

Western District Chair Report
April 2026

It is sad to report that the Western District has lost one very active local organization in the MCHS-LaCrosse Auxiliary at the parent organization's request. We will miss their participation greatly. Citing lack of resources and interest in volunteering, Emplify Gunderson Boscobel Health has also formally given notice.

The remaining 7 local organizations are continuing to thrive and continue to support their local hospitals and the district and state WHA Partners. District membership continues to shrink, going from 615 in 2024 to 462 in 2025. Hours of volunteer involvement have also dipped from 37,979 in 2024 to 23499 in 2025. Financial support for our hospitals has remained fairly consistent, with \$93,382 in 2024 and \$89,777 in 2025. Also somewhat consistent is the support for scholarships, with 46 totaling \$52,000 in 2024 and 44 totaling \$36,700 in 2025.

As with other districts, the declining membership has been troubling, as is the lack of interest in serving in leadership roles within the local and district organizations. We continue to struggle with PPE and President-elect roles. One organization, Volunteers of Black River Health, has adapted to working as an Advisory Committee rather than elected representatives. We need to give them as much support as possible as they continue down this path.

As a district, we continue to meet twice a year with representation of perhaps 50% of the local organizations. I believe this is somewhat linked to the location of the organization in the rotation, and the long distance from the northern-most to southern-most organizations in the district. We still lack a chair elect, and while we did have someone agree to take on the PPE chair role, I was so excited that I cannot remember who it was and the organization to which they belong. If anyone remembers, please let me know!

I am confident we will make it through these times and come out on the other side perhaps changed a little in our structure, but still strong in our support of our local hospitals as well as having some positive impact on those who volunteer for us and the hospital.

Cindy Chicker
Western District Chair