lines are terrified for their own safety and that of their families. These individuals are weary and overwhelmed from working long stress-filled hours. They are frustrated by not having the equipment they need to save the lives of patients or adequate supplies to protect themselves.

We are certain that the issues, such as Medicare, mental and behavioral health, physician shortages, and drug and alcohol abuse have become even greater as we face these new struggles. Until this pandemic is contained, there isn’t much we can do. We can, however, choose to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the experts to keep ourselves, our families, and all of society safe and stop the spread of the virus.

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A Message from the President-Elect

Life in the Pandemic

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without. A standard phrase from the Great Depression is still true and becoming standard again. However, like during the Depression, we can learn new tricks.



Peg Larson

Volunteers are the group who step up to say “How can I help?” Right now, most of us are helping by staying home to allow the cases of COVID-19 to build gradually and to avoid exposure as many of us are in higher risk categories. The passage of time becomes both slower and faster as the endless vacation continues, but deadlines loom. All of society is adjusting to a new, hopefully temporary, normal.

With the suspension of in hospital (and many other) volunteer activities, Partners of WHA Districts cancelled their spring meetings. WHA cancelled Advocacy Day. Rather than cancelling, the Partners of WHA Board was able to convert our Spring Board meeting into a telephone conference. Through the wonders of technology, most board members were able to attend to further the work of Partners to support you in your local community.

On our agenda was the Honor Points award. The sense we have is that some modification to the award will be appropriate. When the current health

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In the end of the Groundhog Day movie, Phil Connors realizes and learns that the key to life isn't what happens but how you react to it.

If forced to repeat the same day over and over again, how would you respond to it? I would choose to spend each day being extremely grateful to wake up in the morning and know that my family and friends are safe. I would pray for those suffering from the virus and those that have died. I would be extremely thankful and proud of those on the front lines.

The current situation was not a part of my plan for spring 2020. But it is what it is and I choose to keep a positive attitude. It is my wish for each of you, that you stay safe, healthy, and keep a positive attitude. Virtual hugs to all.

Jan Molaska
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A Message from the President-Elect... continued from page 1

crisis is over, we will determine how points will be awarded for 2020, but they will be related to the current structure. In October at convention, we will roll out new criteria for 2021.

The other challenge we face with the cancellation of the spring district meetings is the election of new district officers for several districts. Your district chair will be in contact with you regarding the procedures that will be followed.

Stay safe and well. See you in the fall!

Peg Larson
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Looking Forward



Leigh Ann Larson

Whenever I am personally or professionally faced with adversity or a challenge, I ask myself "What am I supposed to learn from this?" It helps me shift from a place of negativity to a place of positivity and learning. As we are all facing an unprecedented time right now, I have found myself asking this question frequently. For example, what am I supposed to learn from working in my home and being with my husband and two children 24/7? Is it to value and not take for granted my loved ones? Or perhaps I'm meant to learn to appreciate the simple gift of being able to drive to WHA every day. In the end, it is probably both of these and then some. With whatever you individually are facing from all of this, I hope that finding the positivity and learning from it will bring you peace and the hope for a better day.

I think looking forward to something is also critical during this time. One of the things that I am looking forward to is seeing the nominations for the annual Best of the Best and WAVE awards come in. This will be my first year to see what this process looks like from beginning to end and I'm excited about that. Please check out information about this year's awards, as well as information on how to submit a nomination, on the Partners of WHA website at:

- **BOB (Best of the Best)** - <https://www.partnersofwha.org/best-of-the-best-award>
- **WAVE (Wisconsin Awards for Volunteer Excellence)** - <https://www.partnersofwha.org/wave-award>

Submit your nominations today!!!

I am also looking forward to being able to load the new WHA On-demand Learning Center with more content! The On-demand Learning Center is up and running! It will eventually have learning content that you and other hospital members will be able to access 24/7. As you can imagine, we will primarily have COVID-19 learning for the foreseeable future. However, more diverse content will be available toward the second half of the year. You can find the **On-demand Learning Center** at: <https://www.wha.org/On-demandLearning>.

I know that most of you are currently not in the hospitals doing what you love the most, helping and working with staff and patients. Despite this, please know that your good work is sustained while you are at home, and that the people you serve are anxious for your return. And, perhaps, while they ask themselves "What am I supposed to learn from this?," one of their answers will be that their love and appreciation for the Partners of WHA is greater than they ever imagined.

Leigh Ann S. Larson, WHA Vice President of Education and Marketing, and WHA liaison to Partners of WHA
Email: llarson@wha.org; 608-274-1820

Perceptions of Administrators

I've been in volunteer management for 28+ years. There is a mantra I echo consistently to new volunteers: "There is no such thing as a healthy community without volunteer involvement." Whether large or small, volunteers breathe life into their communities.

Volunteering for any organization can provide many benefits such as learning new skills through training, gain work experience, make new friends/form relationships, fill time and stay active, add variety to one's life, help other people in the community, use specific skillsets (creativity, leadership, computer skills, etc.), fulfill an obligation to community, gain status or social recognition, making an important contribution to society, and most definitely feeling good about oneself.

When people volunteer in hospitals, they support various departments allowing staff more time to perform critical one-to-one care for patients and their families. Hospital volunteers save the hospital money by their gift of time. The saying "time is money" is so true. That goodwill gesture can save any hospital thousands of dollars each year. The appreciation generated from staff and Administration is profound.

Volunteers can be a voice on behalf of their hospital and help advocate support for the services provided and for ways to keep rising health care costs at a manageable level. The Partners of WHA is an excellent organization that offers hospital volunteers an opportunity to learn key elements to becoming an even greater asset to their respective hospitals. Workshops are offered at the state convention where one can network with others, learn how small to large hospitals cope in today's world, and become educated about different programs and events as well as make new and lasting friendships. Be a change agent – get involved!

With gratitude,

*Mary Pengra, WWD Division Director-Volunteer Services
HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital
HSHS St Joseph's Hospital*

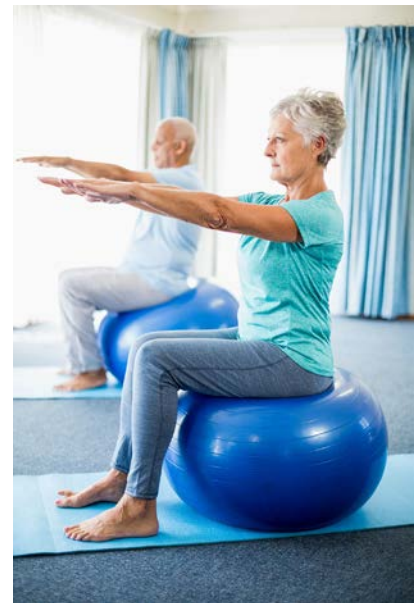
Balance Causes Seniors Concern

Balance is a huge concern for many seniors and may be due to falling down. Fear of falling and having had a fall in the last three months are predictors of future falls. Balance exercises can be very helpful. If you are exercising now with a chair, consider doing them at the kitchen sink, as that is more stable. Community programs in Tai Chi or Yoga are available which will effectively reduce falls.

Some prevention may help as follows:

- Wear proper shoes (no flip flops or loose fitting shoes and no socks without shoes).
- Clean up floor clutter to avoid tripping.
- Proper lighting to avoid shadows and to see objects or water on the floor.
- Step deliberately and with authority, avoid hurrying, and try not to shuffle with small steps.
- Maintain good posture, strength, and mobility.
- Know the side effects of medications (dizziness, decreased blood pressure).
- Stand securely before walking. At night, sit on the side of the bed for 30 seconds before you put your feet on the floor.

Don't be embarrassed or ignore falls! Be safe!



PARTNERS OF WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (WHA)

WHO ARE WE?

April, 2020

Many of you are probably under the assumption that your auxiliary or volunteer group is an entity in and of itself. Each local organization might do its own thing, but there is a much larger picture. Many local organizations belong to districts and the districts make up Partners of WHA – the statewide organization that represents health care volunteers from all over Wisconsin.



I recently received this comment from a new member of a local board: "...it seems that the lack of knowledge of the 'Partners' itself is a void. As I said, until I became involved in the volunteer Board, I do not believe that I had heard what Partners was or even the existence of it. That void is huge."

Here is an overview of PARTNERS OF WHA.

First, a short history:

In 1951, the Board of Trustees of the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) appointed a committee of three women to study the need for a Wisconsin Hospital Association Auxiliaries Association (WHAA). During the year, questionnaires were sent to all hospitals to ascertain the number of existing auxiliaries, the various projects and programs involving volunteers and which hospitals were considering starting such organizations. There were 81 replies. Of these, 43 auxiliaries reported programs and volunteer services. There were 16 requests for assistance, either in organizing or with some particular project.

In 1953, hospital association membership for auxiliaries became a reality, with membership limited to those auxiliaries whose hospitals qualified for membership in the state group (WHA).

In 1954, the Board of Trustees of WHA voted to accept WHAA as a committee within the framework of the WHA – a concept that would lay the foundation for the WHA/WHAA relationship that exists today.

In 1962, a Constitution and Bylaws for WHAA were compiled and voted into existence. Local auxiliaries began to actively promote health careers and sought aid and expertise from the parent organization - WHA. During the years to follow, WHAA became interested in legislative issues concerning the health care industry, and urged local auxiliaries to adopt the study of these issues as an integral part of ongoing programming. WHAA encouraged local auxiliaries to establish scholarships for students pursuing a career in health care.

1972 was marked by the development of the first leadership manual. Over the years, WHAA has grown and developed into a strong service organization and maintains an active liaison with WHA with which it shares common goals.

In 1983, the membership of WHAA voted to become a non-profit corporation to be subsequently referred to as the Wisconsin Hospital Association Auxiliaries, Incorporated (WHAAI).

In March 1996, in an effort to reflect the ever-changing, broad-based needs of statewide health care providers, name changes for the organizations occurred. WHA became Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association. In 2002, the name was changed back to WHA. In 2003, Wisconsin Hospital Association Auxiliaries, Inc. changed its name to Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. (Partners of WHA, Inc.) which remains the name to this day.

Since 1993 Partners of WHA has instituted three awards.

- In 1993, the Honor Points Award was first presented. This award is presented each year at the annual convention to organizations that fulfill specific requirements.
- In 1994, the Best of the Best Award was begun. This award is presented each year to an onsite administrator, who has demonstrated exemplary support of the local Partners volunteers in their facility.
- In 2003, the WAVE awards, "Wisconsin Award for Volunteer Excellence" were presented for the first time. There are four categories: Community Service, Fundraising, In-Service, and Community Outreach and/or Collaboration.

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Present day:

Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. is a non-profit, statewide volunteer service organization representing over 8,500 hospital volunteers, of which the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) is a strong supporter.

The President of the Board moves into the Presidency following two years as President-Elect. A President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer are elected biennially by the voting delegates at the state convention. The state Partners Board is composed of the four officers; the seven district chairs; chairpersons for the following committees: Community Health Education, Public Policy Education, Strategic Planning, and Bylaws; the Immediate Past President; a Parliamentarian; and additional committee members appointed by the President. Partners is governed by a set of Bylaws which have been adopted by and can be amended by a vote of voting delegates at the annual meeting. Every two years, the Board adopts a health issue to focus on. This becomes the project of the Community Health Education (CHE) Chair to research and provide information and resources to the district and local CHE representatives. The Public Policy Education (PPE) Chair works with WHA personnel to keep everyone informed on legislative issues that affect health care.

The statewide Partners of WHA organization is divided into 7 districts. The districts and the number of local hospitals they represent include: Lakes (9 hospitals), North Central (10 hospitals), Northwestern (6 hospitals), Southeastern (7 hospitals), Southern (9 hospitals), West Central (6 hospitals), and Western (9 hospitals). Local organizations operate by the policies that their members establish.

Each district has a district chair and a board consisting of a secretary, treasurer, Community Health Education Chair (CHE) and a Public Policy Education Chair (PPE). These district officers are elected by members of their district organizations. (Please check the PARTNERSOFWHA.ORG website to see a listing of all organizations.)

District meetings are held in spring and fall. At the spring meeting, members of the state Board travel to each of the districts to participate in the meetings, listen to concerns and needs within the districts, and share information and ideas on what is happening

around the state. These meetings provide the opportunity to network with other volunteers, share ideas, and receive updates on health concerns and issues at the local, state and federal level.

In 2019 alone, 56 member organizations representing 8,550 volunteers donated 894,104.55 hours to their respective hospitals and communities. Money donated back to hospitals totaled \$1,706,170.79 in 2019 and 339 scholarships amounting to \$371,125.00 were awarded.

Advocacy is a critical element of the work of Partners. Partners' advocacy is grounded in the belief that people matter and their collective voices are powerful in shaping the future of health care. A tremendous number of Partners members show up yearly at WHA's Advocacy Day and visit with their state legislators. WHA's Hospitals Education and Advocacy Team (HEAT) helps members communicate with local, state, and federal legislators on legislative issues that impact our hospitals, our clinics, and the well-being of all people.

A **statewide convention** is held yearly to bring members of all Partners groups together for educational workshops, to hear from a panel of legislators and hospital administrators on current health care issues, to acknowledge and celebrate award winners and share information and network, and with other volunteers from across the state.

From this snapshot, it is easy to recognize the long and important history of Partners of Wisconsin Hospitals. Our members continue to greatly impact their local hospitals, communities, and at the state and federal levels. We have accomplished a great deal over the past 66 years but there is much more to be done to assure that quality healthcare continues.

As mentioned earlier, please share this information with all members, hospital administrators, director of volunteer services, and community members, so that the mission of Partners is known and celebrated. For additional information please feel free to contact me.

With gratitude to all!

Jan Molaska, President Partners of WHA
Email: jmolaska@gmail.com

WAVE Applications Due by June 5, 2020

Many activities have been completed by the WAVE committee.

On February 12, 2020, a letter was sent to the WAVE Committee members, which was updated and sent to Leigh Ann Larson. This letter has the information of the overview of the WAVE process for this year. Members of the 2020 WAVE Committee are Leigh Ann Larson, Madison; Sandy Goble, Eau Claire; WI; Diane Schmidt, Fitchburg, WI; Linda Nandory, Black River Falls, WI.

A letter has been generated for all Local Partners/Auxiliary Presidents to invite them to submit an application for the WAVE AWARD for 2020. This updated letter was sent out by Leigh Ann Larson after our Spring Conference calls March 18-20, 2020.

An 18th Annual Partners of WHA, Inc. 2020 WAVE AWARD APPLICATION was updated. Applications must be postmarked by June 5, 2020. If you did not receive one please contact Leigh Ann Larson at llarson@wha.org or 608-274-1820.

Jeanne Tatro, WAVE chair
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Strategic Planning Committee Reviews Guidelines

Due to the cancellation of the March meeting in Madison, the Committee conducted a conference call March 20, 2020. Duties of the Strategic Planning Committee are to study and evaluate organizations functions, future objectives and projected resources as they relate to the purposes of the Partners, and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Committee members reviewed and continue to work on the goals established for 2019/2020, as follows:

- 1. Continuous improvement of communications within all levels of the Partners of WHA organization.** Information regarding the history of the Partners of WHA, the Association at present, district structure, and accomplishments are being sent to local organizations. This will improve communications and awareness of the Partners of WHA. Hospital administrators and directors of volunteer services are asked to contribute articles for the *Reaching Out* newsletter regarding the benefits of the local organizations belonging to the Partners of WHA.
- 2. Review annual, district, and state forms.** District forms have been revised and now on the Partners of WHA website. Other forms are being reviewed and any changes will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval.
- 3. Evaluate and improve the value of the Partners of WHA awards.** Award criteria will be reviewed and recommendations considered and presented to the Executive Committee.
- 4. Enhance Leadership Development and Identification at the Local Level.** Committee members continue to research and develop a "tool kit" as a resource for which members can refer to for leadership and available on the website. This will hopefully be presented during the fall district tour (due to the spring tour being cancelled).

Jaci Fuller, Chair
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***Life can only be understood by looking backward,
but it must be lived by looking forward.***

- Mark Twain

There are no secret gardens:
Potatoes have eyes.
Corn has ears.
And, the beanstalk!



Paying Dues is Essential

By now, all local presidents or designated contacts should have received invoices for your 2020 Partners dues. Please know that as a state organization we understand that during this public health crisis we are all experiencing, paying your dues is not at the top of your “to-do” list. Most, if not all local organizations, have had to close gift shops and cancel fundraisers in order to stay safe and comply with the COVID-19 guidelines. As hospital volunteers, we are unable to be in our hospitals to assist staff and patients. Some local chapters may even have difficulty requesting a check to pay dues. We understand and empathize with you. While the deadline for payment of dues is typically June 1, we intend to be lenient on that deadline this year.

Why do we ask that you pay dues to your state organization even at a time like this? Your dues allow our state organization to support you, our volunteers, through education and advocacy. Your dues allow you access to resources, including the leadership handbook, public policy and community health information, our quarterly newsletter, and our Partner’s website – partnersofwha.org. Your dues also allow our state organization to provide learning opportunities at local and district meetings, state convention, Advocacy Day, and online seminars. Also important are the networking opportunities that are available and the group recognition for projects and/or services that your local organizations provide.

In addition, your dues allow our state organization to provide reimbursement to our districts for assistance with operating expenses, distribution of a district newsletter, speaker fees, and leadership training.

The dues which you are assessed are based on the number of members reported on your 2019 President’s Report filed with our state president.

Thank you for your continued support of Partners!

Julie Steiner, Partners of WHA State Treasurer

2020 Nominating Committee Makes Officer Recommendations

The Nominating Committee of Partners of WHA includes chair Bonnie Olson, Linda Fish, Phyllis Malin, Dorothy Revnew, and Peg Larson (ex officio). This committee had a teleconference call Monday, April 6, 2020. The committee’s major responsibility was to place in nomination the best-qualified candidate(s) for each office. This necessitates giving careful consideration, both as an individual and as a committee, to the requirements and scope of the offices to be filled as well as to the qualifications and abilities needed to fill them. They matched these requirements to the qualifications of the candidates. All nominees were evaluated equally and by the same criteria.

The following slate of officers is to be submitted at the Partners convention in Wisconsin Dells at the Chula Vista Resort, October 6-8:

President-Elect - Sharon Scott

Secretary - Julie Steiner

Treasurer - John Tully

President - Peg Larson will be installed at the convention.

We would like to thank those members who submitted an application expressing interest in serving as an officer for 2021-2022.

Bonnie R. Olson, Chair

Email: bonnie.o.ppofwha@gmail.com

Partners 2020 Convention Update

We have all of the Western District committees for the convention in place. Thanks to each of you in our district. Our printing of registration and program are in place. The raffle tickets are printed and ready to go out when it is safe to do so. For now, things are on hold as we get through this epidemic.

We have our opening and closing speakers. The CEO panel is being worked on, as well are the vendors and workshops.

We have been in touch with the Chula Vista Resort this week. At this time, they are closed to essential travelers only. They are looking at a possible opening April 24. We are staying in touch with them.

Be safe, and thank you for all you do within your hospital and community.

Patsy Pippin, Iva Mulhern

2020 Convention Co-Chairmen

Email: pat8apippin@gmail.com (Patsy)

Email: ijmulhern@mchsi.com (Iva)

Public Policy Education Report



Bill McCullough

2020 CENSUS

In October 2019, Governor Tony Evers signed Executive Order #55, for the Creation of a Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census. From this data, the federal government will allocate over \$675 billion dollars in federal funds to states, counties, and communities, and results will determine the number of representatives each state will have in the United States House of Representatives and legislative districts for the state in the Assembly. Integral to this effort was the creation of the 2020 United States Census Complete Count Committee, to address a “hard-to-count” population of over 613,000 that exists in Wisconsin.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT To Health Care?

1. The Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage, FMAP, establishes how Medicaid benefit costs are shared between the federal government and each state. That result is determined by the per capita personal income data collected by the Census and the result of both income and population data.
2. The Medicare Physician Fee Schedule determines the fee-for-service payments practitioners receive.
3. Health Professions Shortage Areas are determined by demographic data received through the Census.
4. Medically Underserved Areas/populations are those identified that lack access to primary care services.
5. Rural Health Clinic shortages; governors can designate these areas and provide services through a Rural Health Clinic Certification based on many factors to include the percentage of age 65 and older citizens in particular areas based on Census Data.

Wisconsin had a respectable return rate of over 85% in the 2010 decennial census. Hopefully we met or exceeded that return in this critically important period.

Assembly Bill 575: This Bill was passed in mid-February to create a new physician assistant licensure statute to address inconsistent physician assistant provisions that are a barrier to efficient team-based care. The bill is said to provide “a good balance of reducing regulatory burden on physician assistants, physicians, hospitals, and health systems, while preserving the important role of physicians in a team-based care delivery model and other safeguards to preserve high-quality care in Wisconsin.”

Study: WI Hospitals & Health Systems Critical for State, Local Economies: In our February *Reaching Out* Publication, reference was made to the challenges in our health care workforce. The 2018 report from the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce projects a current physician shortage of 14%. With current average age for physicians 50+, in the near future we will see physicians retiring at the height of our aging population.

That said, we need to review a few highlights from the 2019 University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension study examining the widespread economic impact and importance of Wisconsin’s health care sector. This report expands the reach of prior reports to include entities more broad than hospitals alone. Some of those findings follow: 1) the health care sector directly employs more than 327,000 people in the state, and when connecting other economic sectors interacting with health care, attributes over 571,900 jobs to health care - more than 15% of all Wisconsin employment. 2) Patients from other states seeking Wisconsin’s high-quality care spent \$2.3 billion on hospital services in 2017. 3) For every \$1 million in spending from out-of-state patients, 13 new jobs are created. 4) The health care sector pays more than \$3 billion in taxes to state and local governments, helping to support schools and vital government programs.

Our hospitals create a ripple effect when we see that for every \$1,000 of additional labor income created in hospitals, an additional \$600 of labor income is created “elsewhere” in Wisconsin. And for every \$1,000 in additional revenue generated by hospitals, an additional \$860 in industrial sales/revenues is generated. Finally, according to the WHA 2019 Community Benefits Report, WHA’s member hospitals and health systems contributed more than \$1.9 billion in community benefits and charity care in 2018.

Excerpts from Eric Borgerding, WHA President and CEO, in a 3/25/2020 letter to members of the Wisconsin Congressional Delegation. “Thank you for working to include urgently needed support for hospitals and health systems in developing the third COVID-19 stimulus package. We continue to be in urgent need of assistance to equip Wisconsin’s hospitals and health systems with personal protective equipment (PPE), testing supplies, and funding to replace the severe revenue shortfalls that have resulted from hospitals canceling more elective procedures.”

“WHA applauds you for your hard work to build a package with bipartisan consensus.”

With all that is being said about the impact of COVID-19, it is critically important that we abide by the “Safer at

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Public Policy Education Report...continued from page 8

Home” Order. As Governor Evers stated, “we must do this to keep our health care system from becoming overwhelmed and to protect public and essential health care workers.”

Bill McCullough, PPE Chair

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Community Health Education Report



Sherry Jelic

WE WILL REMEMBER CORONAVIRUS 2020! *I went to bed one night in one world and woke the next morning in another... turns out this was no dream!* So much has changed – social distancing, pandemic, N95 masks, home-made disinfectants and gel sanitizer, schools and colleges closed and classes now online, mandatory work from home or loss of jobs, and international travel at a standstill. These days/weeks can be filled with uncertainty, anxiety, or fear amid all of the abrupt changes.

But history has recorded that humanity has overcome past health crises. We can work toward coping with this challenging situation and reduce potential impact on our mental health.

Physical health is important and can be affected by mental health. Two of today’s key thoughts are **immunity** and **self-care**. Immunity decreases with age – this is why there is a high-dose influenza vaccine for those age 65 and over. It may also be the reason COVID-19 is so deadly in the elderly. Immunity is also decreased by poor physical health, stress, feelings of anxiety, fear (uncertainty), loneliness from social distancing, and depression. It’s likely many are experiencing one of these during this time. It feels as if we’ve lost some control in our lives – financial, family, work, and routines. Our best defense is to practice physical and mental self-care.

There are strategies to maintain or boost immunity. Get regular exercise and enough sleep. Maintain a healthy diet, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and immune boosters like spinach, low fat yogurt, and green tea. Good hygiene (hand washing!) helps prevent illness spread. It’s vital to manage stress – and this in turn can boost immunity and improve our mental health!

There are steps to take to minimize stress, anxiety, or fear over the current pandemic. Stay positive – time will see this pass. We have all gotten through challenges in the past. Look to your faith to stay strong. Laugh. Connect with others – we live in a world where social media has made this so available! There are sites which allow you to virtually watch performances, tour museums, or take free online college courses. Practice kindness to others – keep sending gifts and kind notes through the mail. Look after neighbors. Support local businesses – it’s not only a financial boost for them, but can be for you too when your favorite meal is picked up or delivered. Take advantage of the extra time to do something you’ve been putting aside, but be careful trying to overachieve (for example, the house does not need to be cleaned from chimney to basement today, or you don’t need to master playing the violin in two days). Limit the intake of news! Yes, we need and want to keep up. But, by now, we realize this is a very bad time, and we don’t need the numbers of virus positives and death totals flashing across a screen for the hours we are awake. Practice acceptance – accept that there are many unknowns. At the end of the day, acknowledge something you’re grateful for, you’ve learned, or you’ve accomplished.

For those suffering with mental health issues, this time can be especially challenging as anxiety of contracting the disease and the increase in loneliness and isolation can worsen and trigger symptoms. On April 3, Governor Tony Evers and Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary-designee Andrea Palm announced the [Resilient Wisconsin](#) initiative, aimed at providing tools and resources to stay mentally healthy during stress. Guidance is provided for first responders, medical professionals, parents, caregivers, people living with mental and behavioral health concerns, and behavioral and mental health providers. The foundation of these tools is self-care, staying connected, and reducing stress. (Go to resilient.wisconsin.gov.) Pass this on to those who could benefit from the resources.

At the time of this writing there are many unknowns, but we’ll deal with them as they come along, and we’ll become stronger as people, families, communities, and society – because that’s who we are!

Sherry Jelic, CHE Chair

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STAY STRONG STAY POSITIVE STAY HEALTHY STAY HOME

Around the State

Partners of Marshfield Medical Center, Ladysmith:

After getting the approval from the Park Board, a handicap swing was purchased and installed for a disabled person in Memorial Park. The swing has its own ramp so you can move a wheel chair onto the swing easily. It also has safety walls so the chair doesn't roll off the side. Once it was installed, the snow came, so hopefully it can be enjoyed soon!

Oconomowoc Memorial Auxiliary and Volunteer Services, Oconomowoc:

Last fall, this group had their first annual wine tasting event, "Eat, Drink, and be Giving," held at the Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital conference center. Food and wine were excellent! The program was an ovarian cancer survivor who shared her journey from September 2018 through her "cancer free" diagnosis in April 2019. She is now on a patient advisory board and donates her time every week to sit with patients during their chemo treatments at the Cancer Center. Way to go!!!

Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital Volunteers, Merrill:

This great advice came from their newsletter by Linda Holdorf, Presidential Team:

Let Go of What's Gone
Be Grateful for What Remains
Look Forward to What's Coming

Kay Lyndahl, Editor

(PLEASE keep sending me your newsletters either by email with Word or "snail mail," as I can't share your news with others if I don't have the information!)



At their Annual Meeting on January 13, the Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary in Park Fall presented a check for \$47,551 to Chief Administrative Officer Jim Braun. The donation was for a Mindray portable ultrasound machine. The Mindray will be useful in every department of the hospital. It can be used to locate veins and arteries that would not otherwise be visible, making the insertion of intravenous catheters or arterial catheters simpler, as well as more comfortable for the patient.

Reaching Out Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
August 2020	Wed., July 15, 2020
November 2020	Sat., Oct. 10, 2020
February 2021	Wed., April 12, 2021
May 2021	Thurs., July 15, 2021

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Although the world is full of suffering, it is full
also of the overcoming of it. - Helen Keller