

*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

### Greetings, Partners



Sharon Scott

On July 7, I was hospitalized with a very acute case of pneumococcal pneumonia—totally caught off guard and literally knocked me on my “keester.” I am very thankful to my medical team who administered an extremely aggressive treatment plan and am very happy to report that I am recovering nicely, feeling stronger every day, and will have resumed all my activities by the time this newsletter is received. Thank you, Julie Steiner, Newsletter Editor, for your understanding, patience, and deadline extension.

I cannot begin to thank our districts enough for the wonderful hospitality, and enthusiastic and informative spring meetings. It was terrific seeing you in person and sharing so many hugs! I appreciated your acceptance/willingness of FACING CHALLENGES, MAKING CHANGES AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES (my theme shared during Spring Tour). Most importantly, Spring Tour brought the realization that we, as an organization, continue to emerge from “shutdown” looking quite different. We encountered organizational/administrative changes that led us to educate our new hospital leaders about the value of our Partners organization. Declining memberships and fewer Partners leaders taking the initiative to step forward presented both local and district challenges.

HOWEVER, let me share some positives—a District Chair was able to “recruit” and install a District Chair-Elect during their spring meeting; Mandy, Julie and Karen, three busy professionals and mothers successfully organized a district meeting having no previous experience; the new Portage Hospital DVS, Linda Krueger, was an invited guest to the Southern District meeting with the hope that she would glean more information through networking about Partners and be successful in re-establishing the Portage Volunteers; and lastly congratulations to the newly installed District Chairs: Donnella Christenson, West Central District; Ginny Bosse, Northwestern District; and Terri Donlin, Southern District. I look forward to serving with you and know you will serve your districts

*(Continued on page 4)*

## A Message from the Past President

### Bylaws Change Proposed

#### The By-Laws

Committee continues to review the adaptability of language in our current by-laws to better meet the needs of our organization. A proposal will be brought to the general membership meeting in October with language changes that specifically align the Parliamentary position with our by-laws. The Partners board proposes to revise 6.2 to read “(6) *Parliamentarian (may be contracted); and ...*”



Peg Larson

**Rationale:** When we revised the bylaws, we didn’t realize that there were professional parliamentarians, so Article 6.12 states, “6.12 Compensation. No Director shall receive any salary or anything of pecuniary value from Partners for performing services of a Director but may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in connection with the Director’s duties.” Article 6.2 lists the Parliamentarian as a required member of the board. The Board and Partners have benefitted greatly from the expertise of a professional parliamentarian and would like to continue to do so.

If you have questions about this proposed change, please contact any member of the bylaws committee: Patsy Pippin, Sharon Scott, Iva Mulhern, John Tully, Bill McCullough, Sue Schuelke, Leigh Ann Larson, Peg Larson, or Cindy Hermel.

Peg Larson

Email: [pegvoluntr@hotmail.com](mailto:pegvoluntr@hotmail.com)

## SCAM ALERT!!!

I have been advised that scammers have “targeted” Partner Volunteers in the Western, Southeastern, North Central, and West Central Districts since mid-July. Using my name and that of WHA as the “hook,” the scammers apparently hope this will “trigger” a response to their email or phone call communication. The scam is requesting Amazon or Apple gift cards in the amount of \$600.00. **The phone number 510-764-0363 has been deemed fraudulent by the Rusk County Sheriff’s Department as well as the email address of mailbox.report2@optonline.net.**

I cannot emphasize enough that neither I nor WHA will solicit money or gift cards from the Partners of WHA membership. I use ONLY this email address: [dick-sharon-scott@prodigy.net](mailto:dick-sharon-scott@prodigy.net).

PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND TO ANY SUSPICIOUS EMAILS OR PHONE CALLS—contact me immediately. I very much appreciate the Partners who reached out on this most current scam.

*Sharon Scott, State President*

## Convention 2023 Countdown! “Today’s Dream...Tomorrow’s Reality”

**Date:** October 3-5, 2023

**Location:** Holiday Inn, 1001 Amber Ave., Stevens Point, WI 54482; (715) 344-0200

Less than three months to go! Your convention committee is working hard to make Convention 2023 informative and fun. We want you to leave with a feeling of fellowship from old friends and new. We also want you to take away ideas you may implement in your own organizations—leadership, fundraising, and acquiring new members. If anyone has a success story you wish to share, we would love for you to be a part of this.

Workshops are in place. John Tully has been finessing this part of the convention. More information about these will be sent to your organizations.

The Keynote speaker will be Tom Thibodeau. Servant leadership will be his topic. Our wrap-up speaker is Terri Donlin to discuss positive intelligence.

For those who have tried to download the registration form, it is currently being revised. **BIG NEWS!!!** You will now be able to pay for registration with your credit card. There will be a \$5.00 charge to cover the fee we are charged for this service, which will all be spelled out in the registration form.

It won’t be all work at convention as we will be having “Purse Bingo,” a wine raffle, 50/50 raffles, and the silent auction. If you would like to donate wine, a raffle prize or a purse, please let us know.

More information will be emailed to your organizations to keep you up to date.

Any questions, please contact Betty or John.

*Betty Oddo, 2023 Convention Co-Chair*    *John Tully, 2023 Convention Co-Chair*

Email: [bettybro43@gmail.com](mailto:bettybro43@gmail.com)

715-559-8021

Email: [balduck@citizen-tel.net](mailto:balduck@citizen-tel.net)

715-642-2239

**Now accepting Credit Card Payments for Registration!**



**The Partners State Board members have decided to accept credit card payments for registration, making it easier for you to register for the State Convention.**

**There will be a \$5 surcharge per registration to help cover the fees incurred by credit card companies.**

If you pay by cash or check-Registration is \$150 per person  
If you pay with credit card-Registration is \$155 per person

- To pay by credit card there will be a spot on the registration form to list the card holder’s name and phone number.
- That information will be passed on to John Tully, State Treasurer.
- John will then call the card holder that is listed and get the credit card information.
- John will destroy the card information as soon as it has been processed.

For more information please contact  
John Tully at 715-859-6775 or [balduck@citizens-tel.net](mailto:balduck@citizens-tel.net)

Dear Partners,

*It is my honor to personally extend an invitation encouraging your attendance at the Partners of WHA Annual Convention, October 3-5 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point. Our hosts are the Volunteers from the West Central District. They have chosen the theme "Today's Dream... Tomorrow's Reality."*

*Our agenda includes the annual membership meeting, engaging opening and closing speakers, educational workshops, an informative CEO Panel, our silent auction, and most importantly the fellowship and networking amongst both new and familiar faces of our state-wide fellow Partners of WHA.*

*An added event.....the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of Partners of WHA. We are hoping to present a slideshow of Past-Presidents and activities from the past 70 years.*

*I look forward to personally welcoming each one of you and creating new memories and friendships.*

*See you soon, in Stevens Point.*

Sharon Scott,

Partners of WHA State President



*You're Invited!*

Another Power of Connection Webinar is planned for **September 12, 2023, from 10:00 to 11:30 am.** The webinar is being organized by the Midwest Regional Collaboration Group.

System Director of Volunteer Services for Advocate Aurora Karen Schafer will present information on a Concierge Admission Program. The program was developed as a partnership between volunteer services and nursing services to connect with patients within 24 hours of admission. The program orients patients, identifies immediate concerns/needs, provides support, and sets the patient up for a successful stay. Units that are more engaged with the Concierge Admission Program demonstrate success with increasing patient experience scores. A strong relationship between nursing leaders and volunteer services is key to implementing innovative care models to support patient experience.

Learn how and why the program was implemented, how volunteers interact with the patients and how volunteers and nurses work collaboratively to best meet patient's needs. In addition, Karen will talk about the process used to gain approval for this new concept.

An informational flyer and zoom registration link will be shared soon.

Peg Larson

Email: [pegvoluntr@hotmail.com](mailto:pegvoluntr@hotmail.com)

## Deadline Extended for Mary Licht Scholarship

The deadline has been extended to August 31 for the 2023 Mary Licht Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship awards a first-time convention attendee their registration fee of \$150. Two (2) scholarship awards will be given this year. The application may be found on the Partner's website. Please consider and encourage a member of your organization to apply.



Mary Licht

Mary Licht, 2017 State President of Partners, lost her courageous battle with breast cancer in September of that year. Mary's dedication, enthusiasm and love of Partners shone brightly through her service as President of her local organization (Partners of Portage Hospital), convention chair, Partner's webmaster, and Southern District Chair. Her family wished to continue Mary's legacy and graciously established the Mary Licht Memorial Scholarship. Let us remember Mary by continuing her legacy through sharing our enthusiasm, passion, and experiences as members of Partners.



*A Message from the President...Continued from page 1*

well. Thank you for your leadership. Let us celebrate these positives and remember to measure our successes for the quality brought to our organization.

Although a report will be shared by our Strategic Planning co-chairs, I want to acknowledge the initiative this committee is taking on two of the identified goals. Thank you for being proactive, assertive, and committed to attaining positive outcomes. At this time, I can share that two districts (West Central and Northwestern) are discussing potential re-structuring. A survey is being developed to review convention planning processes and structures. The survey will be made available for all volunteer members to complete—I encourage you to participate. Partners is our volunteer organization—our organization to voice concerns, share ideas and set realistic goals, and our organization to collaborate with our dedicated DVS's to promote a strong and sustainable organization.

Are your calendars marked for our Partners of WHA Convention October 3-5, Holiday Inn Convention Center, Stevens Point? Are you talking about convention amongst yourselves, during meetings and sharing in your newsletters? Convention experience is truly in the “eye” of the attendee, networking with fellow volunteers, attending educational workshops, listening to the CEO panel, participating in the annual membership meeting, hearing enlightening speakers, and special this year the 70th Anniversary Celebration of Partners of WHA. Come, participate, and celebrate with your fellow volunteers and DVS's.

In closing, I am so encouraged by the positive changes occurring—true, the effects are not always immediately felt by everyone, and you may be inclined to feel that we are going at a “snail’s pace,” but remember change takes time and its success is dependent on the implementation, rationale, and acceptance of the majority.

**Ability is what you're capable of doing.**

**Motivation determines what you do.**

**Attitude determines how well you do it.**

- Lou Holtz

Sharon Scott, Partners of WHA State President  
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## The Road to Oahu



Leigh Ann Larson

Happy summer! I hope you are all enjoying the beauty of Wisconsin and continue to do so over the next several months.

In last year's August newsletter article, I wrote about “the Road to Red Lodge,” which chronicled my trip to Montana to visit my paternal grandmother's birth and resting place, which is also a place that holds deep meaning to my father. (What a fantastic trip that was, btw!!) This year, I've chosen to write about another adventure that I am planning. However, this time, it's to visit a place that has deep meaning to my mother—the island of Oahu.

My mother was a Navy kid, so she moved around a lot. One of the places she spent part of her childhood was the Hawaiian island of Oahu. She likes to boast, “I lived there before it was a state!”, which she did. Hawaii became a state in August of 1959, a few years after my mother and her family moved back to the mainland. The time they lived there made a permanent impression on them. I remember growing up hearing the stories of her youth, playing dress up with her grass skirt, learning hula dances and listening to traditional music. Later this year, my husband and I will have the good fortune to visit Hawaii for the first time and visit Oahu where my mother lived. I look forward to seeing the house she lived in and the school she attended.

This trip brings me to a place of feeling grateful for service. Military families sacrifice a great deal to be of service to others. They do this willingly and unselfishly. I am humbled by this, and I am sure this feeling will only be exemplified once I am there.

The service you provide as volunteers is done willingly and unselfishly. You provide service in a wide variety of ways, but the common element is that you do this for patients and families when they are most vulnerable. I know that WHA and its member hospitals are most grateful and appreciative for this.

Thank you for your service. You are a key partner to positive patient experiences and outcomes and that is something we are all humbled to witness.

I look forward to seeing everyone in October!

The photo I have included is that of my mother, Kaye Alyce who is on the right, and her forever best friend, her twin, Karen Ann on the left.



Leigh Ann S. Larson, WHA Vice President of Education/Marketing;  
Executive Director, WHA Foundation; Partners of WHA Liaison  
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## Strategic Planning Committee Update

The Strategic Planning Committee met and developed goals in February 2023.

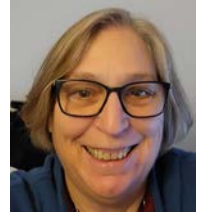
Attendees at all spring district meetings were given the opportunity to comment on three goals the committee will be focusing on: review potential future restructuring of districts; convention planning process and structure; and member-at-large membership.

District restructuring was initially suggested due to decreasing numbers of local organizations in some districts. The possibility of combining districts could result in increased member attendance at meetings and more members available for leadership positions and convention planning. Concerns included communication breakdowns between members of larger districts, longer travel distances to events or district meetings (although a central location could be named) and combining finances. This process will take time and much ongoing communication. Two districts plan to discuss ideas/concerns at district meetings in August.

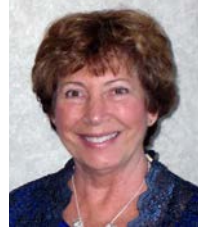
A change this year related to state convention is the ability to use credit cards for registration fees. There will be an extra \$5 charge added to the registration cost for members using a credit card. This will cover the credit card surcharge. Members attending spring district meetings agreed that an increase in convention registration is necessary since no increase has been made in several years. It is hoped that more ideas and concerns on future convention planning will be expressed in a survey being developed for Partners members.

The concept/wording of member-at-large will be discussed between the Bylaws and Strategic Planning Committees. Clear guidelines need to be established and possible bylaw updates made. This will take discussion and time.

*Terri Donlin and Sherry Jelic, Strategic Planning Committee Co-chairs*



*Terri Donlin*



*Sherry Jelic*

### Did You Know This?

***Those lovely white, flat-bottom coffee filters are great for:***

- Covering bowls or dishes when cooking in the microwave oven
- Cleaning windows, mirrors, and chrome, as they are lint free, so they'll leave windows sparkling
- Protect good china by separating dishes and stacking
- Putting a few on a plate to fry bacon, French fries, chicken fingers, etc. on them in the microwave – it soaks up the grease
- A sewing backing, as the filter is an easy-to-tear backing for embroidering or appliqueing soft fabrics
- Wrapping Christmas ornaments for storage
- Using them to remove fingernail polish when out of cotton balls
- Using them as a disposable “snack bowl” for popcorn, chips, etc.

### Share Your Newsletters

Please remember to add Julie Steiner to your email or direct mailing list as you send out your local and district newsletters. Items in your local publications may be shared in *Reaching Out* to let readers know what is happening around the state.

*Julie Steiner, Newsletter Editor*  
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### Silver Years

- I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore, and forget all at the same time!
- It's weird being the same age as old people.
- When I was a kid, I wanted to be older. This is not what I expected.
- I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.
- I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

# Community Health Education Report

## *Improve Your Well-Being with Meditation*



Cindy Hermel

Meditation is frequently recommended as a tool to foster good mental and physical health. Meditation is a mental exercise that involves relaxation, focus, and awareness and is usually done individually, in a seated position, with eyes closed. Meditation is to the mind what physical exercise is to the body. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 2012 and 2017, the number of Americans who reported meditating increased from 4.1% to 14.2%. By 2022, 17.1% of adults (including 41.1% in the 18-24 age group) said they meditated at least once a week. The stress of the COVID pandemic is a contributing factor, but so is growing awareness of the benefits of meditation and mindfulness.

In a review of over 400 studies, mindfulness meditation was identified as an effective mental health practice for improving physical and psychological well-being. There are benefits to meditation that positively impact many aspects of our lives. These include lowering anxiety and stress levels, supporting better interpersonal relationships, improving focus, and reducing “brain chatter.” Meditation connects the mind and body, allowing increased physical and mental peace and calmness.

Meditation is something everyone can do and is a simpler process than many people think. The following steps make up a meditation experience:

- Find a place to sit that is quiet and comfortable.
- Determine the length of time you will meditate. Start with a 5-10-minute session. Use a timer if you wish to be alerted at the end of your session.
- Get comfortable. You may sit in a chair, loosely cross-legged, sit on the floor, or kneel. Maintain a stable position for the length of your meditative session.
- Focus on your breathing, noticing the inhalation and exhalation.
- Notice when new thoughts come into your mind and return your attention to your breath. Do not be concerned about these thoughts. It is a normal part of the meditation.
- As your meditation comes to an end, gently open your eyes and lift your gaze. Focus on how your body feels and what emotions and thoughts you have.

The more you meditate, the more comfortable and effective your practice will be. Daily meditation is recommended for optimal benefit. Integrating the following seven elements into your meditation routine can make your meditation more enjoyable, deeper, and transformative.

### **Before Meditation**

- Relax your body and breathe to calm and center yourself.
- Focus on things for which you feel gratitude.
- Have a strong intention.

### **During Meditation**

- Do not be frustrated or feel guilt for distracting thoughts that interrupt your focus.
- Appreciate moments of concentration.

### **After Meditation**

- Close your meditation slowly and quietly.
- Record your observations and feelings in a journal.

Meditation is a good way to refocus and center yourself. When life is hectic and complicated, it can be difficult to concentrate on meditation without assistance. There are a variety of meditation mobile apps available to make your practice easier and more intuitive. These apps give you access to a variety of guided meditation sessions ranging from one to thirty minutes in length. Some of the most well-known apps include *Calm*, *Headspace*, *Insight Timer*, *Smiling Mind* and *Shine*.

*(Continued on page 7)*

**(Community Health Education Report...continued from page 6)**

Meditation has thrived for centuries and continues to play an important role in the lives of people around the world. Scientists have shown us how meditation positively impacts our body and brain, but it is up to us to decide if or when to put it into practice.

*Cindy Hermel, Community Health Education Chair*  
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## Public Policy Education Report



*Bill McCullough*

### **Payment Reform Needed**

After one or two attempts to attend the American Hospital Association Annual Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C.—this event having been deferred or cancelled due to COVID, I was able to do so this year. What a privilege and opportunity to hear from a multitude of dimensions about the state of health care in the U.S.

Following is a summary of one of the key issues our contingent of Wisconsin hospital CEOs and WHA staff addressed in meetings with our congressional representatives and senators in Washington, D.C.

**Site-Neutral Payments:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) current policy is designed to pay the same rate for the same service, regardless of the setting in which the service is offered. Without further definition and the ability to “look under the hood,” this treatment might on its face, make good sense. However, as in numerous instances, certain governmental strategies fail that are tested under further review. Unfortunately, this payment structure does not take into consideration the actual higher costs faced by hospitals that run 24/7 emergency rooms and incur other related costs. In the hospital setting, treatment is provided for higher acuity patients, and hospitals are required to meet numerous higher regulatory standards.

Currently Wisconsin hospitals receive only 67% of cost for Medicaid patients and 73% of cost for Medicare patients. In 2018 a letter written by members of Congress and the U.S. Senate addressed this same issue, stating that over 40 hospitals in Wisconsin would be affected by this practice, reducing payments by about \$30 million in 2019 and increasing to a reduction of approximately \$440 million by 2028. That letter further states, “rather than offer piecemeal cuts, CMS should pursue fundamental payment reform to reward rather than penalize states like Wisconsin that have high marks on both quality and value.”

Certainly, the above referenced letter of 2018 was neither the first, nor will it be the last statement that addresses the inequity of such reimbursement practice. In March and again June of this year WHA’s newsletter, *The Valued Voice*, referenced this practice. In April 2023, your Wisconsin contingent of hospital CEOs and WHA staff (along with this PPE Chair), met with our representatives and senators in Washington, D.C. to further converse, presenting our “ASK” to address this issue.

As these topics continue to present themselves, we ALL as volunteer advocates, need to make our collective voices heard. Be certain to participate in Hospital Education & Advocacy Team (HEAT) Alerts. Not a member? [Join today!](#)

*Bill McCullough, PPE Chair*  
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## Around the State



Brandy Sikora and John Wagner

**Brandy Sikora, Manager of Volunteer services at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls and Sacred Heart in Eau Claire** received the 2023 Keeper of the Tradition Award. The award is given annually to a colleague who carries on the traditions of Christian hospitality, servant leadership and the mission of the Hospital Sisters. HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital President and CEO John Wagner says Brandy personifies the hospital values of respect, care, competence, and joy. "Everything Brandy does is done with a smile and a genuine heart."

**Ann Bergmann, Volunteer Coordinator at Cumberland Healthcare** is the recipient of a 2023 Rural Health Ambassador Award. The award, established by the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, recognizes employees at member hospitals who have gone above the call of duty in promoting their respective organizations and made significant contributions to rural health care in general. Ann is also the chair-elect for West Central District and a past state president of Partners.



Ann Bergmann

**The Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary Sewing Committee** assisted their Surgery Department by donating children's surgical caps. The caps are offered to children undergoing surgical procedures to help calm and connect them to the hospital's surgical teams. The surgical caps have been such a success at Ripon they started working with other volunteers in Fond du Lac and Waupun to extend this awesome program for kids.



"Alone we can do so little, together so much." - Helen Keller

This photo taken by Suzanne Rose is the hands of many volunteers at Ascension Mercy Hospital – Oshkosh.

## Reaching Out Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
November 2023	Friday, Oct. 13, 2023
February 2024	Friday, Jan. 12, 2024
May 2024	Friday, April 12, 2024
August 2024	Friday, July 12, 2024

Partners *Reaching Out* is published four times a year by Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. Visit the Partners website at [www.partnersofwha.org](http://www.partnersofwha.org). Direct questions or comments to:

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