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## Happy Spring (or am I delusional?)

### District Meeting



Having just returned from the North Central Spring District meeting, I have to admit that even though outside it was raining, damp and gloomy, inside 77 volunteers and auxiliary members were enjoying good company, timely information and some good laughs. Ramona Hornischer, Kathy Steckel and members of the Ministry Good Samaritan Health Center hosted an outstanding meeting. We would like to thank our state officers, Sue Lynch, President; Bonnie Olson, President-Elect; Diane Westbrook, Public Policy Chair; and Gloria Sparacino, Health Education Chair for attending and explaining some of the activities at the state level.

Sue Lynch stated they are in the process of putting together a DVD and new brochure to highlight what we do at Partners. The Partners website is undergoing major revisions and is being updated. Go to [www.partnersofwha.org](http://www.partnersofwha.org) to check on the progress.

Bonnie Olson spoke about the importance of COMMUNICATION. Bonnie stated that "COMMUNICATION IS A TWO WAY STREET and can only take place when there is dialogue going both ways". John Powell said "Communication works for those who work at it." Please acknowledge emails when you receive them – if only with a "yes" or "ok, got it".

Diane Westbrook stressed how the sequester cuts are costing millions of dollars and that we need to advocate for our hospitals. She reminded us that Advocacy Day is April 23, in Madison and don't forget to wear red, white and blue.

Gloria Sparacino, presented facts and warning signs for dementia. She stated that there is a wealth of information at the Alzheimer's Association website ([alz.org](http://alz.org)).

Each of the local presidents reported on happenings within their local district. A few highlights are:

**Antigo** (Langlade Hospital Auxiliary): they are very excited about the new hospital and fund-raisers which includes pie socials and bake sales.

**Eagle River** (Ministry Eagle River Memorial Hospital): is proud of the fact that even though they are a very small hospital, they welcomed 11 new members which brought their membership to 145.

**Marshfield** (Partner's with St. Josephs Hospital): explained the "Mother's Day Art Fair." Last year, to honor their 50th anniversary, a four panel stained glass piece was made with each panel depicting some items representing the organization and the programs they support.

**Medford** (Memorial Health Center Volunteers): discussed how they increased the turn out for the lighting of the Lites of Love by having 4th graders write and read their essays about what the local hospital means to them.

**Merrill** (Ministry Good Samaritan Health Center): explained how they are purchasing a "dementia/Alzheimer's curtain". There are two types of curtains – one for calming and one for super active. The information provided sounded very interesting and hopefully many of us may be able to view it at some time in the future.

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**Rhineland** (Volunteers of Ministry Saint Mary's Hospital): described the "The HODAG MASH". It is a community blood drive taken from the television program MASH – complete with army tents and jeeps.

**Wausau** (Aspirus Wausau Hospital): explained that this year marked the 10th anniversary of the Aspirus Volunteers EZ Rider Program. Since its inception, forty four EZ rider drivers have provided assistance and service to 73,562 patients and visitors to the hospital.

**Wisconsin Rapids** (Riverview Hospital): introduced the audience to a new project they are working on. This spring they will be presenting "Kitchen Prescriptions" a tour of kitchens in Wisconsin Rapids. The event will include narrated tours and a luncheon with selection from the Auxiliary cookbook, "Recipes from the Heart". This sounds exciting and hopefully some of us will be able to attend.

**Woodruff** (Auxiliary of Howard Young Medical Center) explained the Howard Young Art Gallery. In the program's first year over 64 artworks were sold through the Gift Shop. The Gift Shop receives a commission on each piece sold and the funds are used to support programs the auxiliary supports. The current exhibition "Thinking Spring – Flowers" runs through May 14th so if you are in the area stop in and view the spring flowers.

Our guest speaker, Mr. Charles Schoenfeld, author of "A Funny Thing Happened on My Way to the Dementia Ward" shared his stories of working with individuals with dementia. He provided insights that many of us may be dealing with on a personal level. Mr. Schoenfeld, stated that he believes there are four main points to remember. The points are:

*"Alzheimer's is not contagious but ignorance of it is."*

*"The gift of time to someone who can never repay you is food for the soul."*

*"Remember it's often the simplest pleasures that matter most."*

*"No matter how small the task, never underestimate the significance it may hold for others."*

So, as you can see it was a very full day. We had a chance to visit with friends, had a great lunch and raffle prizes and beautiful flowers were given away. Thanks to all for attending and participating in the meeting and to Merrill for hosting the delightful day.



### Community Health Education

By: Audrey Noland, CHE Chair

As stated previously, our 2013 Community Health Project will address Dementia and Alzheimers. Here are some statistics about Alzheimer's disease:

- It is the most common type of dementia caused by damage to nerves in the brain.
- Someone develops Alzheimer's disease every 69 seconds.
- An estimated 5.4 million people in the United States are living with Alzheimer's.
- By the year 2050 as many as 16 million will have the disease.
- The cost of care in 2012 was \$200 billion and is projected to increase at a rapid rate.
- There are no vaccinations or cures for the disease and no way to stop the process.

You can take steps to help prevent the disease by:

- Knowing your family history because genetics do have a role in whether or not someone gets the disease.
- Controlling your blood pressure, sugar intake and weight.
- Eating a healthy diet including eating fish once a week.
- Exercising your brain by reading and doing puzzles such as word search, crosswords and Sudoku.

## Northcentral District Newsletter

### Convention

Because the North Central and Northwestern Districts are hosting this years convention and you have all been so diligently working on your committees to provide the best convention possible, it seems redundant to say but:

**The 2013 Partners of WHA convention will be held October 8-10th at the Kalahari in the Dells.**

Planning a state wide event is not an easy task. However, our district has extremely dedicated TEAM members who have taken on the tasks and are working diligently to assure that this year's convention will be the best that it can be. The theme is "Hit a Home Run" and we will need additional "TEAM" players to help in different areas at the convention. Please plan on attending and "pitching" in when needed.

Each district will again be responsible for providing a basket as a raffle item. Barb Pavloski and Susie Dempse from Wisconsin Rapids are chairing the raffle committee. Like last year, each local is to provide something made in their area. When you have acquired your item, please let one of us know and arrangements will be made to pick up the articles. Barb and Susie have agreed to assemble the basket so we will be all set for the convention.

While at the convention we will plan on having a district chair meeting. This will give us a chance to chat about things that are working well and any common concerns we might have within the district. So, district chairs, please plan on a short meeting – date and time still to come.

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### Reports

Gay and I would like to thank the local officers, PPE and CHE chairs for completing all reports and getting them in on time. As we looked at the results, we were amazed at all the time, money and projects provided by our district organizations. Here is a summary of the reports from our district and a total from the 8 district in the state.

|                              | North Central District          | State          |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| # of members in organization | 1295 (volunteers & auxiliaries) | 10,034         |
| Hours reported               | 207,901.09                      | 1,396,600      |
| Money given                  | \$246,996.01                    | \$2,180,946.00 |
| Scholarships given           | 91                              | 473            |
| Scholarship money given      | \$77,000.00                     | \$468,563.00   |

Our numbers indicate that even though we are a small district we accomplish much and can be very proud of all we give to our communities.

### Awards

WAVE and the Best of the Best awards will again be presented at the convention in October. Having been at many district meetings we know that your local organization has numerous outstanding projects and services. We also feel that many of you have an administrator that you are very proud of. Now is your chance to showcase your projects and administrators. Our district has been fortunate to have received WAVE and Best of the Best awards in the past. How wonderful it would be if all 9 local districts would submit entries for the WAVE and Best of the Best. Forms for the WAVE and Best of the Best can be found at [www.partnersofwha.org](http://www.partnersofwha.org). If you have any questions as to completing the forms please do not hesitate to contact one of us and we will try to get you the information you need.



### Communication

Communication is very important. When you receive an email please respond even it is just "yes, I received it." By doing this we will know that everyone is kept current. Also, please be sure to inform us if you are having special events. We would love to attend or recognize them and share the information with others.

## Northcentral District Newsletter

### Public Policy Education

By: Cindy Hermel, District PPE Chair

As the world turns so turns national and state public policy issues, debate and decisions. In real estate location, location, location is critical. In public policy information, information, information is the key. How fortunate are we to have access to WHA's Advocacy Day and its opportunities to learn, question and discuss major issues affecting our hospitals and our health care. As the North Central District spring newsletter goes to press we are registering and making travel plans to attend the April 23 Advocacy Day. As always it will be interesting, informative and fun.

The Sequester has gone into effect and is affecting Wisconsin hospitals to the tune of two million dollars each week through the 2% Medicare cuts. These reductions come on top of the mandatory cuts already included in the Affordable Health Care Act. The WHA continues to actively advocate for Wisconsin hospitals and health care for our citizens.

There has been much activity, interest and debate surrounding aspects of Governor Scott Walker's budget proposal. A bipartisan task force on mental health has been established. There is agreement that many individuals affected by mental illness are disadvantaged by public policy that has led to a fragmented mental health system and barriers to holistic and coordinated care integrating both physiological and psychological health. In addition outdated laws can perpetuate stigma and prevent coordinated care. Discussion

continues regarding Wisconsin's mental health records law and how it can be changed to facilitate more effective and coordinated care.

The Governor's proposed Medicaid budget has generated lively debate and interest. A provision reducing eligibility for Medicaid to 100% of the federal poverty level (\$11,500/year) is getting the most attention. This provision requires all individuals above the poverty line, including those currently eligible for Medicaid, to access coverage through a federal health insurance exchange. Major concerns include potential levels of uncompensated care by health care providers if previous Medicaid enrollees do not connect with and retain coverage in the exchange. Debate will continue. Look for HEAT alerts regarding this provision as more information emerges.

The North Central District currently has over 130 HEAT members through our volunteer organizations. In 2012 one hundred two individuals contacted our state and federal legislators by phone while over 230 people shared their public policy positions and perspectives with our state and federal representatives by email. Thank you for your time and efforts to advocate for our hospitals and communities. Let's aim to increase HEAT membership in each of our local volunteer organizations and to increase the number of communications to our state and federal legislators in 2013.



### Mark your Calendar

- **State WHA Convention**  
**October 8-10**  
Wisconsin Dells, WI
- **Fall District Meeting**  
**October 23**  
Rhineland, WI

In this fast paced world that we live in, we often forget how very fortunate we are and how thankful we should be. By volunteering, you are sharing yourself with the world and providing care, love and joy to the people whose lives you touch. A simple smile, a kind word, and extra few minutes spent visiting is sometimes all that is needed to brighten someone's day. The world is "ours" to be thankful for and to make better for everyone. Gay and I are very thankful for each of you and your dedication to the district and your communities.