**Northwestern District**

**Spring 2017 Newsletter**

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

 Spring has arrived on the calendar and hopefully Mother Earth will soon shed her cold white coat and put on her soft green one. Then Mother Nature can oversee the rebirth of plant and animal life whose seeming total absence we call “the *dead* of winter”. Of course, life is there all the time: in dormant trees, in the roots of plants ready to send up shoots again when warmed just the right amount, in the seeds still clinging to the brown, dry flowers of last summer or already hidden in the ground by small animals or blown by fall or winter winds, in the animals who stay and somehow manage to scratch meals out of their surroundings (or maybe had hidden it away before the snow flew), and some life is safely hidden in the bellies of their mothers and waiting for warmer, better conditions in which to be born into the tougher outside world. I used to describe the change of seasons, and the unpredictability of weather during the changeover, to my first grader students, as like a tug-of-war. First winter is winning, but then spring starts to win, then winter starts winning again, then spring, then winter, back and forth. However, it’s a *fixed* tug-of-war: you know which season will be the ultimate winner. Oh, winter may be winning for a while, but spring will win out in the end!

 I’ll be hoping that spring is “winning” when Partners of WHA President Mary Licht, President-Elect Jan Molaska, state CHE Barb Filla, and state CHE Sherry Jelic are on Spring Tour. Within a two-week period, they will visit every Partners district, which involves a lot of time, and miles, on the road. You already have received an invitation to the *Northwestern District’s Spring Tour stop: Ladysmith on Wednesday, April 5th*. Please encourage your members to attend! You will meet (or get to know better) your state president, president-elect, PPE, and CHE, and hear their reports, as well as be able to showcase your own Partners group in the afternoon when we share with each other what our groups have accomplished and what they have planned. Send your registrations to Beverly Lazar as soon as possible. Whether you are sending your check or bringing it with you, please remember that each group each 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 Hyatt in Green Bay on Tuesday-Thursday, October 3-5, 2017). Separate checks made out to Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital with notations on the Memo lines, would be appreciated.

 *WHA’s Advocacy Day* is exactly two weeks later, on Wednesday, April 19th. I hope many of you will travel to Madison to learn about healthcare-related legislative issues, to advocate for needed legislative changes, and to thank your legislators for their past votes that were beneficial to Wisconsin healthcare systems, providers, and patients. 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 is Amy Walter, National Editor, Cook Political Report. Her topic is “An Insider’s Look at Today’s Political Landscape”. 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”. WHA President Eric Borgerding moderates the panel each year. You can register for 2017 Advocacy Day by going to [www.partnersofwha.org](http://www.partnersofwha.org) , clicking under “Advocacy” on “Advocacy Day”, which has the link that can be used to get information and register: <http://www.cvent.com/d/svaylc> or you ca go to <http://www.wha.org/advocacy-day.aspx> . Or you can go to [www.wha.org](http://www.wha.org) , click on “Advocacy” and you will be taken to the page with the link for registration.

***2016 in Review: Let’s Give Ourselves a Pat on the Back!***

 On Tuesday-Thursday, March 14, 15, and 16, the Partners of WHA Board and Executive, Finance, Strategic Planning, Bylaws, and 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 181 members, Hayward Hospital Auxiliary with 107 members, Ladysmith’s Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital with 310 members, Park Falls’ Flambeau Hospital Auxiliary with 170 members, Shell Lake’s Indianhead Community Health Care, Inc., with 42 members, Volunteer Partners of Spooner Health with 65 members, and Essentia Health St. Mary’s Hospital Superior Auxiliary with 120 members. These 995 members contributed 190,714 Volunteer Hours and $149,766.00 to their hospitals. The Ashland group combines its $5,000 for scholarships with their hospital’s scholarship fund, together giving 23 scholarships. Add that to the rest of the groups’ scholarship numbers and dollars, and the totals are 74 scholarships and $37,000.00. The dollars given as scholarships or to their hospitals were raised through 40 fundraising projects. The seven groups reported a total of 15 Community Health Education projects and 15 newsletter articles. In the area of Public Policy Education, there were 34 programs, 25 newsletter articles, and 371 contacts with legislators.”* I feel very proud to be representing the Northwestern District as your District Chair. We are in an area of Wisconsin that I describe as geographically gifted and demographically challenged. Our members may be fewer in number and far apart from each other, but there is nothing “sparse” about our drive, our commitment to what we believe in, or our results! We have done well, so let’s celebrate and give each other three cheers, a virtual round of applause, and a pat on the back! I reported the motion the Northwestern District passed at our 2016 Fall District Meeting – the one about changing our next election year from 2018 to 2019 – to President Mary Licht and at the District Chairs Committee meeting. Unbeknownst to me, several districts had turnovers in their district chair positions and moved to a different election cycle. If our current officers stayed in office until spring of 2019, it would make it as lopsided as it used to be, just for opposite years! So, our terms will end at the 2018 Northwestern District Spring Tour meeting, which will be hosted by Spooner. *Please note: Our Chair-Elect position, vacated when Judy Lyons moved to Fort Atkinson, is still vacant. My phone has not been ringing off the hook (Technically, it doesn’t even have a hook.), and my inbox is not full of email messages from people volunteering – or even recommending someone else – for District Chair-Elect. 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 don’t plan to drop off the end of the earth either before or after my term ends, so I will assist, and continue to assist, our Chair-Elect as s/he serves both as Chair-Elect and then as Chair.* With the need for a Chair-Elect now and another new Chair-Elect plus a new Secretary/Treasurer (or a Secretary and a Treasurer) in spring of 2018, I’m activating the Nominating Committee. The committee’s membership is rotated, and it’s Ashland, Hayward, Ladysmith, and Park Falls’ turn. Please plan to meet briefly after the district meeting adjourns.

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

 I will be planning a get-together sometime this summer for all presidents and any other local officers who would like to come. As District Chair, I am to hold some sort of Leadership Training event at least once during my term. Since I am the relative rookie to this whole Partners of WHA “thing”, I think that when we all get together to talk about the past, present and futures of our individual groups and try to figure out what we can do to make our work even more meaningful, ***I*** will be the one doing the learning! Part of the time could be used to talk about recruiting people for local and district offices. There is enough money in the district treasury to pay for mileage for one car from each Partner group, plus lunch for everyone. Please bring your calendars to the district meeting in Ladysmith, and plan to stay for a couple of minutes at the end, so we can choose a date. Thanks!

***News from the Partners Board***

 All of the Bylaws Committee members, as well as all voting members of the Partners Board have been invited to a Bylaws Retreat, which will take place in Middleton on the two days following Advocacy Day. My understanding is that Partners’ goal is to do a complete reorganization and rewrite of the Bylaws based on the answers to several broad questions such as: “Who are we as an organization?” “Why does Partners exist?” “How do we visualize Partners five or ten years from now?” “How will Partners address the changing face of volunteers – and of volunteerism?” Needless to say, this will not be done quickly. It’s possible that by Spring Tour 2018 there will be a proposal presented to each district, to be voted on at the 2018 Convention in Stevens Point. Stay tuned! If there is something that you believe should be addressed at the Retreat, contact me (715-762-3193 or gbosse@live.com), and I will bring it to the table.

***To Honor a Great Lady:***

When asked to send in an article regarding the Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital, I had to address one of the biggest happenings that we've had in many years.  A special lady has been a member of Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital for over 41 years, not only as a member but also as our president for 24 years, Winnie Lee.  In March, Winnie decided she no longer had the health to support this position. To say that Winnie gave her all to our hospital and health community would be an understatement. Our Partners’ Board has met and will be uniting to cover all the responsibilities that we have. Together we will ensure that the traditions of this Board will continue, not without Winnie, but in respect of Winnie for her years of service. Please help us congratulate Winnie for a job well done. – Beverly Lazar

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

 The abuse and addiction to opioids such as heroin, morphine and prescription pain relievers is a serious problem that affects health and social and economic welfare. It is estimated that 2.1 million people in the U.S. suffer from substance abuse disorder related to prescription opioid pain relievers. Prescription opioids are chemicals that are similar to our own endorphins that our bodies produce to naturally relieve pain. Opioids are a class of drugs that include prescription drugs such as hydrocodone (Vicodin), oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet), oxy-morphone (Opana), morphine, codeine and fentanyl. Heroin is also an opioid. It was originally produced from morphine in the late 19th century. Opioids work by attaching to specific proteins called opioid receptors. They are found on nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord, gastrointestinal tract and other organs in the body. When these drugs are taken, they attach to the receptors and reduce the perception of pain and produce a sense of well being. They also activate the reward regions in the brain causing euphoria or “a high” which can increase potential misuse and addiction. They affect the brain’s area that control emotion and decrease the effect of painful stimuli. They can also produce mental confusion, nausea and constipation. With repeated use of opioids our body’s own endogenous receptors decrease natural production. When medications are discontinued, there is often noted increase in discomfort because your body is no longer producing its own endorphins as it was doing before taking the medication. In most cases, opioid pain relievers are generally safe when taken for a short time as prescribed by a doctor. The problem comes from not taking the medication as prescribed. That will be the subject of our next newsletter.

 I wanted to mention something else which I feel is important to discuss right now–Hepatitis C. If you were born between 1945 and 1965, you are FIVE times more likely than other age groups to have Hepatitis C. 3.5 million people have Hepatitis C with more than half of them not knowing they have it. Hepatitis C is a silent disease that many people live with for years with no symptoms. It slowly damages the liver during that time. The CDC recommends that Baby Boomers get tested. Many Baby Boomers have been infected for more than 20 years. Hepatitis C was discovered in 1989. Donated blood was not screened for Hepatitis C before 1992. Infection control standards were not like they are now back in the 70s or 80s. Hepatitis C can be cured. The treatment is shorter now than before, with cure rates at 95% if detected early. Most Medicare and Medicaid programs cover the test. Next time you are at the doctor, tell them you would like to be tested for Hepatitis C.

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

Today (Thursday, March 23, 2017) is the day that Congress is scheduled to vote on the GOP replacement to Obamacare, called the American Healthcare Act.  As I write this, I have one ear tuned to the TV debate regarding if they have enough yes votes to bring it to the floor for a vote later today.  I would like to share with you a few facts I learned over the past few days.  First, our congressional district has the highest Obamacare enrollees in the state, more than 35,000 last year.  Also, our district will be one of two in the state to see the biggest losses in tax credits.  This is in part because under Obamacare higher tax credits are offered to people in high cost counties, which are usually rural counties where there are fewer health care providers.  Under the new GOP plan, this difference in tax credits for counties will be eliminated.  The new GOP plan calls for big changes to Medicaid, changes that are not supported by WHA.  High increases in insurance premiums has most people thinking that Obamacare needs some fixing, but if the plan is to replace, not fix, then more time must be spent to produce a plan that will be better, not worse, for people and hospitals.  Hospitals should not have to be concerned about providing care to increasing numbers of patients who are uninsured or underinsured.  As I get ready to send this article into our newsletter, I have my finger over the send key as I listen one last time to the TV debate.  It appears that they will proceed with the vote today.  So, it is with great concern for the people and hospitals in our corner of Wisconsin that I hit the send key.
 – Note from Ginny, March 24, 2017: Paul Ryan said they “came up short” on votes to pass it, so the bill has been pulled – for now, at least.

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

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

 The Partners of MMC are gearing up for their spring events. In addition to attending the Spring District Meeting in April, we will be represented at the “Just for Women” event on April 26 at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. This will give women an opportunity to meet and greet hospital staff and have some good food followed by a keynote speaker. It is also a recruiting opportunity for Partners. On May 6 we will be honoring our volunteers with awards for those reaching certain levels of volunteer hours of service. We are trying a new format this spring. We will let you know how it is received. May 9-11 is our Second Grade Days. We are pleased that there have been in excess of 15 new members join Partners since the 55+ Expo in August of 2016. The Thrift Shop and Information Desk are fully staffed. The Gift Shop needs afternoon staff because many of our volunteers are intimidated by the cash register and closing out process at the end of the day. Lifeline could use more installers who also make service calls. In the March edition of the hospital newsletter, Partners of MMC were recognized for the Wish List fulfillments made at the end of 2016. Partners also doubled their contribution to the scholarship fund. The MMC Scholarship Committee requested additional help to fund the increase in the number of requests they have been receiving.

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

A warm memory: Snow is falling on the evergreens, the windows are frosted on the edges and Christmas is in the air. Christmas music drifts through the room, played by a volunteer at the organ. The Partners of Rusk County Memorial Hospital are having an old fashioned tea. The Christmas Tea is held every year for the residents of the adjoining Nursing Home and for the employees of our hospital. Tea and coffee are served from a silver tea service that dates back 50 years. Punch is also available from a glass punch bowl. The Partners come together with bars and cookies donated from our own kitchens. The entire Partners’ Board plus some additional members are on hand to start the Christmas season. The conversations are lively, the laughter is heard throughout the room and a feeling of good will is left in everyone’s heart as the day ends.

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

 We are having our Employee Appreciation Sale on April 7th, and it is always a great day! Our employees are very supportive of our shop. We are also holding our Style Show “Fishing for Fashions” on May 6th, and all monies are split between our Partners group funding for scholarships, the Alzheimer's Respite program , and Connections Thrift Store. It is a fun day and well attended by the community. We hope you can join us for the show!

**Patti Francesco – St. Mary’s Hospital Auxiliary, Superior**

Happy New Year!!! Hope everyone had a great holiday season. Here is an update of our Tree of Lights event that was held December 4, 2016. This was an awesome event. Students from the Superior area schools entered an essay contest describing who are the “Lights of Their Lives”. Seven winners were selected, and we presented them with plaques at the ceremony. The donations for the Tree of Lights to honor and thank loved ones raised $1,710, and the raffle tickets for drawings totaled $837. A look at our upcoming calendar of events will keep us pretty busy this year. On January 21, 2017, the volunteers held a belated Christmas luncheon at VIP Restaurant in Superior. It was a very nice afternoon which included eating, drawings for prizes and visiting. On March 7, 2017, a 50th Anniversary celebration in honor of Beverly Underdale was held. Bev became a volunteer on March 7, 1967 and has worked in the gift shop almost every Tuesday since then. Cake and coffee was served and many well wishers stopped in to congratulate Bev. CONGRATULATIONS BEV!!!! On Monday, March 13th, we held a Recognition Awards event. Pins were presented to various volunteers who have volunteer hours starting at 1000 hours. Refreshments will also be served. On Friday, March 24, we held our Annual Book, Bake and Popcorn Sale. This is always a successful fundraiser. I mean, who doesn’t love baked goods! This covers our first quarter, and we all enjoyed these fun events. The rest of the year is equally as busy, and I will keep you posted in upcoming newsletters. Have a great spring!

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

Since our Annual Meeting, which included Installation of Officers, our auxiliary has been planning our spring events. Committees are working on Mini Medic Days, the Babysitting Clinic, and our annual Salad Luncheon, the proceeds of which go towards scholarships. You are all invited! It will be on Wednesday, May 17th 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!

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT OFFICERS as of 3/22/2017**

CHAIR CHAIR-ELECT

Ginny Bosse Vacancy

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SECRETARY TREASURER

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LOCAL PRESIDENTS as of 3/22/2017

ASHLAND HAYWARD Co- Presidents

Linda Fish Carol Knudson Pam McClelland

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LADYSMITH PARK FALLS SHELL LAKE

Winnie Lee Ginny Bosse Linda King

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Beth Burnham Patti Francisco

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betheburnham@hotmail.com  patty.francisco@essentiahealth.org  **Term expires 12/17 Term expires 6/30/17**

 **Photo credit: BigFreePictures.com** It’s Cherry Blossom Festival Time! Spring will win the Tug-o-War!