

August 2002

# HORIZONS

## President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

It's hard to believe it is August already...the summer is more than half over. And I might add, what a summer it has been! I'm speaking primarily of the weather. The hot, humid, ninety-degree days remind me of my childhood. It's one of those "remember when?" moments. If one measures progress in terms of improvements in luxury, we have come so far. Who doesn't remember sleeping in the basement, fans moving hot air, swimming all day, and eating ice cream to stay cool? And heck, there were years when the hot and humid weather didn't even bother us! Thank heavens for air-conditioning! Now we can just turn on the air and keep working! Well...maybe progress isn't so great!

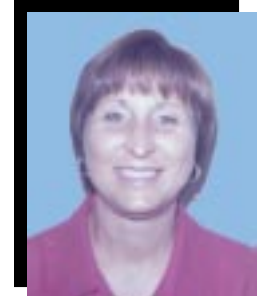
I'd like to share with you two initiatives that are currently in progress over this summer. The first is the launching of the Governor's Health Care Worker Shortage Committee of which Mary Lu Gerke and I are participants, and the second is the Wisconsin Nurses' Survey Data Analysis in process by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Nursing.

In June, the Governor launched a Health Care Worker Shortage Committee whose mission is to "bring together partners in the health care industry, labor, education and government to develop innovative solutions to address the health care worker shortage in Wisconsin." Dr. Richard Carpenter, President, Wisconsin Technical College System and Jennifer Reinert, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, chair the Committee. An initial steering committee met to identify a vision, goals and determine workgroups. Four workgroups were identified:

- Education
- Retention and Recruitment
- Investment, Resources and Infrastructure
- Redesign of Work

Members of the workgroups were identified from throughout the state and convened on June 26 and July 15 to refine goals, identify contributing factors and make recommendations under each goal, taking into account the identified contributing factors. After one more work session on August 14, a final product will be completed by August 23 and recommendations sent to the Governor.

The Nursing Coalition, of which W-ONE is a member, has commissioned the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Nursing to analyze the data obtained from registered nurses licensed in the state



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of Wisconsin who were renewing their licenses during the period of November 2001 and February 2002. 43,488 nurses provided responses. At the Coalition meeting on July 25, the School of Nursing shared its preliminary results. Although the results are not yet available for publication, Coalition members were able to review the analysis, ask for clarification and make comments about the work done to date. I believe a valuable by-product of this analysis will be to give guidance for the refinement of questions asked of nurses during the next survey. In some cases, conclusions were confusing or inconclusive due to the way in which the questions were worded. Since the survey will be repeated in two years, survey questions can be modified to seek clearer answers. I will let you know when the final analysis is completed and available.

In closing, I'd like to remind you of the WHA/W-ONE Fall Conference being held in Green Bay, September 18-20, 2002. This is a perfect opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new! I'd also like to alert you to the fact that it *is* August . . . take the time to swing in a hammock, go on a picnic, read a book! Fall will be here before you know it!

**Gerri Staffileno**  
**W-ONE President**

## An Opportunity to Learn More About Your W-ONE Organization !!

The W-ONE Board of Directors is excited to invite the members of W-ONE to any and all Board Meetings for which you can be available. Attending a Board meeting is an excellent opportunity to learn about your W-ONE organization and also the issues facing us on a statewide and national level. Please let Gerri Staffileno know if you are able to attend a particular meeting. Lunch is provided and we wish to insure that an adequate amount is ordered. All meetings are at the Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association in Madison unless noted otherwise.

### Remaining W-ONE Board Meetings in 2002:

- ✓ Wednesday, September 18, WHA Fall Convention/  
Green Bay TBA
- ✓ Friday, November 15, 2002/WHA, Fall Retreat

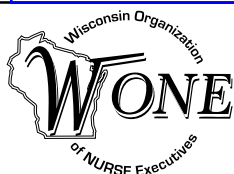
## Patient Safety

Improving patient safety is one of the key issues facing nurse executives in all health care settings. Patient safety initiatives have included development of organization-wide safety cultures, implementation of specific programs to improve systems and processes that decrease error, and adaptation of quality improvement techniques and tools to identify areas for continual improvement.

W-ONE has been an active partner with the Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association in compiling and evaluating patient safety projects submitted by hospitals across the state for inclusion in the 2002 Patient Safety Showcase. Twenty-six hospitals submitted 38 successful projects from their hospitals for inclusion in this year's showcase. Projects cover organizational, cultural and environmental programs; medication safety; patient falls; restraint use and infection control.

Showcase hospitals will display their projects and programs at the October 7, 2002 Patient Safety Showcase & Conference to be held at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison. This event will combine educational presentations and will showcase projects.

Conference and registration information will be mailed to you in August. If you have any questions regarding the conference, contact Diane Peters at Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association: 608-274-1820 or email [dpeters@wha.org](mailto:dpeters@wha.org)



Horizons is published quarterly as the newsletter of the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Executives. Articles on nursing, management and health care issues, and letters to the editor are welcome. Display and classified advertising are accepted. For information, contact the editor.

2002 W-ONE Board of Directors: President: Gerri Staffileno; Secretary, Rosemary Ryan; Treasurer, Janice Giedd; Past President, Carolyn Friese  
2002 W-ONE Board Members: Beverly Hoege, Patricia Schroeder, Faye Deich, Marti Klug, Nancy Wilde  
Editor: Peggy Ose

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this issue of the Horizon's Newsletter, we are trying something new...an opportunity to express opinions to our colleagues as an open "Letter to the Editor." We thank Mary Lu Gerke for being the first contributor to what we hope will be an ongoing column.

### Political Influence: Rethinking how to be Effective

I have recently been involved in several conversations that have centered around the issue of the need for the profession of nursing to step up to the plate in influencing public policy. The demand for political participation by nurses has intensified as governmental agencies continue to attempt to deal with the problems in the health care industry. Studies indicate that the nursing profession has been continuously and steadily declining in organized political participation and influence. "Nurses and nursing groups do not seem to place enough emphasis on the larger organizational and policy picture. Nurses have declared a need for change, but have failed to develop either the tools or the understanding of policymaking and organizations that might bring that change (Cramer, 2002)."

As executives and nursing leaders in Wisconsin, we need to assess and act upon this critical issue. But who, when and how can we meet this need when each of our workplaces and our families are in need of our time and energy? The Wisconsin Nurses' Association represents organized political influence for nursing in Wisconsin. There are at least 40 nurses associations in the state of Wisconsin and 60 nurses associations in the nation. However, the focus of these groups is primarily on their specialties. Often, these groups assist in affecting health care and public policy only when it applies to their special interest. WNA is involved in all these interests and represents nursing as a professional group. Out of the 90,000 nurses in the state of Wisconsin, 2,500 belong to WNA. Most of the 2,500 nurses are from academia, or are advanced practice or executive nurses. Often staff nurses do not embrace professional organizations as the champions of their issues. Why not? On paper, WNA represents nurses, but in the eyes of the politicians, the number of members does not represent the complete voice of nurses. Therefore, we appear, and in many respects are, disjointed and less than effective in influencing any health care policy changes.

What would happen if 90,000 nurses belonged to a unified organization as a unified voice? Do you think legislators would be more willing to listen to the opinions of this group? I think so! How do we go from where we are now to a unified, effective political voice that will be influential? The Wisconsin Nurses' Coalition is a great start. The work so far has been to establish common ground and, from that point, figure out the mechanism to create a unified voice dealing with the multitude of public health care issues

that promise to intensify over the next several years. These issues include the workforce shortage, aging population, bioethics, care in rural areas, and numerous other complex and serious problems. W-ONE and WNA can lead the way. Think about resource allocation. 40 groups of nurses, executing organizational efforts. This means many people serving several organizations simultaneously. Each organization has taken time to establish by-laws, offices, boards of directors and budgets for all of these. The question before nurses is: With more demands in our personal and work lives is there time left to dedicate to more than one professional organization? Can we come together to meet the health care needs of the public in Wisconsin? I haven't talked to one nurse who hasn't agreed that we need to act and be seen as a unified voice. If that is what we want, how do we reach that desired goal? Perhaps now is the time to put aside our petty differences and move forward, thinking completely out of the box; thinking about our commonalities and not our differences. We all have only a very limited amount of time to dedicate to assuring political influence. However, if the time we dedicate would be focused on the essence of nursing through one organization, WNA, becoming the executing office of all specialty groups, we might be able to accomplish our desire. We would become more efficient and effective as an organization, as a profession. Each specialty would still need some type of board or mechanism to deal with the specialty issues, but the resources saved in the cost of operations would decrease significantly. With less resources spent on the operations of each specialty, more resources could be spent on being at the legislative tables and offices to influence sound, healthy answers to the health care crisis at our door. We would be seen as a unified voice with tremendous political influence.

John Adams was persistent and vigilant in his quest to create the reality of an independent country, the United States of America. He, along with several other risk takers, dedicated their lives to a dream that did not seem possible or practical. Bringing all nurses together under one organization seems impossible and not practical, or are the outcomes of unification and influence worth the risk of trying?



Mary Lu Gerke

Mary Lu Gerke, RN, MSN, MA

## W-ONE 2002 New Members

We welcome the following individuals who are new to W-ONE since May 24, 2002.

Jean Barry-Walker, Chief Nursing Officer, Mercy Medical Center/Affinity Health System, 500 S. Oakwood, Oshkosh, WI 54902, 920-223-0514

Deborah A. Hagen, Primary Care Executive, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, (home) 261 N. Chicago Ave., #3, South Milwaukee, WI 53172, 414-762-8745

Janet L. Neuman, Director of Nursing, Rusk County Memorial Hospital, 900 College Avenue West, Ladysmith, WI 54848 715-532-5561, ext. 203

Juli Novak, Manager of Obstetrics, Holy Family Memorial Hospital, 2300 Western Avenue, Manitowoc, WI 54220, 920-684-2485

Sue K. Shaw, Nurse Director, Holy Family Memorial Hospital, (home) 4220 Ray Street, Manitowoc, WI 54220, 920-682-5101

Mary K. Stangel, Nurse Director, Holy Family Memorial Hospital, 2300 Western Avenue, Manitowoc, WI 54220, 920-684-2411, marystangel@hotmail.com

Joyce A. Talsky, Director, Patient Services, Columbia-St. Mary's Hospital, (home) 2507 E. Beverly Road, Shorewood, WI 53211, 414-962-8845

Dale Wallerich, Director, Emergency Services, Holy Family Memorial Hospital, (home) 1913 E. Horseshoe Drive, Manitowoc, WI 54220, 920-652-0983, dwallerich@hfmhealth.org



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**Wausau Hospital**  
Serving the community since 1887



*At Wausau Hospital, we're enjoying the pride that comes from being one of the best. Our dedication to high quality care, and the professionals who provide it, has earned us the honor of being named one of the Top 50 Cardiac Surgery and Cardiac Care Centers in the country by U.S. News & World Report. Join our team and receive regular, market-driven, performance-based pay increases, continuous opportunities for additional compensation, tuition assistance, flexible scheduling with NO mandatory overtime and much more.*

## Employee Pride Program

The Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Executives, along with the Wisconsin Society of Healthcare Human Resources Administration and Wisconsin Healthcare Public Relations and Marketing Society developed the **Wisconsin Health Care Employee Pride Program**. The Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association sponsored the Employee Pride Program and held a celebration evening in Wausau on May 30 with a reception, dinner and an awards program. Fifty-eight Wisconsin hospitals participated by selecting one ambassador from their staff and submitting the individual's written essay or poem about his or her chosen health care profession. The testimonials were inspiring and thought provoking. They truly remind us of why we are in health care. Several Employee Pride Ambassadors also took part in a panel discussion held the following day as part of the retention workshop, "We Care: Retaining Our Health Care Employees." Our thanks and congratulations go out to all of the Wisconsin Employee Pride Ambassadors.

## Business World 2002

"A Career in Nursing" was one of the topics presented at "Business World 2002," held at St. Norbert College, Green Bay. Business World® holds a week-long program each summer for high school students from around the state. Their mission is to "prepare today's student to be tomorrow's business leaders." Approximately 150 students attended the two nursing sessions. The nursing recruitment video, brochures and posters from the Johnson and Johnson campaign were used with rave reviews. The Johnson and Johnson recruitment materials were sent to each institution and can also be procured free of charge by calling 888-981-9111 or by visiting their website [www.discovernursing.com](http://www.discovernursing.com).

## Physician-Nurse Collaboration

The Chief of Staff/Chief Nurse Executive (COS/CNE) Planning Committee Group from the VA system has developed an assessment process and conference proposal to address "front line doctor-nurse collaboration." The physician/nurse relationship has been identified as an important factor in nurse retention. The proposal to pilot the plan on a regional and on a local level is currently in the review stage.

## Professional Development Committee

Diane Postler-Slatery has assumed leadership of the Professional Development Committee. She is replacing Ann Peck, who served W-ONE well for many years as the Professional Development Committee Chairperson and is now enjoying her retirement years. We wish Ann all the best in her retirement!!

As the torch is passed to Diane, there is just a bit of confusion over who the members of the committee have been. As we get to the work of the committee which includes awarding scholarships for degree completion and advanced nursing degrees, we need to know with whom to communicate. If you have been a member of the committee in the past, or would be interested at this time in joining the committee, please let Diane know via e-mail or phone call.

Thank you Diane for assuming leadership of the Professional Development Committee!

## CHIEF NURSING OFFICER

Riverside Medical Center, a progressive, community-based 40-bed acute care JCAHO accredited hospital located in the beautiful Chain O'Lakes area of Waupaca, has available a career opportunity for a Chief Nursing Officer. As a member of the executive team, the CNO reports directly to the CEO and works closely with the medical staff to provide quality patient care.

Do you want to raise your children in a small community with new schools and a commitment to education? Do you enjoy the beauty of crystal clear lakes, the smell of pines, and an abundance of year around outdoor recreation? Do you want to be less than an hour from the finer things in life? Do you want to make a difference in the quality of healthcare for a community?

BSN, Wisconsin licensure, managerial experience, recent acute care experience, and strong leadership and interpersonal skills required. Healthcare administration degree preferred. Send resume and salary requirements to:

RIVERSIDE MEDICAL CENTER  
ATTN: Director of Human Resources  
800 Riverside Drive  
Waupaca, WI 54981  
(800) 924-4442, ext.1237  
(715) 258-1237  
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### Member Checklist

- Please contact Shannon Nelson whenever you have a change in either employment or residential address to guarantee timely mailings.  
e-mail snelson@wha.org or 608/268-1806.
- Submit articles for publication in the next issue of Horizons to Peggy Ose, 715/421-7427.
- If you are interested in being a part of a specific committee, contact the committee chair.