



WHA Foundation, Inc.

2024 *Year in Review*

A Letter from the Executive Director

Innovation and Creativity – these are the words that come to mind when reflecting on the work of the WHA Foundation in 2024. In addition to annual funding projects, the Board of Directors challenged themselves to think of more wide-reaching initiatives that could make a large impact while staying aligned with the Foundation’s mission.

These new endeavors included a strengthened partnership with Wisconsin HOSA. Founded in 1978, Wisconsin HOSA is a student organization focused on supporting students who are interested in a health care related career. Currently, Wisconsin HOSA has a membership of over 5,000 students from 165 different chapters throughout the state. The Foundation supported Wisconsin HOSA through the funding of high school senior scholarships, as well as assisting schools in starting their own local chapters. Done in conjunction with WHA member hospitals, these new chapters are helping to address health care workforce issues in Wisconsin. These long-term investments symbolize a firm belief that we have the best health care resources already within our state and that we are committed to helping them grow.



Becoming a *Friend of Foundation* is a great way to support not only the work the WHA Foundation is doing, but also to support Wisconsin’s health care workforce and communities across the state. To learn more about how you can become a *Friend of the Foundation*, please reach out to me directly.

Leigh Ann S. Larson

Executive Director of the WHA Foundation

llarson@wha.org

2024 Board of Trustees

Thank you to the 2024 WHA **Foundation Board of Trustees** for their dedication, commitment, collegiality and time. The list below reflects the roster of board members who were in place beginning in January 2024.

- **Kristie McCoic (Chair)**, Chief Executive Officer, Gundersen St. Joseph’s Hospital & Clinics, Hillsboro
- **Jan Bauman**, Chief Nursing Officer, Divine Savior Healthcare, Portage
- **Michael Bergmann**, President and CEO, Ascension Fox Valley Hospitals - Calumet, St. Elizabeths and Mercy Hospitals
- **Eric Borgerding**, President and CEO, Wisconsin Hospital Association
- **Joni Olson**, Chief Executive Officer, Gundersen Tri County Hospital & Clinics, Whitehall
- **Gail Pasard, SHRM-SCP**, Regional Vice President, Human Resources, SSM Health – Wisconsin & Post-Acute Madison
- **Bruce Roesler**, Chief Executive Officer, The Richland Hospital, Inc., Richland Center

Quality. Workforce. Community. The WHA Foundation's Funding Priorities.

The Focus of the WHA Foundation

Formed in 1968, the WHA Foundation, Inc. serves to support educational, research and charitable programs of the Wisconsin Hospital Association and its members.

Today, the Foundation focuses its grant-making priorities on initiatives that have a statewide impact on health care in Wisconsin.



WHA Foundation Funding Programs

1. Health Care Quality and Safety Initiatives

The Foundation has supported a variety of quality and safety initiatives for more than 20 years, starting with the funding to develop, launch and upgrade [CheckPoint](#), the first public website to provide consumers with clinical quality measures and error prevention practices for all hospitals in Wisconsin. Since 2016, the Foundation has provided funding for clinical simulation training to more than 60 hospital teams, focusing training in areas of sepsis/septic shock, opioid crisis, high-risk OB scenarios and stroke.

2. Health Care Workforce Development

Addressing the workforce needs of Wisconsin health care providers has been a focus of the Foundation over the past decade. The Foundation supports the annual Foundation Scholarship Program, providing two annual scholarships to each of the 16 technical colleges in Wisconsin. The unique twist is the scholarship covers expenses incurred in the student's final semester to assist and encourage students to make that one final push toward graduation and a career in health care. Since its inception in 2003, more than 400 scholarships have been awarded, worth more than \$500,000. In 2024, the Foundation also supported Wisconsin HOSA through high school senior scholarships and new chapter start-ups.

3. Collaborative Community Health Initiatives

The WHA Foundation supports community health initiatives created in partnership with WHA members through its annual Global Vision Community Partnership Award. This award was established in 1993 to provide recognition and financial support to innovative and collaborative initiatives that meet a community's health needs. A total of 53 Global Vision Awards have been presented since its inception, awarding a \$2,500 unrestricted grant for each winning initiative.

Outgoing Board Members

Happy retirement to Joni Olson! Thank you for your years of service to the WHA Foundation.



“Serving on the WHA foundation Board of Directors has given me much more than what I contributed in return. The Foundation provides awards to community projects which benefit community members and addresses a health need. Reviewing the projects submitted was quite an eye-opener. I enjoyed learning about the meaningful and creative ways in which resources were used. Being a part of the group as been both delightful and meaningful. I would encourage anyone who has an opportunity to be part of this team to accept and enjoy the learning.”

Thank you to Kristie McCoic for your full two-term service pushing forward the mission of the WHA Foundation.

“As my tenure on the WHA Foundation Board comes to an end, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked with this group. With my background in human resources, I found the work of the Foundation to support the growth of Wisconsin’s health care workforce particularly meaningful. The Foundation’s impactful initiatives, such as partnerships with our technical colleges to provide scholarships, collaborations with simulation labs to fund hands-on learning for hospital teams, and most recently, the funding of HOSA – Future Healthcare Professional chapters in Wisconsin high schools, are making a real difference. I am proud to have been a part of this important work.”



Clinical Simulation Lab Scholarships

Health Care Quality and Safety Initiatives

The WHA Foundation provided scholarship funding to support WHA hospital members’ participation in clinical simulations labs. In 2024, the participating lab was Gundersen Health System Integrated Center for Education in La Crosse.

Applications were reviewed against a set of criteria, including the hospital teams’ objectives for incorporating clinical simulation training into their multidisciplinary team. Applicants indicated their interest in either stroke, high-risk OB delivery, opioid crisis or sepsis/septic shock labs, the focus areas decided upon by a collaboration between the WHA Foundation and WHA Quality Department.

One scholarship was awarded in 2024, in the area of high-risk OB.

Technical School Scholarships

Health Care Workforce Development

The 16 technical schools in the state of Wisconsin were offered 32 scholarships for the 2023/2024 school year. Each scholarship has a monetary value of up to \$2,000. These scholarships, two offered to each school, are intended for the final semester of school for students graduating in health-related fields. These fields include:

- Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA)
- Anesthesia Technology
- Biotechnical Lab Technician
- Cancer Information Management
- Cardiovascular Technology
- Clinical Lab Technician
- Clinical Research Coordinator
- Dental Hygienist
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Dietetic Technician
- Echocardiography
- EMT/Paramedic
- Gerontology
- Health Care Business Services
- Health Information Technology
- Health Care Services Management
- Medical Lab Technician
- Midwife
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Pharmacy Services Management
- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Radiography
- Respiratory Therapist
- Surgical Technology
- Wellness and Health Promotion

For the 2023-2024 school year, 24 scholarships were awarded, totalling \$43,700 dollars disbursed to new health care workforce members in the state of Wisconsin.

Natalie Gawron, RN, was one of the recipients of a scholarship in 2024. Since passing her NCLEX Exam, Natalie was hired by WHA member hospital, Advocate Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh, on their Medical/Surgical unit, and is grateful for the scholarship.

"Thank you very much to the WHA Foundation for this scholarship. I am very humbled and appreciative to have been selected. This scholarship allows me to focus on my studies while also continuing to work part-time on weekends as a CNA. I love the care I am able to provide to patients as a CNA, but I really want to be able to do more for them. Becoming a nurse will allow me to take my care to the next level and really be able to play a vital role in the care and treatment of the whole patient."

Natalie Gawron, RN
Fox Valley Technical College Student
WHA Foundation Scholarship Recipient



New Funding Projects

Health Care Workforce Development

In a continued effort to promote the development of the health care workforce in Wisconsin, the WHA Foundation added two new funding projects in 2024.

Grant Funding

Through a competitive grant application process, the WHA Foundation provided funds to help support initiatives that promoted health education for WHA hospital members, as well as future health care professionals in the state.

1. *Sepsis and SEP – Video Education Series*

Grant awarded to: WHA Quality Department

In conjunction with National Patient Safety Awareness week March 10-16, this 15-part video series was made available to hospitals. Content is centered around strategies needed to treat sepsis. This is a series that hospitals can access for years to come.

2. *Fall prevention and increased ambulation in older adults in an inpatient setting – Education through resources and 1:1 coaching.*

Grant awarded to: WHA Quality Department

Hospital-acquired disability due to limited patient ambulation is a critical public health concern that results in significant negative functional, psychological and financial outcomes for patients and health care organizations. Mobilizing Older adults Via a systems-based Intervention (MOVIN™) is an evidence-based program centered on improving patient ambulation by addressing barriers that prevent nursing staff from getting patients up to walk.

3. *Graduating high school senior scholarships for higher education in health-related field.*

Grant awarded to: Wisconsin HOSA

Scholarship funds were awarded to four graduating seniors who plan to continue their education and pursue a career in a health-related field. A total of \$2,000 was provided at Wisconsin HOSA's annual Leadership Conference in Wisconsin Dells.

New HOSA Chapters

In collaboration with 30 local hospitals, the WHA Foundation provided grant funding to establish HOSA-Future Health Professionals chapters in schools during the 2024/25 school year.

HOSA is a student organization that provides members with the opportunity to explore health care career options and experiences, and the routes they can take to embark on their professional pathway. By fostering early interest in health care professions, the WHA Foundation, in partnership with 30 local hospitals, is investing in Wisconsin's future health care workforce to ensure Wisconsin has the skilled, compassionate caregivers needed to meet the growing demand for health care. Combined, the WHA Foundation and participating hospitals contributed \$33,000 to launch new HOSA chapters in schools statewide.

Thank you to the Wisconsin hospitals that participated in this initiative:

Amery Hospital and Clinics	Aurora Health Care St. Lukes	HSBS St. Mary's
Ascension WI Hospital Greenfield	Aurora Burlington	Mayo Clinic Health System – NWWI
Ascension SE St. Joseph	Bellin Health	Mayo Clinic Health System – SWWI
Ascension NE Mercy	Beloit Memorial Hospital	Mile Bluff Medical Center
Ascension SE Franklin	Froedtert Mequon	Prairie Ridge Hospital
Ascension Columbia St. Mary's	Froedtert Community Hospital Oak Creek	River Falls Area Hospital
Ascension All Saints	Froedtert Milwaukee	Spooner Health
Aurora Medical Center Mt. Pleasant	Gundersen Boscobel	SSM St. Mary's Madison
Aurora Medical Center Oshkosh	Gundersen St. Joseph	Unity Point Meriter Hospital
Aurora West Allis Medical Center	Gundersen Tri County Hospital	
Aurora Sinai		

23 Wisconsin schools/school districts applied and received funding. One of the schools to receive funding was Independence High School.

"The Independence High School HOSA Chapter used the WHA Foundation and hospital funds to provide a variety of opportunities for its members. Funds were used to send student officers to the Fall Leadership Conference at Epic's headquarters, where they learned more about developing their leadership skills and careers in healthcare. Our competitive events program has grown significantly since last year and the funds will also be used to cover registration costs, which gives more members the opportunity to compete. We have 11 members competing this year and we are very excited to see how they do. Remaining grant funds will be used to make chapter t-shirts, purchase supplies for school and community outreach events, and cover costs for the state leadership conference this spring." - Independence High School HOSA Advisor



Independence High School HOSA students

Thanks to the success of these new funding projects, the Board of Directors has approved offering these opportunities again in 2025.



A BIG THANK YOU to the WHA Information Center for being a 2024 *Friend of the Foundation*. With their generous support, the WHA Foundation continues its commitment to further the education of Health Information Technology students.



Pictured is WHA Information Center Vice President Brian Competente.

Global Vision Community Partnership Award

Collaborative Community Health Initiatives

The WHA Foundation awarded two Global Vision Community Partnership Awards in 2024. The purpose of the award is to recognize and reward community partnership projects that work with a WHA member hospital(s) to meet an identified community health need in an innovative or creative manner. The awards were presented to ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital and Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – St. Joseph Campus.



L to R: Sarah Butz, Director of Community Benefit, ProHealth Care; Shawn Verdoni, Major Gift and Grants Officer, ProHealth Care Foundation; Leigh Ann S. Larson, WHA Foundation Executive Director

Growing Healthy Communities

ProHealth Waukesha Memorial Hospital

In 2017, Waukesha County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), through a community health assessment, identified that residents needed better access to fresh and nutritional foods and also to increase their activity levels. The Growing Healthy Communities program improves access to affordable and healthy food by promoting accessibility to farmers markets, community gardens and other healthy food outlets convenient to residents with food insecurity concerns. As part of annual health and wellness check-ups and hospital discharge with a ProHealth Care clinician, food insecurity assessments are conducted. If a family identifies as food insecure, an emergency food

package is prepared with staples that will support a family for 2-3 days. Success of this program is measured by the amount of fresh produce harvested and distributed to community partners and to families. Pre- and post-tests and surveys are conducted after nutrition education sessions are hosted in the garden. Since 2010, garden programs have harvested 21,720 lbs. of produce valued at \$46,481.

Women's Outpatient Center

Ascension SE Wisconsin Hospital – St. Joseph Campus

For over 15 years, the Women's Outpatient Center (WOC) continues addressing the overlooked community health needs in Milwaukee, particularly among vulnerable populations of women and families. The primary health need addressed is maternal and child health, with a focus on providing comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care. This need was identified through direct interactions with the community, where many women experience their first medical relationship during pregnancy. The center

serves approximately 700 patients annually, representing 35% of all obstetric volume at Ascension-St. Joseph. The need for enhanced support during pregnancy, safe childbirth, and postnatal care was evident from the socio-economic challenges faced by the community, including housing insecurity, food scarcity and lack of access to essential health care services. The primary objectives of the program include enhancing maternal and child health, supporting socio-economic stability, educational empowerment, community resource connection and removing barriers to care. In 2024, the program served 436 car seat class participants and 392 safe sleep class participants. The Children's Waiting Area hosted 251 children while their mothers attended over 160 appointments.



L to R: WHA's Molly Wiegel and Leigh Ann S. Larson; Ascension St. Joseph's Team: Nikki Lorino, Ginny Wagner, Taylor Tatiro, Priya Ahuja, Taylor Kuczynski, Gail Robinson, Khadijah Grimes, David Mannes, Shana Crittendon, Selina Dallas.

Award winners each received a plaque of recognition and a \$2,500 grant to continue to fulfill the mission and activities of these valuable programs. WHA Foundation, Inc. thanks all nominations submitted for the Global Vision Community Partnership Award.

Third WHA Health Care Leadership Academy Class Graduates with the Help of WHA Foundation Scholarship Dollars

The WHA Health Care Leadership Academy was developed to address the needs of WHA member hospitals, particularly the need for their leaders to better understand the “business of health care” so they can contribute in more meaningful ways to better patient care, cost management and service delivery. At the conclusion of the program, participants were able to demonstrate their knowledge to successfully navigate the complexities and opportunities of the future of health care.



Health Care Leadership Academy graduates with Bucky Badger, June 5, 2024.

The WHA Health Care Leadership Academy was developed in partnership between the Wisconsin School of Business Center for Professional & Executive Development (UW CPED) and the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA).

The third academy was held between February 2024 – June 2024. Topics included:

- The Business of Health Care: Leadership, Strategy, and Understanding the Business
- Understanding & Navigating Ethical Issues in Health Care
- Relationship Management: Communication & Influence Across a Matrix
- WHA Government Relations, Quality, and Information Center

Through the generous donation of scholarship dollars from the WHA Foundation, participants were each awarded a partial scholarship, which was applied to their overall UW CPED tuition. In total, the WHA Foundation donated more than \$10,000.

Congratulations to the graduates of the 2024 WHA Health Care Leadership Academy!

Name	Title	Organization
Sharon Cox	Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer	Beloit Health System
Emily Halla	Director	Froedtert Holy Family Memorial
Lindsey Hardy	Laboratory Director	Tomah Health
Jenna Jennerjohn	Quality Director	Door County Medical Center
Carrie Lord	Director of Women's Health Services	Tomah Health
Corey Schmidt	Chief Ancillary Services Officer	Southwest Health
Erik Schuelke	Director of Employee Services	Prairie Ridge Health
Jennifer Winter	CMIO	Fort Healthcare

Looking Toward 2025

The WHA Foundation will continue to support **Health Care Quality and Safety Initiatives**, **Health Care Workforce Development**, and **Collaborative Community Health Initiatives**. It is our hope that these programming opportunities will provide support in the most meaningful way possible to WHA member hospitals and the communities they serve. The WHA Foundation Board of Trustees will also be exploring other funding opportunities to further accomplish its overall mission and goals.

2025 WHA Foundation Board of Trustees



Bruce Roesler (Chair)
Chief Executive Officer,
The Richland Hospital, Inc.,
Richland Center



Michael Bergmann
President and CEO,
Ascension Fox Valley
hospitals



Eric Borgerding
President and CEO,
Wisconsin Hospital
Association (WHA)



**Theresa Braudt,
MSN, RN**
Administrator,
Gundersen Boscobel
Area Hospital and Clinics



Derek Daly
Chief Executive Officer,
Tomah Health



**Gail Pasard (Treasurer/
Secretary)**
Regional Vice President,
Human Resources, SSM Health
– Wisconsin & Post-Acute

The WHA Foundation warmly welcomes Kyle O'Brien to the Board of Directors effective July 1, 2025 as he moves into the President & CEO role at the Wisconsin Hospital Association.



Kyle O'Brien
Senior Vice President,
Government Relations, WHA

Become a *Friend of the Foundation*

What does it mean to be a *Friend of the Foundation*?

Being a *Friend of the Foundation* means that you support the mission and efforts of the WHA Foundation. Your support ensures the continuation of the current programming of the WHA Foundation, as well as possible future impacts that can be made in Wisconsin communities.

Please see the “Friend of the Foundation Annual Giving Levels” insert for more details.



We thank the generous support of the **Wisconsin Hospital Association Information Center (WHAIC)** as they continue to be a *Friend of the Foundation* member in 2025. For the fourth year in a row, the WHAIC will have the opportunity to have sponsorship recognition at two WHA events, provide naming rights for two scholarships and more.

“Friend of the Foundation” Annual Giving Levels



You can make a positive impact on Wisconsin health care! Contribute at one of the giving levels below and become a “*Friend of the Foundation*.” Your support ensures the WHA Foundation can continue its current funding programs, as well as possible future initiatives that can benefit Wisconsin communities.

\$1,000 Sponsor

- Company/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation website
- Company/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation signage at events, including at WHA’s Advocacy Day, the Wisconsin Rural Health Conference and WHA’s Physician Leadership Development Conference
- Two complimentary enrollments in a WHA-sponsored webinar

\$2,500 Sponsor

- Company logo/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation website
- Company logo/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation signage at events, including at WHA’s Advocacy Day, WHA’s Rural Health Conference and WHA’s Physician Leadership Development Conference
- Two complimentary enrollments in a WHA-sponsored webinar
- Sponsorship recognition of one WHA event or webinar

\$4,000 Sponsor

- Company logo/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation website
- Company logo/individual name recognition on WHA Foundation signage at events, including at WHA’s Advocacy Day, WHA’s Rural Health Conference and WHA’s Physician Leadership Development Conference
- Two complimentary enrollments in a WHA-sponsored webinar
- Sponsorship recognition of two WHA events or webinars
- WHA Foundation Technical School Scholarship naming rights for two scholarships awarded to one Wisconsin technical college during the academic year

The WHA Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Be a “Friend of the Foundation”

In order to continue focusing its grant-making priorities on initiatives that have a statewide impact on health care in Wisconsin, the WHA Foundation Board of Trustees continues its fundraising efforts each year. Every contribution to the WHA Foundation is appreciated and will be recognized appropriately. Thank you for considering a contribution to the WHA Foundation. See “*Friend of the Foundation Annual Giving Levels*” for more details.

Questions:

Contact Leigh Ann S. Larson,
Executive Director
P: 608-274-1820; F: 608-274-8554
llarson@wha.org



wha.org/AboutWHA/WHA-Foundation

2025 WHA Foundation Fundraising Campaign

Contribution Form

My organization/I wish to support ongoing efforts of the WHA Foundation with a contribution of:

- ☐ \$4,000*
- ☐ \$2,500*
- ☐ \$1,000*
- ☐ \$500
- ☐ Other: \$_____

*contribution will make you “*Friends of the Foundation.*”

Organization Name

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CityStateZip

First NameLast Name

Job Title

Email

Telephone Number (with area code)

Please make check payable to:
WHA Foundation, Inc.

Send Contributions to:
WHA Foundation, Attn. Leigh Ann S. Larson
5510 Research Park Drive, Suite 200, Fitchburg, WI 53711

Your contribution is tax deductible as specified in IRS guidelines.