

# Friends of VMH

Vernon Memorial Healthcare, Viroqua

May 2024

## Update from Your President

Happy Spring!! This year has been full of fantastic energy and enthusiasm within Friends. We have had successful events and interesting meetings with



Kathryn Anderson

guest speakers. Our guest speakers shared details of new services in their departments and how financial support provided by Friends of VMH has impacted patient care.

Barb Webb, Manager of Imaging Services spoke about the new 3D Mammography machine. We learned about the importance of screenings in the detection of breast cancer.

Michelle Nelson, Manager of OB Services, expressed gratitude for the labor and delivery beds that Friends aided in purchasing. She noted that the diaper bags that are gifted by Friends were given to three families who were very appreciative of our generosity. VMH has two new Family Practice-OB providers starting in August 2024, exciting additions to the VMH staff.

Anna Thompson, Registered Dietician, was a popular guest speaker when she



The Bistro Bus

brought the teaching kitchen to the meeting. The mobile kitchen, The Bistro Bus, had neat features like

a refrigerator, hot plate, and mixer and is used for classes for people with diabetes. Anna explained the various services that the dietary staff offer such as an ala carte menu for patients in the hospital. The homemade meals receive much praise from patient surveys.

We learned a great deal about VMH lab services in the hospital and clinics from Kim

Harther, Manager of Labs. She extended a thank you for the funding to support the



VMH lab staff with the new Lyme's Analyzer

purchase of a Lyme's Analyzer to process Lyme disease testing in house.

Every spring Wisconsin deals with unpredictable weather. Nicole Robinson, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, shared details on how to be ready at home in the event of an emergency such as access to water, power, medications, and food. She also brought to light the need to have a plan for your pets.

The May meeting will have Jessica Dominy, Supervisor of Cardiopulmonary Diagnostics and Rehab as the speaker. We are looking forward to hearing some great heart healthy tips.

## President Update continued

We had Nutman sales, bake sales, 50/50 raffles and gift shop open house activities. We supported Toys for Tots and purchased supplies for local schools. We receive many notes of gratitude for these supplies. We decorated the front entrance of the hospital in November for Lovelights sales. In May, we have our Geranium and Memorial Day Flag sales. During Hospital Week, we will help supply baked goods for the employee and volunteer meal. Let's not forget the seamstresses who work behind the scenes to make burp cloths and bibs for newborns. We attended Advocacy Day and the Western District Spring Meeting.

I hope that your summer is filled with healthy adventures and kindness. I am certain I am forgetting something or someone in this letter! Please know that all efforts and leadership provided by each one of you is very much appreciated!

### Friends of VMH Geranium Sale

Friday, May 17, 2024

6:30 am to 3:30 pm

Held outside the Vernon Memorial Hospital entrance.

Hanging baskets will also be available for purchase.

Cash or check accepted.

Thanks to Hardy Vines for their support of this fundraiser.



Proceeds help support a scholarship program and VMH Programs & Services.



Spring Western District Meeting Attendees from Viroqua, LaCrosse, Prairie du Chien, Richland Center, Black River Falls and Lancaster.

## Community Health Education



by Romelle Heisel  
CHE Chair

Stress is a common condition for millions of people. There are a number of things individuals can do to deal with stress and enhance mental health. First and foremost, staying physically healthy can maintain and/or improve one's mental well-being. The CDC recommends eating a healthy diet including fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains; getting seven or more hours of sleep each night; and maintaining a regular exercise routine.

Meditation is an effective tool to deal with stress. According to Melanie Greenberg, author of *The Stress-Proof Brain*, meditation can recondition your brain to become more stress tolerant over time. Stress can cause increased levels of cortisol in the body causing inflammation. This can disrupt sleep, promote anxiety and/or depression, increase blood pressure and contribute to fatigue. Research studies show eight weeks of mindfulness meditation led to noticeable improvements

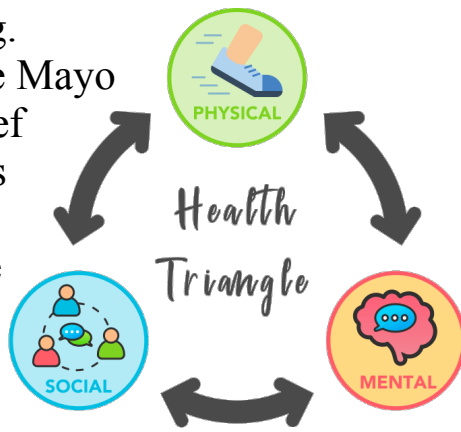
## CHE Report continued

in stress and anxiety levels.

Maintaining relationships and connecting with people is important to both one's physical and mental health. The Cleveland Clinic advises staying connected with people who you enjoy, make you happy, provide emotional support and give you a sense of belonging.

According to the Mayo Clinic "Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke." a good laugh can increase your intake of oxygen which stimulates many body organs resulting in a flow of endorphins making you feel more relaxed. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress. While negative thinking creates chemical reactions in the body which increase stress and weaken the immune system, positive thoughts and laughter can release neuropeptides that help combat stress enhancing the immune response.

Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health. According to **HelpGuide.org** volunteering helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety. The social contact helping and working with others can have a huge impact on one's psychological well-being. Nothing relieves stress better than a meaningful connection with another person. Researchers have studies measuring hormones and brain activity indicating that helping others provides a sense of satisfaction and pleasure to the volunteer.



Volunteering often results in increased self-confidence and provides a sense of purpose. Whatever one's age or situation, volunteering can take your mind off your problems and keep you mentally stimulated.

Stress is a part of modern life. Awareness of these strategies provides one the tools to manage stress symptoms and lessen the emotional load that can affect both physical and mental health. Let's nurture relationships with family and friends, laugh every day, volunteer frequently, meditate often, and stay active.



The Friends of VMH are holding a fundraiser May 2-24 to honor and remember Veterans this Memorial Day.



**Vernon Memorial Healthcare was founded in 1951 in memory of veterans.**

With a \$1.00 donation, you can purchase a paper flag to honor or memorialize someone special. Paper flags will be displayed in the VMH hospital lobby during the month of May. With a \$5.00 donation, you can honor someone with a cloth flag that will be displayed on the VMH grounds for Memorial Day.

**Stop by the VMH Gift Shop in the hospital lobby to honor someone with a flag.**

Proceeds raised will be used by the Friends of VMH to help provide needed medical equipment and supplies locally.



# Public Policy Education

by Trudy Wallin



“Two out of three patients receiving care in Wisconsin hospitals are covered by either Medicare or Medicaid. Both the federal Medicare and the state administrated Medicaid programs underfund Wisconsin hospitals, causing a cost shift onto everyone else who receives care at a hospital.” This statement along with five or six other statements regarding issues facing Wisconsin hospitals, is familiar to us. Reimbursement, workforce challenges, and licensure reform are topics we have heard about for years along with other issues that WHA champion for Wisconsin hospitals.

We all recognize the importance of WHA’s efforts on behalf of small and large hospitals in Wisconsin. We can also recognize the importance of Vernon Memorial Healthcare’s presence in Viroqua and we also know that VMH faces these challenges like all hospitals.

Each of us can do our part in supporting the efforts of WHA on behalf of VMH by joining H.E.A.T. (Health Education and Advocacy Team). Those of us that are members of H.E.A.T. can attest that we receive no barrage of emails as a result of signing up. Please go to the site WHA.org and become a member of H.E.A.T. to lend your support.



Partners of WHA State CHE Chair, Cindy Hermel; State PPE Chair, Bill McCullough and State President-elect, Julie Steiner joined WHA in Washington D.C. in April to lobby our Wisconsin Congressional delegation on legislative issues affecting Wisconsin hospitals.



Donna Nelson, Romelle Heisel, Kathryn Anderson, Julie Steiner, Janelle Cisneros, Trudy Wallin, JoAnn VonRuden and Bonnie Rath at Advocacy Day 2024 in Madison.

## Friends of VMH Coulee Scrubs SCRUB SALE

Thursday, June 6th, 2024

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Medical Office Building  
Lower-level Conference Room D  
Public welcome

(Cash, checks and cards accepted).

The Friends of VMH are hosting a Coulee Scrubs sale fundraiser with a percentage of sales supporting their scholarship program.

The program assists students pursuing careers in the healthcare industry.

Thank you for supporting  
The Friends of VMH

