From the director, Lori Van Lin

As this newsletter reaches you, the holiday season is behind us and we have embarked on a new year—2017! Volunteer Services and Gundersen Partners, the Health System Auxiliary, experienced many transitions last year and look forward to new changes this year.

Maria Runde completed her two-year tenure as Partners president the end of last year. The presidency transitioned to Mary Jo Klos on Jan. 1. We are deeply grateful to Maria for her leadership and dedication and look forward to Mary Jo’s guidance of the Partners organization.

As of 2017, Volunteer Services and Partners report to a new administrative vice president, Mike McKee, RN, BSN, MBA. Mike has been with Gundersen for 26 years and previously held the position of administrative director of Neurosciences. He has had a variety of positions in his career at Gundersen Health System including leadership roles for Emergency Services, MedLink AIR, Specialty Care Transport and Urgent Care; and staff nurse positions in the Critical Care Unit, the Operating Room and with MedLink AIR. Mike will partner with P. Michael Jacobs, DPM, medical vice president for Team 2.

As we move forward we will continue to be challenged to excel at serving our patients and families, communities and each other. Your involvement will be even more important and appreciated. Wishing each of you a happy, healthy 2017!

*My thanks, Lori*

Updates, tidbits and helpful reminders:

When delivering items into patients’ rooms, whether it’s flowers, patient belongings, something from the Gift Shop, etc., please remember the three Rs: **Right room, Right delivery, Right patient.** If you are unsure, because the patient isn’t in the room, please ask the nursing staff for assistance.

“**Kindness is the language the blind can see and the deaf can hear.**”

— Mark Twain
Tis' the season to be cautious. When the chilly season arrives and we begin to gather in shopping malls, viruses spread. This can happen just as easily on our healthcare campus. To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, including influenza, the following infection control measures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) should be implemented at the first point of contact with a potentially infected person.

1. Visual alerts
Gundersen Health System has posted visual alerts at the entrance to all facilities (e.g., emergency departments, physician offices, outpatient clinics) instructing patients and persons who accompany them (family, friends) to inform healthcare personnel of symptoms of a respiratory infection when they first register for care and to practice Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette. Signage encourages visitors to cover their cough and use proper hand hygiene.

2. Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette
The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.
   • Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
   • Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
   • Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Our facilities have ensured the availability of materials for adhering to Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in waiting areas for patients and visitors. Tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal have been provided as well as conveniently located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub.

3. Masking and separation of persons with respiratory symptoms
During periods of increased respiratory infection activity in the community (such as when there is increased absenteeism in schools and work settings and increased medical office visits by persons complaining of respiratory illness), offer masks to persons who are coughing. Either procedure masks (i.e., with ear loops) or surgical masks (i.e., with ties) may be used to contain respiratory secretions (respirators such as N-95 or above are not necessary for this purpose). When space and chair availability permit, encourage coughing persons to sit at least three feet away from others in common waiting areas.

As you work to encourage these good practices, and protect other patients and families, remember to also protect yourself. Wipe down work areas and high-touch surfaces such as door handles between visits with potentially infected people. Disinfect equipment such as wheelchairs after each use. Stay out of the line of fire! If someone is coughing or sneezing without regard for your proximity, step off to the side and turn your head away. This is the perfect opportunity to find them a mask or tissue. Most importantly, remember that good hand hygiene is your number one defense against germs.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in Healthcare Settings. Feb. 27, 2012. cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm
What the Library Has for You

By Mary Jo Boland, Patient Education librarian

While wandering the many halls of the Gundersen Medical Center, you may have come across a library or two. Did you know there are actually four library locations? These are:

- Adolf L. Gundersen, MD Health Sciences Library—Lower Level, Heritage Building, ext. 55410
- John & Nettie Mooney Library, La Crosse—Level 1, Legacy Building, ext. 55995
- John & Nettie Mooney Library & Stanek Cancer Library—Level 2, East Building, ext. 51186
- John & Nettie Mooney Library, Onalaska—Level 4, Onalaska Clinic, ext. 51665

Whether you’re looking up a medical condition, seeking a quiet place, or looking for a recent bestseller, Gundersen librarians will help you find what you want in short order.

Health information for you, your best friend, your neighbor …

At each of these locations, librarians can help you locate information about a health disease or condition. The librarians specialize in locating health information written at a non-technical level. There are books, CDs, and DVDs on a variety of topics. These items can be checked out for a period of four weeks. You may be surprised to learn that among the health materials, there are exercise and relaxation DVDs, cookbooks, materials on parenting and grand parenting, Medicare and Social Security, retirement and financial planning and more.

The La Crosse and Onalaska locations have the largest collections, with information on a wide variety of topics. They also have the comfiest chairs—if you need a place to relax, please stop in. The collection in the Mooney Library, East Building, focuses on cancer, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, and the neurosciences, including epilepsy and Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, etc.

If you are interested in just an article about a particular topic, the librarians can do Internet research. The libraries have access to more than 70,000 online journals and can locate the most authoritative information in these journals or on the Internet.

For those of you who like to do your own health research, the Mooney Libraries have computers for you to access the Internet. Start your research on the Mooney Library web page at: gundersenhealth.org/libraries. The web page also has access to the library catalog, so you can search to see what books, CDs and DVDs are available.

Learn to use MyCare

Librarians help patients enroll in and use MyCare. We can help you locate your health information within MyCare. For those who have a smartphone, we can help you download the MyCare App. If you have signed up for MyCare, but forgotten your password, librarians can help you get re-connected.

Fiction anyone?

Each of the Mooney Libraries has a fiction exchange shelf. The libraries receive donations from patients and visitors, and these are available for anyone to take and read. If you have some items to donate, check with a librarian—we are happy to accept donations of recent fiction items.

In the Adolf L. Gundersen, MD, Health Sciences Library, there is a recreational reading collection. This collection has more than 800 titles and includes recent best-sellers in the romance, mystery, suspense and thriller categories. Volunteers can check out these titles for a period of three weeks. Want a recommendation for a good read? Just ask the library staff and they will assist!
Healthcare career exploration opportunities

High school and college students who are interested in healthcare careers are encouraged to visit Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers - Scenic River AHEC website at scenicriversAHEC.org. AHEC is funded by a federal grant and appropriation from the state legislature, and partners with schools, businesses and healthcare organizations to create and facilitate hands-on learning opportunities for high school and higher education students, professionals and their communities. Scenic Rivers AHEC serves a 10-county region including Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon counties.

High school students can participate in healthcare curriculum presentations such as Hands on Health day, Job Shadow resources; multi-day health careers camps and AHEConnect mentoring programs. For higher education students, opportunities include community health projects for third- and fourth-year medical students, inter-professional activities, rural healthcare tours and Wisconsin Express Program (cultural immersion).

Volunteer Services is hosting the third annual Hands on Health day on April 7. Hands on Health day consists of a job shadow, hands-on experiments in the simulation lab and problem-solving using team work. The day wraps up with lunch and evaluations. Participants need to be at least 16 years old and not a member of the Health Science Academy program or participated in last year’s HOH day.

If you are interested in attending this event, let Karol Fox know as soon as possible at kjfox@gundersenhealth.org. Space is limited.

Pathways to a Health Care Career event is April 5
If you have an interest in healthcare and are in high school, grades 9-12, please plan to attend the upcoming event, “Pathway to a Healthcare Career” scheduled for Wednesday, April 5, 5-8 p.m. at the ICE House (Integrated Center for Education) at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. The Pathway to a Health Care Careers event is coordinated by Scenic Rivers AHEC (Area Hospitals Education Centers) and sponsored by Gundersen Health System. This is a great opportunity for students to meet healthcare professionals and ask questions, participate and watch demonstrations. Information will be sent to area schools and flyers will be posted as soon as they are available. Contact Karol Fox if you have any questions at (608) 775-6755 or kjfox@gundersenhealth.org.
Volunteer News

Thank you volunteers for the role you play in Advance Care Planning (ACP) clinics

By Janet Olmstead, project manager and ACP facilitator
Hospice, Palliative and Advance Care Planning

Earlier this year, Gundersen Health System opened its first Advance Care Planning clinics in La Crosse and in Onalaska. Individuals can schedule an appointment to meet with one of our trained ACP facilitators for a conversation about planning for future medical decisions. This service is free and recommended for all adults. The facilitator assists individuals to:

- Understand possible future medical situations and decisions that should be considered
- Reflect on their goals, values and beliefs
- Discuss reflections and decisions with those that might need to carry out the plan

Part of the planning process is choosing a healthcare agent, a person who is trusted to make decisions if the individual becomes unable to make his or her own decisions. Following the conversation, goals, values and preferences for future healthcare can be written into a document called a power of attorney for healthcare (POAHC). To make the document legal, the individual must sign and date the document in the presence of two witnesses. Per Gundersen policy, three groups can serve as witnesses: chaplains, social workers and volunteers. Our chaplains and social workers are frequently busy with patients and families. Therefore the witness role has fallen primarily to our wonderful volunteers. Without you, many individuals would be forced to come back or take their document elsewhere to be signed and witnessed. Advance care planning conversations are important, but they are not easy. Having the volunteer’s friendly, helpful and professional presence is a great way to finish the process. Thank you so much for filling this need and being part of our ACP team!

As a reminder, these services are also available to you and your family. If you have not had the opportunity to have this important conversation and complete your own advance care planning document, we encourage you to contact (608) 775-6000 (ext. 56000) to schedule an appointment.

Meal benefit process update

Volunteers at the La Crosse Campus will see a change in the meal benefit process. As of Jan. 1, you no longer need to sign in the binder located by the cashier area. Your information will be processed by Nutrition and Hospitality Services staff at the cash register. You must have your volunteer photo ID badge to utilize this benefit. As previously, you are entitled to up to $6 for a meal per volunteer shift on the day you are scheduled. We ask that you enjoy your meal in the Cafeteria dining area only. If you choose a meal which totals more than the $6 benefit, you are responsible to pay the difference. Beverages may be taken to the work site with approval from the area supervisor. Cafeteria hours are 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week.
Partners News

From Partners president: Mary Jo Klos

I feel very honored for the opportunity to work with Partners over the next two years. The Partners organization has always been near and dear to my heart. I was very fortunate to be connected with the board of directors and the membership when I was in Gundersen administration serving as vice president of Clinical Operations, and throughout that time I was often filled with gratitude and awe at the work done by the Partners members.

As you may know, I retired early in 2012 to care of my parents. They reached a point where they both needed me. In looking forward to the important work on the horizon for Gundersen I knew I would not be able to serve the organization and care for my parents—and thus made the difficult decision to retire from a job I loved. I was given such a wonderful ‘sendoff’ and my heart smiles even now when I think of how blessed I was to have such amazing support. My parents are now both gone and after a little time to regroup I found myself really missing Gundersen, the place I called “home” for 32 years.

Fortunately there was an opportunity to work in Service Excellence as a patient representative. I started May 9, 2016, and it feels incredible to be back home and to work in such an amazing department—the team is awesome and I am very proud to work for Gale Kreibich, the director of Service Excellence.

I will have a lot to learn as the new president. I am following in the amazing footsteps of Marie Runde and I will do my best to live up to the high bar she has set. I am so excited to work again with Lori and Vicki and the Volunteer Services team. I look forward to seeing all of you soon and to the exciting things in our future.

Gundersen Partners hosted the Fall District Meeting for the Western District on Oct. 26. More than 70 auxiliary members from nine area hospitals met at the Black River Beach Neighborhood Center to exchange ideas and support each other in fundraising and volunteer work. There were addresses by Beth Smith-Houskamp and Ingri Gundersen Lombardi. Board director Joan Brueggeman educated the attendees on the latest medical trend of Population Health by explaining some of the nuances and jargon. In keeping with the chosen “river” theme, entertainment consisted of a musical jazz trio (the Phatt Cats) who brightened an otherwise dreary day. Congratulations to board directors Linda Arentz and Linda Gillette who chaired the planning committee and to all of the Partners members who assisted in some way!

The photo shows those Partners in attendance with the exception of Martha Balfany, Dorothy Balfany and Swanhild Lubeck.

Back row: Arla Redman, Kathy Lucey, Marge Knudtson, Linda Arentz, Linda Gillette, Ingri Lombardi, Sandy Kirchner and Deb Veglahn

Front row (or seated): Rose Ann Kazmierczak, Vicky Jessen, Maria Runde, Peggy Miller and Sally Miner
Election outcome places healthcare in spotlight

By Brian Vamstad, External Affairs, government relations consultant, Public Policy Education Chair

The results of the 2016 Presidential election have put health policy back into the spotlight heading into 2017. Vowing to swiftly repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the victory of President-elect Donald Trump, and further solidified by Republican majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives, has paved the way for major changes to President Obama’s landmark law.

Overall, the effectiveness of the ACA in achieving policy goals of increased coverage, and lower cost continues to be mixed. According to the Census Bureau, the number of individuals and families being covered by health insurance has increased to approximately 91 percent nationwide. However, the ACA continues to be burdened by annual double-digit increases in the cost of health insurance premiums and the loss of insurers and insurance options in the marketplace.

It is expected the Trump administration and Congress will take action early in 2017 on modifying or repealing the ACA. We anticipate any repeal of the ACA to be joined with a replacement plan and transition. Policy changes may include repealing the individual mandate to purchase insurance, opening up insurance markets across states, increasing flexibility in Medicaid regulations and modifying the health insurance standard benefit requirements.

Our focus continues to be on promoting public policy that focuses patient outcomes. That will not change. The continued emphasis on moving away from volume-based to a value-based system will drive forward regardless of the future of the ACA. Whatever healthcare policy changes come from the next Congress and administration, it is our priority to ensure value-based, patient-centered care is the primary policy goal. In the delivery of healthcare, we continue to strive for the improved health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Welcome New Partners Members

Mary Kampschroer, Amanda Sims and Judy Brown
Calendar of Events

January
1  Happy New Year
16  Martin Luther King Day

February
2  Ground Hog Day
12  Lincoln’s Birthday
13  Blood Drive, Lower Level Legacy
14  Blood Drive, Lower Level Legacy
14  Annual Valentine’s Day Carnation Sale, carnations, greens and wrap supplied by Floral Visions
15  Blood Drive, Lower Level, Legacy
20  President’s Day and Washington’s Birthday
27-28  HCI Fundraising, $6 and up, Lower Level Legacy Building
      Stop by to check out all the fabulous merchandise. Proceeds benefit Partners.

March
1  HCI Fundraising, $6 and up, at Support Services Building, Onalaska
   Stop by to check out all the fabulous merchandise. Proceeds benefit Partners.
12  Daylight Savings ends; set your clocks one hour ahead
17  Happy St. Patrick’s Day

Valentine’s Day Carnation Sale/Fundraiser on Tuesday, Feb. 14
Volunteer Services and Gundersen Partners will host the annual carnation sale at the La Crosse Campus, Support Services Building (SSB) and Onalaska Clinic. Proceeds from the sale are designated for the Teen/High School Volunteer Merit awards.

Blood Drives are April 17, 18 and 19, Lower Level Legacy

Save the date: Annual Volunteer Recognition Event is scheduled for Tuesday, April 25 at the ICE House. Invitations will be mailed to your home.

Calling all veterans
If you’ve served in the military, we’d like to know. Please stop by the office or email kjfox@gundersenhealth.org.

Contributors to Volunteer News
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