

Aspirus Stanley Hospital & Clinics Volunteers

2025 Fall Newsletter

Hello ASH Volunteers,

Can't believe it's Fall already! Where did the year go!

I feel we have definitely made forward progress and am very happy with the coffee and how well it is going. Thank you to all of you for volunteering your time to do this! It's been well received.

I'm also very happy about the Nut Man fund raiser, and thank Mary Dirkes for chairing this and those who volunteered their time for that time. Let's continue to try to find some other vendors who are willing to come to the hospital and give us a percent of their sales.

I attended the Partners of WHA Conference held in Onalaska. It was very informative, at least on a personal level and to meet and visit with fellow volunteers.

Workshops I attended were Empowered Mind, Gentle Nutrition, and Falls. From Empowered Mind I learned warning signs for dementia, what to do, risk factors, things linked to dementia risk, and other information.

From Gentle Nutrition I learned things about eating better, some I knew, some I forgot, and some new. The presenters gave us a couple of recipes and made them in the workshop so we got to taste test them! Delicious! I've included the recipes in another section of this newsletter. Be "Mikey", you'll like them!

Thank you to those who have responded to my email on our potluck. The majority can be there on Monday, November 17, at noon in the conference, so see you all then!

Donella

Valued Voice

Please check out WHA.org and click on News, then newsletters to read the Valued Voice. This newsletter has lots of important information about legislation that can affect our local hospitals.

Another thing to check out is HEAT, click Advocacy, then HEAT Action Center. When you join HEAT, you will be notified by email of all important legislation that could affect Aspirus Stanley Hospital.

It's an easy way to connect with your state

representatives and voice your opinion, without having to "write" your own letter or email!

All you have to do is click on the tab and a screen comes up with an email already done so you just have to click the send and that's it!

Any questions or help, please feel free to let me know and I will do my best to help. I have been a member of HEAT for a few years, and it's a great way to let my representatives know what I support!

Public Policy Education Report

"Vertical integration" A model for corporate profitability but...not at all good for healthcare consumers.

The vertical integration concept makes good business sense, as it occurs when a company takes ownership of suppliers, distributors, or retail locations to obtain greater control of its supply chain.

This concept, however, has taken on considerable interest in the healthcare field. An article appeared in the April 12, 2018, publication; HealthcareDive, with a deep dive into the frenzy occurring at that time. While the article referenced three companies including Aetna, Cigna and Humana, it specifically addressed a fourth—UnitedHealth and its formation of Optum. That formation combined existing pharmacy (Optum Rx) and care delivery services within the company in 2011. In the first quarter of 2024, OptumRx, a subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group, generated \$35 billion in revenue.

The relevance of Optum's (and two other pharmacy benefit manager's) ever-increasing financial gain was recognized by an FTC complaint issued in September 2024. The FTC Act prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce" and "unfair methods of competition." A brief summary of that issue was addressed the February edition of Reaching Out. Unfortunately, the above case involves a large number of requests from 24 third parties and up to 17 expert witnesses. As a result, the hearing at FTC was rescheduled from August, 2025 to January, 2026. Our hope is for that hearing to fully recognize, confirm and apply the law to those "vertical marketing" efforts conducted by those three and other like-minded pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs).

One might ask if there are alternatives to the marketing strategies used by companies as those stated above? Fortunately, yes, right in our own back yard!!

In 2003, NAVITUS, a Madison-based organization, was formed and today has over 18 million members from 800 clients. The company is jointly owned by SSM Health and Costco Wholesale Corporation, and operates as a division of SSM Health. Their mission is “to provide transparent cost-effective solutions that prioritize affordability and improve care.” Their Business Model is totally dissimilar to the above-mentioned PBMs. NAVITUS neither receives rebates nor participates in “spread chasing,” operating on just a set fee, and returns 100% of all negotiated drug rebates, discounts, and fees.

NAVITUS is participating in federal PBM reform bills signed to reshape PBM operations to include:

- Expanded reporting requirements, mandating detailed disclosures
- Medicaid changes; prohibiting “spread pricing”
- PBM Act; Prohibit pharmacy ownership by PBM’s
- Bona Fide fees; definition of acceptable compensation
- Inflation Reduction Act – pharmacy reimbursement provisions: specific reimbursement provisions on negotiated drugs.

This is a topic in which we all have interest, and we will continue to follow its evolution.

Bill McCullough, PPE Chair

Email: webirish2@gmail.com

August 2025 issue of Partners of WHA Newsletter, Reaching Out

Community Health Education Report

We continue to work on our goals of sharing ways to address our own mental health by developing healthy habits and routines. With summer in full swing, summer might be a good time to work on our sleep quality.

Sleep quality refers to how well you sleep, not just how long you sleep. It’s about how easily you fall asleep, how long you sleep without interruption, and how refreshed you feel upon waking. Good sleep quality is essential for physical and mental well-being, while poor sleep can lead to various health issues.

Components of good sleep quality:

- Adequate duration - getting the right amount for your age and needs. For adults, this is typically 7-8 hours.
- Restorative sleep - sleeping deeply enough to feel refreshed and energized in the morning.

- Consolidated sleep - having few awakenings during the night and not spending excessive time awake after falling asleep.
- Timely sleep - following a consistent sleep schedule by going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.

Signs of poor sleep quality:

- Difficulty falling asleep (taking more than 30 minutes to fall asleep).
- Waking up frequently during the night.
- Lying awake for extended periods after waking up in the middle of the night.
- Feeling tired or sleepy during the day despite getting enough sleep.
- Difficulty concentrating.

Importance of good sleep quality:

- Physical health - good sleep supports the immune system, lowers risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, and helps regulate hormones
- Mental health - adequate sleep improves mood, reduces stress and anxiety, and enhances cognitive function.
- Overall well-being - quality sleep contributes to a better quality of life by improving energy levels, focus, and productivity.

Tips for improving sleep quality:

- Establish a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine. Wind down before bed with activities such as reading or taking a warm bath or shower.
- Optimize your sleep environment. Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool.
- Limit screen time before bed. The blue light emitted from electronic devices can interfere with sleep.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. These substances can disrupt sleep patterns.
- Get regular exercise. However, avoid strenuous workouts close to bedtime.
- Manage stress. Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation.
- Consult a healthcare professional. If you are experiencing persistent sleep problems, seek advice from a doctor.

Happy sleeping! Stay well,

Donna Nelson, CHE chair

August 2025 issue of Partners of WHA Newsletter, Reaching Out

Gentle Nutrition Recipes

Energy Bites

1 cup oatmeal,
½ cup chocolate chips (or other flavor),
½ cup ground flax seed (can add almond, cranberry,
or raisins),
½ cup peanut butter (or other nut butter),
1/3 cup honey or maple syrup, 1 tsp vanilla.

Directions: Combine all ingredients in a bowl, mix until full combined. Roll into balls, refrigerate or freeze as desired. Will keep 1 week in fridge, and 3 months in freezer.

We had the privilege of enjoying a sample of these great tasting energy bites and decided they wouldn't make it to the freezer, they'd be gone long before the week was up!

Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients: vegetable(s), olive oil, seasoning of choice.

Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (can be done in an air fryer, see directions on air fryer for the setting). Wash and prepare vegetables. Place in a large bowl. Drizzle lightly (just enough to coat the vegetable) with olive oil and season as desired. Toss or stir to coat. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 30-40 minutes or to desired doneness. Vegetable Ideas: Broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, zucchini, mushrooms, potatoes, carrots, brussel sprouts, green beans.

Seasoning Ideas: Chili powder, onion powder, garlic powder, parmesan cheese, fresh herbs, ranch seasoning, balsamic vinegar, Honey, paprika, dill, cumin, Italian seasoning, seasoning blends.

Again, we got to sample the vegetable, which was cauliflower, and it tasted very good! Can't wait to make my own!

Life is not a dress rehearsal.

Laugh with friends.

Splash in puddles.

Dance in the rain.

Have fun.

There is no "DO OVER" to your life.

Don't worry – choose to be HAPPY!

Be thankful for today. You only see it once.

"Together, ordinary people can achieve extraordinary results."

– Becka Schoettle

Stanley-Boyd Community Red Cross Blood Drive

There continues to be a critical need for blood and the upcoming Stanley-Boyd Community Red Cross Blood Drive is Monday, December 22, 12 to 6pm at the Stanley Community Center.

We need to have the appointment schedule completely filled to make the goal attainable. This is due to deferrals, which have been approximately ten, no shows, which there seem to be three to five, and, of course, cancellations!

Please pass the word. Appointments can be made by calling Donella at 715-644-3638, Mary Endru at 715-644-2165, the Red Cross at 800-733-2767, or visit redcrossblood.org.



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