

WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT OF THE PARTNERS OF WHA

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

A Note from the Chair...

As I ponder what to write for this current newsletter, my feeling is we need to concentrate on the positive. I am so thankful for our Partners, volunteers, council members and the support of the WHA. I am also very optimistic that we will soon be able to meet in person and return to the active/hands on organization we were before COVID. Zoom meetings are not ideal but I am thankful we had the ability to use that technology to keep in touch. Our Spring District meeting had 25 virtual attendees and I am hoping for more in person attendees at our fall district meeting,

Our District, like others, is encountering many obstacles which is disheartening. So many changes within some of the Partners and their role within the dynamics of their associated hospitals. I am looking forward to Convention 2022 to interact with other districts to discuss solutions.

However, ending on a positive note, let's count our blessings. We may need to make changes, rebuild and adapt. BUT we are capable and can do this! Today's Dream...Tomorrow's Reality!

Be kind to everyone, not what it does for others but for what it does for you.

Betty Oddo
West Central District Chair

Update from the Secretary/Treasurer...

Since I last reported to you, there has been no activity in the West Central District checking account. However, with the State convention coming up in October at the Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, I imagine we will have some expenses. There will be the District basket for the convention and we will probably have some mileage and other expenses.

If you have any questions regarding the West Central District account, expenses or income, please contact me. Be sure to mark your calendars for the next district meeting and the State Partners of WHA convention this fall. I hope to see you there!

Jaci Fuller, Secretary/Treasurer
West Central District

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Dates to Remember

West Central District Meeting.....To be Determined

Partners of WHA State Convention.....Oct. 12 & 13, 2022
Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells

Partners of WHA State Convention 2023.....Oct 3 - 5, 2023
Holiday Inn, Stevens Point

PARTNERS OF WHA HOSPITAL REPORTS:

ASPIRUS - STANLEY HOSPITAL

At this time our name has not been changed on our corporation and Aspirus wants us to join with them, thus dropping our corporation. Since it is a legal corporation and in the past the hospital has taken care of legal matters, we aren't sure if we can legally change our name to Partners with Aspirus Stanley Hospital. Their legal department doesn't want to do this change for us. So as far as the District and State goes, we should probably leave our name as Partners with OLVH.

We met with our new CAO Rob Holcomb to get information on how we would move forward if we were to go with Aspirus. We are still gathering information so that we can make a wise decision. We seem to keep coming up with questions that we would like answers to.

However, in spite of the hospital changing over to Aspirus, we have still accomplished a couple of things so far this year. Since the December tornado was unusual and with all the damage to homes and businesses, we decided to donate money to the tornado fund that was set up at one of the local banks. We donated money to the hospital to purchase equipment they needed to be able to better help patients, a vital machine and a recliner for knee and hip replacements patients. Aspirus Stanley Hospital began doing knee and hip replacements in November 2021.

We awarded three \$500 high school scholarships in May. We normally award two high school students and one employee but (Aspirus-Stanley Hospital Continued) since we did not have any employee applicants, we decided to give three high school scholarships.

If Aspirus allows us, we will be having two fund-raisers this year - a brat sale for scholarships and our Love Lights. As to the future of the Partners with OLVH, only time will tell.

Donella Christianson, Chair

CUMBERLAND HEALTHCARE VOLUNTEER PARTNERS

Our Volunteer Partner's organization continues on shaky ground due to COVID-19 even though contractions have eased. We do not have our Escort/Greeters in place and probably will not until we move into our new hospital next March, That volunteer position impacts many of our volunteers. With them unable to volunteer, they will find another place to volunteer and I will lose them. We do have the gift shop open and most shifts are filled now. I have been able to have volunteers do a couple short term projects which has helped I believe I have lost in-fourth to one-third of our volunteers. I hope to launch a volunteer recruitment campaign in the fall. I will need a full contingent of volunteers when we are in our new facility.

We will continue with the Partner's organization as long as it exists and I am able to budget through the Volunteer Resources Partner's organization.

Ann Bergmann, President

HSHS ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL- Chippewa Falls

Current Status of Partners of HSHS Partners of St. Joseph's Hospital:

The sun is shining and the birds are singing and all should be well with the world, but I am waiting for the other shoe to drop. I think my Covid Hangover is showing. This hangover I have heard people talk about has affected not only individuals, but businesses, systems, and all types of organizations, big and small, like our Partners group.

After so many times of setting dates for events and having to cancel, we have become a bit hesitant, a bit tentative. I feel, to some extent, our focus has shifted. We have drifted apart during our time of Zoom. Don't get me wrong, Zoom was a lifeline that I desperately clutched, but nothing beats face to face for group cohesion.

We are in a time of transition and probably will be for a while but Partners of St. Joseph's Hospital is well positioned. One of the things that has helped is the fact that we have a strategic plan and have recently revisited and revised it. We have remained flexible. One example of that is changing our Steak Fry to drive through and pick up when we were no longer able to congregate. We recently had our first face to face board meeting, but using Zoom allowed us to carry on in difficult times. Tomorrow is another major step forward. We will be boarding our Friendship Day bus with our vaccination cards in hand for a trip to Chanhassen.

Partners is alive and well! We may not be exactly like we were before Covid, but we are refining our focus, strengthening connections and are motivated to move forward.

Ellen Kiefer, President
Partners of HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital

ST. CROIX FALLS

Kathy Lucken, District Representative of St.Croix Regional Medical Center Volunteer Partners, has indicated they are not volunteering at the Hospital at this time. Therefore, there is nothing to report.

PARTNERS OF OSCEOLA MEDICAL CENTER

Greetings from the OMC Partners to each of you. What a trying time we are living in "today"! It seems that we are all struggling, especially the smaller organizations like ours! COVID really was trying for us all and the return even to a "new normal" is hard to achieve.

OMC Partners continue to work forward in providing assistance to our hospital as well as others in need of or services. Even though we have been struggling with maintaining members and securing new members, we try to do the best that we can. One of our most difficult struggles at this time is securing a slate of officers for the upcoming year.

Securing a place to meet was not a huge challenge. Our hospital asked us not to gather at the medical center and so we are able to meet at the fitness center which is on the OMC campus. Our liaison has been very helpful in providing this

place for us. Although some feel that this is not ideal, it provides for a place to be together. We have been assured that we may use this facility for all of our needs and have enjoyed gathering for simple tasks. We have not used it for our “coffee” time as yet.

We have been fortunate to be able to do some of our fund raisers such as a rummage sale at one of our member’s home, selling cookies for Valentine’s Day which we pre-packed at the Fitness Center, bringing in the Nutman to OMC for employees at Father’s Day time and having a very successful “Bakeless Bake Sale”. We have been able to continue providing two scholarships for students involved in medical studies as well as providing for some new mattresses for OMC.

It has been a struggle for us to attend District and State meetings. Some are simple issues such as date and time. While others remain concerned about COVID and its many different facets and changes it has brought to us all. As we continue into fall and winter it will again be a question as to how safe we will be with inside meetings and more togetherness.

As each organization continues separate paths, may we find ways to support each other, come together to exchange ideas and foremost assist our medical facilities in providing for the safe care of our patients.

Kathy West, President
OMC Partners, Osceola

VOLUNTEER PARTNERS OF HSHS SACRED HEART HOSPITAL - EAU CLAIRE

Our Volunteer Partners group is currently small, but dedicated. We’ve had trouble filling our officer and committee chair spots because of the small pool of people to choose from. I know we are all in the same boat as we sail through the post-Covid waters. Friends and colleagues are still testing positive so it is not really “post” Covid.

In Eau Claire our new president Carol Dittmar will take over in July. She is a vibrant leader with lots of ideas for us to consider. Welcome to your new role, Carol! And thank you for all you’ve done for me during this term.

What we are working on: updating the HSHS Volunteer Partners 'Strategic Plan to energize and strengthen our mission, helping Brandy and the nominating committee find volunteers to fill our offices and committees, and planning for new and continuing events.

This might sound strange, but I admit to really liking Zoom for the various groups I am in. I'm ready to put most of those meetings behind me, though, in favor of face-to-face events. Zooming allowed us to stay connected in one of the only ways available for a few years, which was a good thing. Meeting in person is what we've been missing – the personal touch is invaluable.

Best wishes to all our hospital volunteer partners groups. May you continue to prosper. Have a great summer!

Kathy Herfel, President
HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire

Public Policy Education (PPE) Report

Wisconsin Hospitals Commit More Resources to Communities, Face Larger Medicare Losses

Hospitals across the nation committed 13.9% of their overall expenses to community benefit, equating to \$110.9 billion each year, according to the [American Hospital Association](#) (AHA) and an [Ernst & Young analysis](#) of non-profit hospital expenses.

Annual community benefits made by Wisconsin hospitals, when calculated in the same manner as the AHA report, result in 21.2% of all expenses—largely driven by significant losses from Medicare and Medicaid, accounting for 78.8% of all community benefits. In total, Wisconsin hospitals provide \$4.9 billion in benefits to Wisconsin communities as a commitment they make for being a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

This data also shows how poorly Medicare reimburses Wisconsin hospitals. According to AHA's data, hospitals nationally experience a 3.1% shortfall in Medicare reimbursement as a percentage of their overall expenses. In Wisconsin, Medicare losses to hospitals account for a whopping 12% of their expenses.

Medicare reimburses Wisconsin hospitals only 73% of their costs, while Medicare reimbursement to the rest of the country amounts to 84% of cost. Similarly, Wisconsin's Medicaid program reimburses hospitals only 66% of cost, while the national average for state Medicaid reimbursement is equivalent to 88% of cost. This is important to understand because for the vast majority of Wisconsin hospitals, Medicare and Medicaid patients make up more than half of their overall business.

(From the June 9, 2022 issue of the Valued Voice newsletter of the Wisconsin Hospital Association.)

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Community Health Education (CHE) Report

Monkeypox is a rare viral infection similar to Smallpox that occurs mostly in regions of Africa. It gets its name from being first identified in infected monkeys (thought to be infected by African rodents). However, some US cases in the past have been a result of close contact with infected prairie dogs. Monkeypox is spread person to person through prolonged face-to-face contact whereby large drop-lets can enter the respiratory tract and mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose, mouth. It can also spread when there is contact with the lesions, body fluids, and contaminated bedding and clothing. Animal to human transmission occurs from contact with the blood, body fluids, and lesions of the infected animals.

Currently, there is 1 case confirmed in the state of Massachusetts, and suspected cases in New York, Florida, Utah, and Washington State. Concerning is that Monkeypox could become a worldwide outbreak with cases seen in Europe, Canada, and Australia.

Symptoms include fever, chills, aches, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and blister-like lesions. The lesions become pustules and drain, crusting over, then healing. Monkeypox is contagious until the lesions are scabbed. The recovery period from the illness is usually 2-4 weeks.

There is no specific treatment for Monkeypox. Care should focus on lessening the symptoms and preventing long-term effects. Antiviral medication and Immune Globulin may be used in severe cases. Complications may include secondary infections such as pneumonia, sepsis, encephalitis, and infection of the cornea of the eye (can lead to blindness).

In the past, individuals who received the smallpox vaccine were also protected from Monkeypox. A newer vaccine is available for high-risk individuals, such as healthcare workers, that is in the process of being released from the US government stockpile.

Source: [CDC.gov, who.int](https://www.cdc.gov/who/int) 5/24/2022

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The Gardens of Kindness Never Fade

A garden is measured
not by its withered leaves,
but by each budding flower
and the smiles that it receives.

A day is measured
Not by hours that have flown,
but by how much we've done
and the compassion that
we've shown.

Our lives are measured
not by what we have or take
but by what we give back
and the difference that
we make.

-Author unknown

QUESTIONS - IDEAS - THOUGHTS...

If you have any ideas, thoughts, or questions regarding the Partners of WHA or the West Central District or if you would like to get more involved and serve in some capacity to help further the goals of the Partners of WHA, call/email any one of the officers.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

