

**Vol. 70, Issue 39**

Thursday, October 1, 2026

## WHA Foundation Announces Winners of the 2026 Global Vision Community Partnership Award

Congratulations to Southwest Health and Aspirus Wausau Hospital for being named the recipients of the 2026 Global Vision Community Partnership Award. First awarded in 1993, the purpose of the award is to recognize and reward community partnership projects that work with a WHA member hospital to meet an identified community health need in an innovative or creative manner.



### Southwest Sexual Assault Resource Team (SART)

#### Southwest Health, Platteville

SART is a multidisciplinary partnership established in 2013 to improve the response to sexual assault across rural southwest Wisconsin. The program addresses the significant prevalence of sexual violence and the challenges rural survivors may face in accessing specialized medical-forensic care, advocacy and legal services. At the center of the initiative is Southwest Health's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program, which has expanded from one nurse to five specially trained SANE nurses. The program provides trauma-informed care, medical-forensic examinations, evidence collection, forensic photography and injury documentation, STI and pregnancy education, assistance with reporting when requested and referrals to advocacy and follow-up services.

SART brings together Southwest Health, UW-Platteville, the Platteville Police Department, Family Advocates, the Grant County District Attorney's Office and other regional partners. Each organization contributes specialized expertise in health care, advocacy, education, law enforcement, investigation and prosecution. This coordinated model reduces the need for survivors to navigate disconnected systems or travel long distances for specialized services. The program has demonstrated sustained impact through more than 13 years. SART improves access to compassionate, survivor-centered care while strengthening collaboration among health care, advocacy, education, law enforcement and justice system partners.

### Beyond the 911 Call: Creating a Healthier Community Through Community Paramedicine

#### Aspirus Wausau Hospital

The Wausau Fire Department Community Paramedic Program, launched in 2024 through a partnership with Aspirus Health, the Marathon County Health Department, county agencies and community organizations, addresses major health care challenges facing rural Wisconsin communities. The program responds to issues such as limited health care access, chronic disease, behavioral health needs, transportation barriers, falls, fragmented care and social determinants of health. Specially trained community paramedics conduct in-home assessments, provide post-discharge follow-up, support medication management and chronic disease care, identify fall and social risks and connect residents with health care and community resources.

The program is built on collaboration rather than creating duplicate services. The Wausau Fire Department provides the frontline community paramedic workforce, while Aspirus Health contributes clinical oversight, care coordination, population health expertise and evaluation. Public health, county agencies, ADRCs, behavioral health providers and community organizations address additional medical and social needs. Early results show significant impact, including a 63% reduction in 911 utilization and a 41% reduction in unnecessary emergency department utilization among enrolled participants. The program also reports stronger primary care connections, improved coordination, increased identification of social needs, and greater ability for residents to safely remain at home. A key element of sustainability is the regional hub model, which allows communities to share training, infrastructure, technology, administrative support and expertise rather than developing separate programs independently.

*Beyond the 911 Call* demonstrates how EMS, health care, public health, government and community organizations can work together to address problems upstream, reduce avoidable health care use and help vulnerable rural residents remain healthy, independent and connected to needed resources. It represents a scalable model of innovation, collaboration, stewardship and community impact.

Award winners each receive a plaque of recognition and a \$3,000 grant to continue to fulfill the mission and activities of these valuable programs. The WHA Foundation thanks all nominations submitted for this year's award.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- WHA in Washington DC to talk 340B, MDH/LVH and Medicaid Funding
- 2026 Quarter 3 Quality Snapshot Highlights Wisconsin's National Leadership in Patient Experience
- Annual Hospital Board of Directors' Educational Event to Be Held Nov. 17 in Madison
- Register Today for the Last Two Webinars in the Workforce Webinar Series
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## EDUCATION EVENTS

### Oct. 15, 2026

Substance Use Disorders Management Boot Camp

### Oct. 15, 2026

Culture College – Breakthrough Strategies for Creating and Sustaining a Magnetic Culture

### Oct. 20, 2026

Wlpop Virtual Training: Session 1