**Northwestern District**

**Spring 2018 Newsletter**

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***Message from the Northwestern District Chair* Ginny Bosse – Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary, Park Falls**

 Spring has arrived on the calendar, but Mother Nature played her April Fools’ Day joke a couple of days early, dumping nearly a foot of new snow on us in the last days of March. Hopefully, spring will have a huge lead in her annual Tug o’ War with winter by ***Tuesday, April 24th, the date of our Spring Tour NW District Meeting,*** hosted by the Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health at Trinity Lutheran Church. Please encourage your members to attend in order to meet, or get to know better, Partners of WHA President Jan Molaska, state CHE Barb Filla, state CHE Sherry Jelic, and me, now both Northwestern District Chair and Partners President-Elect, appointed by the Partners Board to serve through December 2018. Hearing what is happening at the state level is always important, and this spring an overview of the proposed Partners Bylaws will be given. The revision process began in April last year with a two-day Bylaws Retreat with about fifteen Bylaws and Strategic Planning Committee and Board members present. The Bylaws have gone through many, many revisions since then, and the Board made even more revisions before approving the version which we hope will be adopted at the Partners Annual Meeting on Wednesday, October 3rd in Stevens Point. The proposed Bylaws will be published in the August 2018 edition of *Reaching Out* and a conference call/webinar will be held in late August or early September.

 District meetings also give time for us to showcase our own Partners group in the afternoon when we share with each other what our groups have accomplished, and what they have planned. You already have received an invitation to the Northwestern District Meeting in Spooner. Please send your registrations to Beth Burnham as soon as possible! Whether you are sending your check or bringing it with you, please remember that each group needs to contribute $20.00 for the ***Northwestern District basket for the raffle at the Partners of WHA Convention*** (which will be held at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point on Tuesday-Thursday, October 2-4, 2018). Separate checks made out to Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health with notations on the Memo lines, would be appreciated.

 *The* ***Wine Raffle at Partners Convention*** *has been both popular and a great fundraiser. In order to make it better, Convention Chair Sheree Schaeffer has a request: “The Wine Raffle will be held at the convention in October with a few changes. The evaluation sheets indicated that there were some issues with the raffle and those issues have been addressed. First, some complaints were about “cheap” wine, the exact comment was Boones Farm wine, at about $1.99 a bottle. We get the point. So, we will ask each hospital to donate a bottle of wine with a minimum value of $15.00, and sell the tickets for $20.00 each. Second, some complained about getting red and wanting white, or the other way around. So this year, donated bottles will be divided between the reds and the whites. Each bottle will have a number on it that will correspond with a number on a wine cork in a basket. Pick from the white or red basket, and you get the bottle with that number. All bottles will be on display, not in bags, so you can see what’s available and decide if you want to take a chance. I’m asking the District Chairs to send out an announcement with your Spring Meeting information, asking for donated bottles to be brought to the meeting. Jan has agreed to transport the wine. We will see how this setup works this year, and thanks for your help spreading the word! Sheree Schaefer*

 I was happy to see many of you in Madison on Wednesday,March 21st for***WHA’s Advocacy Day***. This year’s healthcare-related legislative issues to bring to the Capitol were: 1.) Worker’s Compensation in Wisconsin: Government Price Setting is Wrong Public Policy; 2.) Wisconsin’s Medicaid Reimbursement Lags the Nation: Hidden Health Care Tax Now $1.1 Billion; and 3.) High Quality Health Care Attracts Businesses and Talent to Grow Wisconsin’s Workforce. Advocacy Day is also an educational opportunity, as there is always an excellent keynote speaker who informs participants about the process of advocacy, the current political climate, or the “Issues of the Day”. This year’s keynoter was Mara Liasson, National Political Correspondent for National Public Radio, who spoke on “The Political Landscape: Today and Tomorrow”. There is also a four-person Legislative Panel, consisting of a State Senator and Assemblyperson from both the Democratic and Republican Parties. It is our chance to hear their positions “straight from the horses’ mouths”. This year’s participants were state Senators Patrick Testin-R and Jon Erpenbach-D and state Representatives Joe Sanfielippo-R and Debra Kolste-D. WHA President Eric Borgerding moderated the panel, asking questions regarding workforce, insurance stability, and government reimbursement, the three issues brought up by hospital administrators in a survey last fall.

***2017 in Review: Let’s Give Ourselves a Pat on the Back!***

 On Tuesday-Thursday, March 13-15th, the Partners of WHA Board and Executive, Finance, Strategic Planning, Bylaws, and Membership (District Chairs) Committees met in Madison at the WHA Headquarters. My written report contained the following information about our Northwestern District: There are seven Partners groups in the Northwestern District: Ashland’s Partners of Memorial Medical Center with 151 members, Hayward Hospital Auxiliary with 135 members, Ladysmith’s Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital with 184 members, Park Falls’ Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary with 170 members, Shell Lake’s Indianhead Community Health Care, Inc., with 35 members, Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health with 62 members, and Essentia Health St. Mary’s Hospital Superior Auxiliary with 120 members. In 2017, the Northwestern District’s **857 members** during some of their **50,620 volunteer hours** did **56 fundraising projects** that raised the funds to **give their hospitals $150,341.65** and give **60 scholarships totaling $55,163.90**. In addition, our members and our communities learned about health through **47 health education programs or projects and 23 newsletter articles**. Our members learned about legislative issues through **12 public policy education programs or projects and 17 newsletter articles**. They used that knowledge while making **275 contacts with legislators,** and **11 members attended Advocacy Day**. I feel very proud to be representing the Northwestern District as your District Chair. Our members may be fewer in number and farther apart from each other than in other districts but our accomplishments are worthy of celebration! So let’s give each other three cheers, a virtual round of applause, and a pat on the back!

***Upcoming Officer Installations:***

 Northwestern District’s officer terms end at the Northwestern District Spring Tour meeting in even numbered years. In other words, in three weeks! Here’s where we stand: 1.) Arlene Morrison’s term as Treasurer will end, and she will pass the checkbook and financial records on to Linda Fish, who has volunteered to take the position. Thank you, Linda! 2.) The Secretary position has been vacant since the resignation of Winnie Lee last summer. I hope that someone will agree to take the Secretary position starting with the Minutes of our meeting on April 24th. (It will be difficult for me to take good enough notes to write the minutes like I did last fall, since I will be “wearing two hats” for this meeting!) 3.) I am willing to serve one more term as District Chair, through the 2020 Spring Tour District Meeting. I will assist our Chair-Elect as she serves both as Chair-Elect and then as Chair.4.) Our Chair-Elect position, vacated when Judy Lyons moved to Fort Atkinson, is still vacant. It would be best if the Chair-Elect is elected and installed sooner rather than later, to give the person some time as Chair-Elect before becoming District Chair. Neither job of Chair or Chair-Elect is difficult or complicated, but the jobs do require an investment of time and commitment. I sincerely hope that all of you will think about accepting the Chair-Elect position or contact me with the names of others who might. Both CHE Allison Posso and PPE Betty Harnish have already served for six years in their positions! Beth Burnham has volunteered to be our district’s new CHE. Thank you, Beth! However, a PPE is still needed! The duties of both positions are to provide a newsletter article for each of the three newsletters each year, and give a report at each of the two district meetings. Each new Partners President chooses a health issue for their two-year term. The PPE usually reports on current public policy issues at the state and national level.

***A Special Note for Presidents:***

 I put choosing the date for this summer’s Leadership Meeting on the agenda, so please remember to bring your calendar marked with possible dates. It would also be helpful to be thinking now about what you would like to have on the agenda, which I will write again this year based on what you want to get out of the meeting. *The get-together is for all presidents and any other local officers and members who would like to come!* Money was added to the 2018 district budget to pay for mileage for one car from each Partner group, plus lunch for everyone. Please write down your ideas for discussion topics or specific skill you want to learn and give them to me at the district meeting.

***News from the Partners Board***

 Upon the death of Partners of WHA President Mary Licht, President-Elect Jan Molaska became President. This left a vacancy in the office of President-Elect. The Partners Board appoints someone to fill a vacancy, so with less than a year of the term left and with the advice of both Jennifer Frank, WHA liaison to Partners, and the attorney assisting us with the Bylaws, it was decided that the appointee would serve only until the end of 2018. I ran for the office and was chosen. Shortly after Mary’s death, it was decided that she should be honored by creating a Mary Licht Scholarship program for Partners Convention registrations. Donations from Board and Committee members, as well as from WHA, totaled $600.00, enough for four scholarships which will go to members who have not previously attended a Partners Convention, two this year, and two next year. I believe that President Jan Molaska will talk about the scholarships at all the district meetings and will have copies of the application form with her. So, if you have people who have never attended a Partners Convention, but would like to this fall, they can apply and may be one of the lucky two. New WHA staffer Kari Hofer, Vice President, Advocacy, will be working with Partners in the same ways Jenny Boese did. Kari previously worked for WMC. Peg Larson’s 2019 proposed Budget was approved by the Finance Committee and then by the Board. The Strategic Planning Committee, which had been part of the Bylaws re-write, also completed its work on the Organizational Charts for the Leadership Handbook. Job descriptions were also rewritten, and work on various report forms is continuing. The Mentorship program for District Chairs was successfully begun and will be continuing into the future. A flyer to replace the trifold pamphlet is being designed. The committee will again provide conference calls in May on filling out the WAVE and Best of the Best forms, and will do one on the Convention in August. The Convention Committee has scheduled time into the Partners Convention schedule for districts to hold a district meeting. (We WILL have one!) Presenters have been found and scheduled. Presidents will receive their group’s packs of raffle tickets at the spring district meeting. *Remember that the Northwestern District will be fulfilling the Hospitality duties this year.* The Bylaws Committee went through the proposed Bylaws one last time, and during a Board conference call with the attorney, the wording was again tweaked. You will “meet” the proposed Bylaws at our district meeting, and I get to make the introductions!

***A Message from the Northwestern District CHE Chair***  **Allison Posso – Partners of Spooner Health, Spooner**

 I truly do hope Spring is eventually on its way to Wisconsin! In Wisconsin, the misuse and abuse of opioids is a public health crisis. Addressing this crisis is priority in Wisconsin. The state will be holding a conference in April by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The event is full and registration is closed. This speaks to the importance of this crisis and how many are affected in the state. Wisconsin is working on efforts to address this crisis. Most of the increase in drug related deaths is due to the misuse of prescription opioids. The most prevalent category of drugs mentioned on death certificates is “other opioids”, whether by itself or in combination with other drugs. It takes all of us doing our part to address this crisis. Being aware and educated on this crisis is one way to do your part. Being aware of what is being prescribed for you, asking how many do I really need and taking them how they are prescribed. Ask about other options for pain management. Store your medications out of reach of others. If you do not need all of the medications prescribed for you, find a Drug Take Back Site to drop them off at. We really all need to do our part. We can do this by being aware and informed of this crisis. We need to have discussion with family and friends about the opioid crisis. Wisconsin prescribing practices have improved since the state has been addressing these issues.

 This is my last CHE Report. Thank You for allowing me the opportunity to report and provide information on the topics that were chosen by the State Partners of WHA. I have learned new information on these topics along the way: Alzheimer's and Dementia, Take a Deep Breath and Drugs End Dreams.

 Thanks for letting me get my “nurse” plugs in, like getting your flu shot yearly. Even though this year the shot missed covering some of the flu’s and the flu has been bad this year. Those who got the vaccine and got the flu and pneumonia for the most part were not as ill as those who did not get the vaccine. It is important to get the shingles vaccine. It is so worth not getting full blown case of shingles. The most important at all times is to “wash your hands.” Beth Burnham will be the new District CHE. She is a retired Registered Nurse and will do a great job! Information taken from WI DHS and Dose of Reality

***Message from the Northwestern District PPE Chair* Betty Harnish – Partners of Memorial Medical Center, Ashland**

 Let us discuss three words that are familiar to us, Inpatient, Outpatient, and Observation as they relate to a Medicare rule that requires a 3-day Inpatient stay prior to transfer to a Nursing Home/Rehab Facility. Inpatient stays for certain surgeries are getting shorter and shorter (which is good) or surgeries are done as Outpatient with no hospital stay at all. More medical conditions are being treated with Observation status with no Inpatient admission. These are all good changes in healthcare practice yet the Medicare rule regarding a 3-day stay prior to transfer has remained the same. What used to be a 3- 4 day surgery stay is now a 2-day stay. I have spoken lately with a number of people who ended up having to self pay for a short Rehab stay. Also, some people with medical conditions that needed short Rehab stays but again having no 3-day stays as an inpatient had to self pay. I ran into this myself last year when I ended up in the ER with leg pain and unable to walk or stand. I was placed into Observation status. I asked my doctor the next day to change me to Inpatient but the hospital said no as I didn’t meet Inpatient criteria. I needed a short stay in rehab and ended up having to self pay. I would like to discuss with Medicare staff why this 3-day inpatient rule has not changed when the conditions it is there to help have been shortened to 2 or less days. If you need surgery or have a condition that needs a rehab stay, be alert to this issue and have a plan because Medicare may not be there to help you. This is my last report as your District PPE. It has been fun finding subjects to discuss with you. Keep supporting our hospitals and the issues that concern them. Be active with the issues that concern you as an individual and your healthcare needs.

***News from around the Northwestern District***

**Linda Fish – Partners of Memorial Medical Center, Ashland**

 Partners of MMC ended the year 2017 with a total of 13,171 volunteer hours, and granting $20,275.00 in Wish List funds. Partners also contributed $10,000.00 to the Howard V. Sandin Healthcare Fellowship and Future Caregiver Scholarship funds. A set of vouchers has been developed for the Thrift Shop. There are several agencies in town who send their clients to the Thrift Shop for clothing and small household items. Vouchers have also been created for the ER to have a supply of clothing for patients who may need something just to wear home after an incident. Many in Behavior Health Services are homeless so they need clothing when they are discharged. And then there are Ashland’s homeless and those who suffer disasters such as fire who could use a little help. The Thrift Shop has always been very generous, but the vouchers help keep track of what the Thrift Shop is actually giving away for tax purposes and for a more accurate total of donations. In 2017 we went from nine board meetings a year to five meetings. The board met every odd numbered month except July. It worked fairly well except at the year end. The board voted to add a December meeting.

**Bev Lazar – Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital, Ladysmith**

Wow. Is this winter ever going to be over??? As I sit here tonight, it is snowing, the weather man is predicting 3-5 inches of fresh white powder…. That is one thing even a good committee cannot change.. Mother Nature.

Ladysmith Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital has been busy. We have just completed our third fund raiser this year and have more planned. It has been fun and exciting as we are raising money for a new piece of health equipment for our hospital. The equipment is a LUCAS, a compression machine for our emergency room. This goal came about from our “WISH LIST”. The wish List is funds donated at the Christmas Love Lites Tree. The list is given to the Partners from the various departments of the hospital, and is presented to the board in the January Meeting. This is a presentation and explanation in layman’s terms of what they would like and the benefits of the product. The board is not made of Doctors or Nurses, so this has been very beneficial to us. This year we are granting 4 wishes. The Rehab OT requested money for patient activities, Speech Therapy asked for an audiometer, Imaging requested a MRI scanner for detection of metal in the body before an MRI. These wishes were granted at our February Meeting. The fourth wish was the LUCAS 2, which is compression machine that performs chest compression (CPR). The funds for this wish will take us the year to raise.

Partners will be volunteering at our **100-year Anniversary of Rusk County Memorial Hospital on June 10, 2018!** The celebration begins at noon and will continue to 4:00 pm. We are very proud of our hospital. There will be a tour, lunch, games for the kids and genuine good will and conversation. Come and join us! We would be glad to see you there!

**Beth Burnham – Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health**

 We held our holiday open house in November for the gift shop. It was a tremendous success due to the support from the community, the hospital and clinic staff and our members. We also had our Love Lights and Silent Auction event in December, which is always well attended. January was our quarterly meeting with Installation of officers. Genie Nulle is our new treasurer, and I am serving a second term as president. In March, we held our bake sale and did well. April of course is very busy with our Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon followed by our used book sale and the District meeting Spring Tour.

**Ginny Bosse – Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary, Park Falls**

 We were so proud of our Rag Cutters when they won the 2017 WAVE in the fundraising category! The awards ceremony at Convention was an extremely happy occasion! We were disappointed when a picture of the WAVE Committee was printed in place of a picture of the Rag Cutters in the article in the November issue of *Reaching Out,* but then were thrilled to see a front page picture and correction in the February 2018 issue. We have submitted an application for the HAVE and keeping our fingers crossed! Our annual Salad Luncheon will be on Wednesday, May 16th from 11:00-1:00 at the Padua Center of St. Anthony’s Catholic Church, 200 5th Ave. S., Park Falls, WI 54552. The Padua Center is most easily reached by parking in the lot behind the church and entering through the back door. For a mere $6.00, you can eat all you care to eat from a buffet of over fifty salads, deviled eggs, dinner rolls, and assorted bars for dessert. Coffee, milk and other beverages are also included. We’d love to see you there! The proceeds go towards scholarships.

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT OFFICERS as of 4/24/2018**  **(Unless someone steps – or is gently nudged – forward!)**

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