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## Partners InTouch Newsletter - October 2025

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**Partners of Crossing Rivers Health** <partnersofcrh@67087201.mailchimpapp.com>

Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at 1:42 PM

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# *Partners of Crossing Rivers Health*

## *InTouch Quarterly Newsletter - October 2025*

### *President's Reflection*

Our Partners' group has had a busy summer since our Spring District Meeting. We continue to staff our gift shop and provide way finders to assist patients. In addition, we have volunteers caring for our hospital plants and various sewing projects.

We have supported our hospital by providing cookies for all employees for Hospital Week, and by providing volunteer hours in addition to donating \$2000 for the Crossing Rivers Foundation LaSoiree fundraising gala, with the proceeds going to the purchase of surgical equipment. We provide Women's Health Pocket Calendars given

out during October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We continue to provide Baby's 1st Books and Period of Purple Crying Hats to all babies born at our hospital.

In support of our community, we have donated to the Children's Summer Reading Program at the Prairie du Chien Memorial Library. We donated to the Driftless Region Suicide Awareness 5K Color with the profits going toward mental health programs.

In support of a local 4H group, we provided \$1000 for their purchase of fabric for tie blankets. The group cuts and ties the blankets and in turn donate them to Crossing Rivers Health to provide for patients in need of extra comfort.

Fundraisers over the summer included a Bake Sale, Nutman Sale, Scrub Sale, and Collective Goods Book Fair. We also receive profits from our hospital vending machines and the sale of Kwik Trip gift cards.

At our semi-annual meeting last month, we celebrated our 70th anniversary of our Auxiliary/Partners organization. Connie Achenbach, one of our longest-serving Partners, provided a wonderful "walk through time", followed by an interactive trivia-style presentation. Commemorative pens were given to our members.

Our upcoming events include a bus trip in December for a Christmas Dinner Theater and our Christmas Right Here - a family-oriented afternoon with games, crafts and children's store held at our hospital. We co-sponsor this event with the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center.

***- Ginger Arms, President Partners of Crossing Rivers Health***



***A Message from the CEO***

Crossing Rivers Health remains in a strong position as we move through the year. While we saw a small dip in patient utilization this month compared to recent trends, the care we delivered remained exceptional. We recently rolled out updates to our patient experience surveys, and we're now hearing from more patients than ever – across many areas of care, which include rehab, lab, medical imaging, the ER, primary care, and inpatient services. The positive feedback has been both overwhelming and heartwarming. Our team should be incredibly proud – not just of their compassionate care, but of the high-quality outcomes they're achieving.

Speaking of quality, I want to give a special shout out to our entire team for the fantastic results from our recent Joint Commission surveys. The hospital, home medical equipment, hospice, and lab all completed their triannual accreditation surveys – and passed with flying colors! It's truly inspiring to hear seasoned healthcare professionals with impressive backgrounds say things like, "I'm done here – I'm only going to keep being more impressed," or in another surveyor's words, "The bells and whistles aren't why people come to this hospital; they come here because of who you are and what you mean to the community. You don't let them down. You have a lot to be proud of." That kind of feedback speaks volumes.

On another note, uncertainty still lingers around government programs and funding – especially with potential changes involving \$50 billion that may be directed toward rural healthcare transformation. There are shifts happening with both new and existing programs, and rural healthcare continues to evolve – nationally and right here at home. We're keeping a close watch and making sure Crossing Rivers Health Remains stable and ready to seize opportunities as they become available.

One thing I *can* say with certainty is this: the dedication of our Partners of Crossing Rivers Health remains unwavering. You are a vital part of what makes this organization so special. For 70 years, your support has made a meaningful difference in our hospital and our community – and we are truly grateful.

Thank you for everything you do. You enrich Crossing Rivers Health beyond measure.

**- Christopher Brophy, CEO Crossing Rivers Health**

***Community Health Education***

The statewide Partners organization has selected mental health as our area of focus for community health education this year. Recently, our Partners board members attended the state convention where we had the opportunity to learn from other organizations and community advocates. One very valuable workshop was **"Caring for the Caregiver"** presented by the LaCrosse County Aging and Disability Resource Center. Along with many other valuable tips, the ADRC representative introduced us to Tualta.com.

Tualta.com is a free resource for caregivers. Whether you find yourself caring for a parent, spouse, family member, friend, or patient, the act of caring can be very difficult, and many caregivers do not know how to access resources that will improve their lives. If you or someone you love is a full- or part-time caregiver, visit Tualta.com to see if you qualify for free access.

**- Ruth Skelly, Community Health Education Officer**

**The following article is presented from Tualta.com. [Check your eligibility here.](#)**

## **"Mental Illness in Older Adults"**

Mental health is important at every stage of life, including older adulthood. While there are changes that happen with aging, mental illness is not a normal part of aging.

### **Signs In Older Adults Are Different**

Mental illness may show up differently in older adults compared to other age groups. Signs and symptoms could include:

- Changes in mood, like increased sadness or anger
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Difficulty concentrating
- Digestive issues
- Chronic pain
- Changes in energy
- Hallucinations
- Obsessive thinking or compulsive behavior
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities

**Expert Tip:** Signs of suicidal thoughts may also appear differently in older adults.

For example, they may:

- Give their belongings away when there's no other reason they'd be doing so.
- Make arrangements, like saying "if something happens to me, take care of the dog."
- Show little to no concern with their own physical safety.
- Neglect their self-care, grooming, and medication routines.

If you suspect thoughts of suicide, talk to your care recipient and consider reaching out to a health professional or organization for help. Trualta's article "*Crisis Support & Suicide Prevention*" has examples of questions you can use to assess a person's level of suicide risk.

## Causes Of Mental Illness In Older Adults

Changes in relationships, health, abilities, or other difficult life transitions can lead to new mental illnesses or the exacerbation of existing mental illnesses. Examples include:

- Loss of a loved one
- Loss of independence
- Social isolation or loneliness
- Financial difficulty
- New or worsening illness
- Physical or cognitive disability

**Consider This:** An older adult may have a preexisting, but undiagnosed condition that was managed or hidden from others, like bipolar disorder. Conditions can begin to appear later in life as a person's support systems or protective factors change with age.

Caregivers can be supportive by:

- Being flexible with these two truths: "I never knew they were ill" and "they were ill all along"
- Helping healthcare professionals understand the changing context of the person's environment

## How You Can Help

Sometimes mental illness in older adults may be overlooked due to a focus on physical health changes. Here are tips you can use to help:

- **Advocate to health professionals.** If you notice signs of a new, or worsening, mental illness, bring your concerns to their doctor.
- **Ask for a medication review** from their doctor or pharmacist. As people get older, the way they metabolize and eliminate drugs from their body changes. If they've been taking medications for an existing mental illness, their treatment plan may need to be changed. If they have a new condition, a medication

review can make sure the medications they're prescribed are safe to take with their other medications.

- **Help them get connected.** Social groups, day programs, and religious groups can help reduce social isolation and loneliness.
- **Find their sense of purpose.** Help them participate in hobbies they enjoyed or find a meaningful place to volunteer.
- **Listen and validate.** Before jumping in to try and solve a problem or give them advice, take time to listen to their thoughts and feelings. This can show them you genuinely care about what they have to say and their experiences.
- **Encourage physical activity.** This can help manage symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other conditions. Ask the healthcare team about what type of physical activity is safe for them to do. Support them to start slowly and gradually increase.
- **Use favorites to help calm them.** Favorite songs, films, stories, or activities can help bring comfort and positive feelings.
- **Reduce stigma.** They may not notice signs of mental illness in themselves, or they may be embarrassed when talking about emotions. This can impact their ability to accept treatment. Provide information on mental illnesses, validate their experiences, and describe how the onset of mental illness has impacted different areas of their life. For example, you could say "It makes sense that after the passing of an old friend, a person would be more preoccupied with their health. Unfortunately, it seems like you're now worried about things you never used to worry about before, like catching a cold or not getting enough sleep."

*Don't forget to get your flu shot! Crossing Rivers Health volunteers are eligible to receive their annual flu vaccination at no charge at one of our vaccine clinics.*

All clinics will be held in the HR Conference Room on the North Entrance second floor.

Wed, October 22 - 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Thurs, October 23 - 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Fri, October 24 - 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Thurs, October 30 - 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

***Public Policy Education***



Wisconsin hospitals could see an additional \$1.2 billion in Federal Medicaid assistance (and Badger Care assistance) after the Wisconsin state legislature enacted the State Budget shortly before President Trump signed his sweeping “Big Beautiful Bill” in July. There have been no recent HEAT alerts since the “Big Beautiful Bill” was signed. There is uncertainty lingering around government programs and funding. Rural hospitals are dealing with shifts in both new and existing programs affecting their payment.

All Partners of Wisconsin hospitals are encouraged to sign up for HEAT alerts from the Wisconsin Hospital Association’s Hospital Education and Advocacy Team. These time-sensitive alerts provide a simple, straightforward way for Wisconsin residents to impact healthcare legislation. Watch your email for the HEAT alert, then follow the steps in the email to contact your state or federal legislators by email or phone regarding important legislative issues. If you aren’t sure what to say, HEAT even crafts a sample email that you can simply copy and forward on to your legislators. Signing up for HEAT alerts is an easy and effective way to help keep Wisconsin hospitals and healthcare strong and sustainable for years to come.

**- Jan Weisensale, Public Policy Education Officer**



Learn more about HEAT and  
sign up for alerts [here](#)

*“The HEAT program provides you with the information, strategy, and assistance you need in order to share your insight on how legislative issues impact hospitals and the communities they serve.”*

- Wisconsin Hospital Association

## *Upcoming Events*

## ***Jerry's Gift Shoppe Holiday Open House***

*Thursday, November 20 | 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.*

*Jerry's Gift Shoppe, Crossing Rivers Health*

Visit Jerry's Gift Shoppe inside Crossing Rivers Health to shop for brand-new unique Christmas gifts and holiday decor! Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and coffee while you browse exciting new merchandise.



## ***Christmas in the Dells Bus Trip***

*Wednesday, December 3*

*Legacy Dinner Theater, Wisconsin Dells*

This trip to the Wisconsin Dells' famous Legacy Dinner Theater will feature festive food and fun with an all-new Christmas extravaganza. Waiting list available in Jerry's Gift Shoppe.

## ***Christmas Right Here & Livin' Well Wellness Fair***

*Saturday, December 6 | 10:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.*

*Crossing Rivers Health*

This community holiday event brings together fun games and activities with health-focused support services from the local area in a celebration that is both fun and educational for the whole family!



## ***Season of Lights Tree Lighting Ceremony***





*Saturday, December 6 | 2:00 p.m.*

*Jerry's Gift Shoppe Hallway, Crossing Rivers Health*

This tree-lighting ceremony brings together the community to remember the honorees of the Season of Lights and Walk of Stars program. This year's tree-top honoree is Katie Garritty. [Honor a loved one here.](#)

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### ***Silent Basket Auction***

*Friday, December 5 - Friday, December 19*

*Jerry's Gift Shoppe Hallway, Crossing Rivers Health*

This Silent Basket Auction lasts for two weeks, and the proceeds directly fund the four \$1,000 scholarships awarded to area seniors pursuing careers in healthcare.



### ***Nutman Co. Fundraising Sale***

*Wednesday, December 17 - Thursday, December 18*

*Jerry's Gift Shoppe Hallway, Crossing Rivers Health*

The Nutman Co. will be on site with a host of delicious snacks and treats for all your stocking-stuffing needs! Proceeds help fund ongoing Partners' programs like Baby's 1st Books.

## ***Volunteers Needed!***

### ***Ongoing Opportunities:***

- Wayfinder (North Entrance) - openings available
  - Mondays 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

- Thursdays 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (8 a.m. - 12 p.m. December-March)
- Jerry's Gift Shoppe - Openings available on a biweekly basis.
- Teddy Bears and Purple Hats - Experienced (or motivated beginner!) sewing enthusiasts always needed to make these items to be given to the community.

### ***Event-Based Opportunities:***

- Help needed now through December 4 to solicit donations for the Silent Basket Auction.
- Help needed on November 20 to set up for the Holiday Open House.
- Help needed the week of December 1 - 5 to help put together the Silent Auction Baskets.
- Help needed December 6 in many areas of Christmas Right Here.

### ***Donation Opportunities:***

- Bakers: we need delicious treats for the Christmas Right Here bake sale.
- Inexpensive gift items needed for Santa's Gift Shop at Christmas Right Here.
- Baskets of local or handmade goods needed for the Silent Basket Auction.

*Contact Samantha Matern in Volunteer Services if you are interested in helping out!*

(608) 357-2621

samantha.matern@  
crossingrivers.org



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