

*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*

## A New Year: What New Opportunities Await?



Sharon Scott

Happy New Year! I am always in awe at just how quickly the holidays arrive and then “poof” it’s over. I hope your holidays were wonderful and a positive and enthusiastic perspective will follow you throughout 2024.

A few bold initiatives were undertaken by Partners leadership in 2023 and I am predicting this trend will continue in 2024. As difficult as change may be, perhaps a few small positive steps are the steadfast reminder of a “let’s try and we can do” attitude. Letting go of the past, yet building on that foundation is helping to implement the changes that are so needed within Partners at all levels—local, district and state.

So, what are some of those initiatives and how might they affect an individual Partners volunteer and the local organization?

- Significant discussion and process identified for the merger of two (2) districts.
- A Survey Monkey poll for convention changes and concerns identified great suggestions that will be implemented over the next few years.
- The wording that might best identify Partners’ description of “Member-at-Large” continues to be researched.

To answer how these initiatives affect us individually, I quote Henry Ford:

**“Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.**

Let’s not be afraid to change. “It is possible to change, if we have the belief we can.” I so believe that we have set the stage for significant positives and now the question before us is, “Are we ready, willing, and able to adapt to the challenges of change?” Opportunities are out there. Are you ready to embrace the belief we can change and work toward solutions? Are you ready for a few possible changes in 2024?

*(Continued on page 2)*

*A Message from the President-elect*

## Partners is Strongest When We Stand Together

Think of what we might accomplish if we continue to work together. Let’s make 2024 a year for increasing our membership and growing new leaders.

Many of our local Partners groups survived the damaging effects of COVID and are back to volunteering and functioning as normal. Yet there are others who continue to struggle with a lack of support from their health care organizations, cannot recruit members who wish to take on leadership roles and thus have dissolved their local group and cut their ties with Partners. As a state board we are discussing ways we can stop this disappointing and alarming trend.

We are currently helping Partners in the West Central and Northwestern Districts explore a possible merger due to declining local organization membership. Thank you to Mary Rose Willi and Donella Christianson for facilitating early discussions and establishing a timeline.

With the help of our WHA Liaison, Leigh Ann Larson, we are working on a plan to provide in-person education to state health care leaders on the value Partners can bring to their regional and local organizations.

We continue to brainstorm other ideas

*(Continued on page 2)*



Julie Steiner

### *A Message from the President...continued from page 1*

- Discussions regarding increasing member dues...\$2.50 per person
- District reimbursement from state doubling...\$.50 per district member
- Convention registration increasing...\$170 (cash or check), \$175 (Credit Card)

The basic premise for our bold initiatives is COURAGE—to continue identifying challenges, making those necessary changes, and seizing opportunities with an open mind. What may await us down the road is a bolder, brighter, and more progressive organization that simply empowered itself to become more sustainable through an optimistic vision full of possibilities.

2024 is an election year for Partners. Our Immediate Past President Peg Larson and her Nominating Committee are tasked with formulating a slate of officers—President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer—that will be accepted and elected during our October convention. Many of you heard Tom Thibodeau, keynote speaker during convention, enhance our understanding and perspective on the topic “Servant Leadership.” His message resonates with the spirit for perpetuating strong leadership within our Partners organization. The criteria for filing a nomination application form can be found on the Partner’s website—take a chance on yourself and step up to help lead this wonderful organization.

As I close this first message of the new year, I am genuinely excited for what lies ahead with Partners. The board of directors will hold its spring meeting in February with a significantly modified agenda. We will be welcoming the participation of WADVS Co-Presidents - Liz Juern and Marcia Rupp. I’m extremely excited to have Julie Steiner, President-elect join me as we embark on the annual Spring Tour beginning April 3. I am hoping to announce some significant changes to the W.A.V.E. award application process in the spring newsletter. I am encouraging everyone to submit any questions/concerns that we can address in upcoming issues of Reaching Out. Please address the questions to me and I will forward them to the appropriate committee for discussion and answering. Always be comfortable in contacting any of the Partners leadership team with questions, concerns, or solutions to any and all issues regarding Partners volunteers.

Thank you, Partners, for continuing to place your trust and confidence in me. Together we make positive differences.

*Sharon Scott*

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### *A Message from the President-Elect... cont'd. from page 1*

that we hope will bring about positive change for Partners. As you review the Strategic Planning column in this issue of Reaching Out, take note of the changes being discussed for Convention 2024 and beyond. There are additional goals that we continue to work on. These changes and discussion topics come from input obtained from all of you. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, concerns, and positive feedback. Please continue to do so. Sharon and I look forward to speaking with you all during Spring Tour.

*Julie Steiner, Partners President-elect*

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## Spring Tour Schedule

During the month of April, Partners President Sharon Scott and President-elect Julie Steiner will travel our beautiful state attending district meetings. To be efficient and financially responsible, the meetings have been grouped according to their respective locations.

<u>Date</u>	<u>District/Location</u>
Wed., April 3	Southern District, Beloit
Thurs., April 4	Western District, Prairie du Chien
Wed., April 10	Southeastern District, Menomonee Falls
Thurs., April 11	Lakes District, Waupaca
Wed., April 24	Northwestern and West Central Districts, Ladysmith
Thurs., April 25	North Central District, Wausau

## Plan to Attend WHA's Advocacy Day, March 20

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) is known for its superior government relations results and impactful advocacy on behalf of its members. The annual WHA Advocacy Day, bringing together nearly 1,000 hospital advocates from across the state to Madison, is designed to educate and motivate health care employees, trustees, and volunteers on important health care-related issues and to encourage grassroots advocacy opportunities. This year, Advocacy Day will be held on Wednesday, March 20 at the Monona Terrace.

During this event, featured national speakers give timely insight into state and federal health care issues, and participating in state legislative visits allows attendees to advocate on behalf of their hospitals.

WHA encourages and invites hospital CEOs, CFOs, managers, nurse executives, quality managers, hospital volunteers, hospital trustees, WHA HEAT grassroots members, Partners of WHA members, WHA corporate members and any other hospital staff interested in helping to shape the future of health care in Wisconsin communities to attend.

Attend this complimentary, in-person event on Wednesday, March 20. While there is no registration fee to participate in Advocacy Day, pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, visit [www.wha.org/AD-2](http://www.wha.org/AD-2).



## A New Year – An Opportunity to be Courageous



Leigh Ann Larson

I hope 2024 has been good to you thus far and that everyone is staying warm. The changing weather, from 50 degrees on Christmas Day to -25 wind chill just three weeks later, has been challenging. Yet, we know that this change must occur for spring to come and new growth to bloom.

Change can be difficult and uncomfortable. It is none the less necessary to grow and evolve. Partners, like many organizations in the world today, are learning to be “comfortable with the uncomfortable,” knowing that change must occur to move forward and continue to be a valuable and thriving resource to our hospitals and patients. My grandfather used to say to me “Don’t let the feeling of discomfort stop you from doing what is right.” His voice is always in the back of

my head when I feel like retreating to the old way of doing things simply because that is what I know and what is more comfortable. Another quote that sticks with me is:

*“...we need to cultivate the courage to be uncomfortable and to teach the people around us how to accept discomfort as a part of growth.” - Brené Brown*

The word in this quote that stands out to me is **Courage**. That is really what it is all about, isn’t it? To be courageous, even in the face of uncertainty and newness. I look forward to the changes that 2024 will bring and ask you to have courage to look at those changes as positive, hopeful, and necessary in order to enjoy the bloom of spring.

Leigh Ann S. Larson

WHA Vice President of Education and Marketing; Executive Director of the WHA Foundation; Partners of WHA Liaison  
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A Message from the Immediate Past President

## Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates



Peg Larson

*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy.  
I woke and saw that life was service,  
So, I acted and behold, service was joy!"*

- from Rabindranath Tagore (Nobel Laureate in Literature – 1913)

For those who experience joy through service, joining the leadership of Partners of WHA is an opportunity to expand your horizons while helping to provide educational and networking opportunities to your fellow health care volunteers. In October 2024 we will elect a new President-elect, Secretary and Treasurer. There are also other board positions to fill. In addition, all our districts are looking for leaders.

Volunteer organizations need new perspectives to continue our work. Partners has planned progressions and mentors to help those new leaders be comfortable in their roles. Please consider committing your talents to help Partners continue to provide opportunities to health care volunteers.

The Nominating Committee of Partners of WHA is seeking candidates to represent all members of the organization in the offices of President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominations for these three offices will be accepted until March 15, 2024. Candidates must be a member of Partners of WHA, have served on the Partners of WHA State Board for at least one year, be able to attend two Board of Directors meetings per year and attend the Partners annual convention.

Nominations need to be submitted by March 15, 2024, to Peg Larson, chair of the Nominating Committee. Election and installation of new officers will be held at the Partners annual convention in October.

Nominations must include the nomination form and a maximum 200-word statement of the nominee's reason for seeking a position. Information and nomination forms are posted on the Partners of WHA website, [www.partnersofwha.org](http://www.partnersofwha.org). Consult the Partners website or a member of the nominating committee (Peg Larson, Julie Steiner, Ramona Hornischer, Bev Lazar, or Mary Rose Willi) with questions or additional information.

Send a completed nomination form, a maximum 200-word statement of the nominee's reason for seeking a position, and a photo to: Peg Larson, Partners of WHA Immediate Past President, 110 Stoney Beach Road, Oshkosh, WI 54902.

Thank you for your dedication to the health of your community!

Peg Larson, Immediate Past President

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

## Save the Dates: Convention 2024, Oct. 1-3

Save the dates of October 1-3, 2024 for "Volunteers-Diamonds in the Rough." We will gather again at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn and Conference Center to enjoy our time together. Plan to attend some educational workshops and listen to enlightening speakers. More information will be forthcoming in future *Reaching Out* newsletters. Start making plans to attend!

Sheree Schaefer  
Convention Chair



## Report from Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee continues to review convention planning, process, and structure. Members of the committee participated in a recent Zoom meeting to discuss the results of the online survey done in Fall 2023, as well as the comments from the 2023 Spring District meetings and October 2023 Partners convention. Some of the suggestions/discussion points considered for the 2024 convention were:

- Have vendors at convention for one day for better use of time. Possibly set up on Wednesday morning, open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and have the cocktail party in the vendor area so attendees could shop while networking.
- Have two workshop sessions on Wednesday afternoon (like 1:45 - 3 and 3:15 - 4:30).
- Present WAVE awards at the Wednesday luncheon
- Find a closing speaker that brings us back to health care and why we volunteer in health care.
- Potentially have networking workshops focused on specific topics on Thursday morning prior to the closing speaker.
- Find a different solution for where the CHE and PPE meetings are held so that they have their own spaces.
- Betty and John did an excellent job on meals at 2023 convention.

The committee will continue working on the other goals at the February 2024 board meeting. These include: (1) discussion and written guidelines when/if combining districts becomes necessary, and (2) discussion and formulation of an amendment to the bylaws regarding single membership in Partners if the volunteer organization that that person belongs to is no longer a member of Partners. This would need to be presented in two newsletters before being voted on by members of Partners at the next membership meeting (Convention 2024).

*Terri Donlin and Sherry Jelic*  
Co-chairs of Partners of WHA Strategic Planning Committee



### Power of Connection Continues

#### ***Unlocking the Door to Human Behavior – The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator***

More than 86 individuals registered for the most recent “Power of Connection” webinar on Jan. 16.

The webinar was sponsored by the Midwest Regional Collaboration, a committee of volunteers and auxiliaries from Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The topic, “Unlocking the Door to Human Behavior – The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator” was presented by Leigh Ann Larson, Vice-President of Education and Marketing at WHA and our Partners of WHA Liaison.

The Myers-Briggs® Type Indicator (MBTI) is the world’s premier personality assessment tool. Rooted in research by Carl Jung and then further tested and validated by Katherine Briggs and daughter Isabel Briggs Myers, the MBTI identifies the hard-wired personality preferences we are all born with. It explores how those preferences are presented to the world and how we develop our opposite preferences. Used in personal and professional life, the MBTI is a framework for achieving greater self-awareness and self-management. It supports effective communication, leadership, and team development.

Leigh Ann’s presentation introduced us to this powerful tool that can help us understand and manage ourselves as we work with others. She explained that this assessment offers a powerful lens that can explain the nuances of why we do what we do.

I would encourage you to click on the link below and listen to the webinar [recording](#) if you were unable to participate in the live event. It may be accessed on the Iowa Hospital Association Auxiliary/Volunteer [website](#). ***Scroll halfway down from the top*** to the “2024 and Previous Year Educational Opportunities” section to access the recording, chat, and Leigh Ann’s presentation.

[Recording - Power of Connection - Unlocking the door to human behavior - The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\) Webinar and Presentation](#)

*Julie Steiner*  
Partners President-elect

## Public Policy Education Report

### *Continuing Impacts on Wisconsin 340B Hospitals*

Wisconsin has roughly 20 critical access hospitals which are continually impacted by health care public policy, most recently the outrageous drug pricing to consumers and reimbursements to regional 340B pharmacies.

According to articles in WHA's *The Valued Voice* newsletter in June of last year, the U.S. Supreme Court had decided in favor of this same group of critical access hospitals. Historically, in 2018, the Outpatient Prospective Payment System, a function of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) cut payments of about \$40 million annually to around 20 Wisconsin 340B hospitals. After some bouncing around, this case came before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that HHS had acted unlawfully because the federal statute does not give HHS authority to create different payment rates for different types of hospitals unless it first surveys hospitals to determine their average acquisition costs.



*Bill McCullough*

HHS attempted to survey hospitals amid the 2020 litigation but did not do so prior to the financial cuts to hospitals in 2018. Unfortunately, the court did not lay out a remedy for repayment to 340B hospitals, but instead, to remand the case for further proceedings consistent with their opinion. That deadline was set by HHS to be September 5, 2023.

On July 7, 2023, HHS released its proposed remedy for paying back the 340B hospitals sums paid at the beginning of 2018. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is proposing to pay back those impacted hospitals in a single sum. From 2018 to 2022, the budget neutral process had to offset higher payments received by the non-340B hospitals and proposed to offset those higher payments over a period of 16 years into the future. WHA joined the American Hospital Association and other hospital groups in urging CMS to hold non-340B hospitals harmless in recouping those payments. WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding wrote, "Hospitals were not responsible for CMS's decision to make their prior unlawful payment cuts and they should not be penalized for the decision of CMS." WHA also noted that CMS had no legal basis for recouping payments that had already gone out, based on prior years' payment rules. Unfortunately, CMS proposed to reduce the outpatient payments to those non-340B hospitals for 16 years until the full amount of 340B repayments are offset.

The deadline to offer comments on this proposed remedy by HHS was September 5, 2023. Finally, on November 2, 2023, HHS issued its final rule outlining its remedy. HHS will repay those impacted 340B hospitals in one lump sum payment in the first quarter of 2024. Those non-340B hospitals who had received the larger payments will be required to make repayment over the next 16 years.

I apologize for this rather technical summary. I have done so with the intent to shine a light on the important role WHA plays in the massive intricacies and analysis employed to ensure quality and fair health care for Wisconsin residents.

*Bill McCullough, PPE Chair*  
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*"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."*

*~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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# Community Health Education Report

## *Bipolar Disorder Basics*



Cindy Hermel

Bipolar disorder (BP) is a chronic, relapsing illness characterized by recurrent episodes of manic behavior or depressive symptoms with intervals that are relatively symptom free. The onset of bipolar disorder usually occurs during adolescence or in early adulthood. Bipolar disorder has a lifelong impact on patients' overall health, quality of life and day-to-day functioning.

Diagnosed cases of bipolar disorder are rising among adults and children. According to research reviewed by Joseph Blader and Gabrielle Carlson, bipolar disorder-related hospitalizations are more frequent among adults and female adolescents. Male children show a higher risk for bipolar disorder than female children. Children's bipolar diagnoses usually are more general and not reflective of a prevailing mood state. Adults' bipolar disorder diagnoses are based on outward depressive and psychotic behaviors.

There are two major types of bipolar disorder, Bipolar I and Bipolar II. Bipolar I is defined by episodes of depression along with episodes of mania, while Bipolar II is characterized by episodes of depression and hypomania. The main difference between the two types is the severity of the manic symptoms. Full mania causes severe functional impairment and can include symptoms of psychosis, often requiring hospitalization. Hypomania, on the other hand, is not severe enough to cause marked impairment in social or occupational functioning and rarely requires hospitalization.

Bipolar disorder (BP) has a big economic impact on United States health care. The estimated direct cost of bipolar disorder, according to *The Economic Burden of Bipolar Disorder in the United States (2020)*, including inpatient care, outpatient care, pharmaceuticals, and community care is \$50.9 billion. In addition, the negative impact of bipolar disorder on functioning and quality of life results in indirect healthcare costs from loss of employment, loss of productivity, sick leave, and uncompensated care totaling \$158.5 billion. Bipolar disorder treatment is one of the costliest of all mental health conditions. This is the result of the need for frequent hospital stays for BP patients.

The diagnosis is complicated when the patient's initial presentation includes depressive symptoms which is true for 50% of the BP patient population. Up to 70% of patients diagnosed with BP have been initially misdiagnosed. Delayed identification of BP can result in poor clinical outcomes and increased costs. Delay in diagnosis is a specific problem for women with BP type II since the symptoms of hypomania may not be readily apparent. In addition, misdiagnosis during the postpartum period is common and women originally diagnosed with postpartum depression may be diagnosed with BP at a later time.

Treatment for BP is often conventional mood stabilizers such as lithium, valproate, lamotrigine, and carbamazepine. Lithium has been the primary treatment for BP for over 60 years. Its effect on bipolar disorder depression is limited and it does not have rapid affect in reducing acute mania. However, lithium is the only drug proved to reduce the risk of suicide in patients with BP. Sodium valproate is the most commonly used mood stabilizer for patients with BP. It can be paired with lithium to treat patients needing maintenance therapy. There is some controversy over the use of antidepressants to treat bipolar disorder. When antidepressants are prescribed, specific protocols are followed to gradually taper the dosage slowly after remission of depression.

An obstacle in the successful treatment of bipolar disorder is the patient's willingness to take prescribed medications as directed. It is not uncommon for bipolar disorder patients to stop taking medication when their symptoms lessen and/or disappear.

Cindy Hermel, Community Health Education Chair

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## Around the State



*Aspirus Wausau Volunteers*

**Aspirus Wausau Volunteers** celebrated the 40th Anniversary of their Lifeline program. The group has been providing Lifeline as a service to Marathon County communities. Attending an event recognizing the program were: Curtis Barthel, Lifeline volunteer; Susan Prah, Lifeline Coordinator; Bev Kordus, former Lifeline assistant; Paul Dobbratz, Lifeline volunteer; Andy Barth, Aspirus VP & Chief Operating Officer; Yo Voigt,

Director of Aspirus Volunteers & Guest Services; Polly Zwolensky, Lifeline representative.

**Aspirus Merrill Volunteers** hosted another successful Yuletide Ladies Night Out fundraising event. Funds raised from the bow-making/wreath decorating workshop are used to provide clothing for individuals who come to their emergency room after an accident. This event received a 2023 WAVE.



*Aspirus Merrill Hospital Volunteers*

**Ripon Community Hospital Auxiliary** donated \$6,128 for the purchase of a Sit-to-Stand lift unit and \$4,000 for a table retractor for interior hip surgeries for Ripon Community Hospital.

**Partners of Marshfield Medical Center – Ladysmith** funded the \$1,500 purchase of a Powerstep unit for the Rusk County Ambulance Service. The Powerstep extends outward and downward, providing an important “in-between” step that makes it easier to get in and out of the patient module of the ambulance.

**The Ascension Mercy Hospital Volunteer Board** presents the Ascension Foundation with their annual donation. Pictured are Dan Woolf, Sue Boerschinger, Debbie Seekings, Sue Knobloch and Lisa Peters.



*Ascension Mercy Hospital Volunteers*

### Reaching Out Deadlines

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
May 2024	Friday, April 12, 2024
August 2024	Friday, July 12, 2024
November 2024	Friday, Oct. 11, 2024
February 2025	Friday, Jan. 10, 2025

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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