

Wisconsin Research & Education Network

Annual Report 2008-09

The Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN) is a statewide practice-based research network of over 100 primary care physicians and academic researchers who conduct translational research projects in “real world” family practices across Wisconsin.



Wisconsin Research & Education Network

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I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Wisconsin Research and Education Network is to improve health outcomes for the people of Wisconsin through education, and through promoting and conducting primary care research in partnership with primary care clinicians and the communities they serve.

II. WREN Leadership

Steering Committee

The WREN Steering Committee consists of representatives from the University of Wisconsin and Medical College of Wisconsin Departments of Family and Community Medicine and WREN general membership. The Steering Committee establishes overall direction and policy for the organization.

Dennis Baumgardner, MD
Aurora UW Medical Group

Mary Beth Plane, PhD
UW Department of Family Medicine

John Beasley, MD
UW Department of Family Medicine

Ken Schellhase, MD
Medical College of Wisconsin

Rod Erickson, MD
Lake Tomah Clinic

Greg Simmons
MetaStar, Inc.

Kari Lathrop-Capaul, MD
Affinity Medical Group

Paul Smith, MD
UW Department of Family Medicine

Valerie Gilchrist, MD
UW Department of Family Medicine

Paul Treder, APNP
Affinity Medical Group

Advisory Committee

WREN has assembled and convened its first Advisory Board in November 2008. The board's purpose is threefold: 1) develop and make policy and procedural recommendations to the Steering Committee, 2) advocate for WREN to the general public and to funders, and 3) advocate for Wisconsin citizens in regard to WREN activities. Greg Simmons will serve as Chair of the Advisory Board for a three-year term. The Advisory Board will convene again May 7, 2009 in Madison, WI.

Howard Bailey, MD
Wisconsin Network for Health Research (WiNHR)

Larry Pheifer
WI Academy of Family Physicians

Marc Drezner, MD
UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research

Chuck Shabino, MD
Wisconsin Hospital Association

Molly Jahn, PhD
UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Greg Simmons
MetaStar, Inc.

Nancy Nankivil
Wisconsin Medical Society

Paul Smith, MD
UW Department of Family Medicine

Kristin McManmon
St. Mary's Hospital

Geoffrey R. Swain, MD, MPH
City of Milwaukee Health Department

Kathleen O. Smith
UW School of Medicine and Public Health

Bruce L. Van Cleave, MD
Aurora Health Care

Zorba Paster, MD
Dean Health System

Steve Yale, MD
Marshfield Clinic

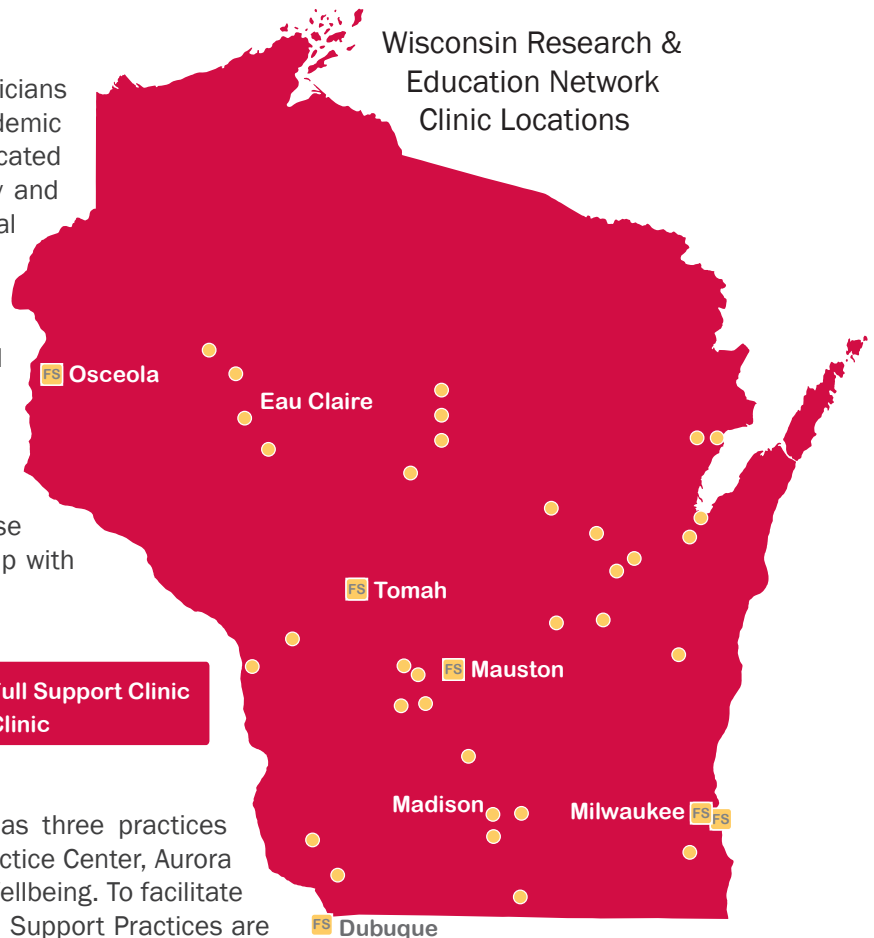
III. WREN Staff

WREN went through substantial growth over the last two years. Funding through the UW School of Medicine and Public Health’s Clinical Translational Science Award (CTSA) has allowed WREN to expand its staff from a Director and a full-time network coordinator to two full-time regional research coordinators, located in Eau Claire and Milwaukee, two full-time research coordinators in Madison, a half-time administrative assistant and a 75% time project manager/technical writer. Due to the current economic climate we made some cutbacks to the budget including personnel. One full-time staff position, a regional research coordinator has been vacant since September 2008 and we decided not fill this position. We have reallocated duties to other staff. We made shifts in salary support for WREN staff. During part of 2009, the Center for Urban Population Health employed Katherine Pronschinske 50% time. The Eau Claire Family Medicine Residency employs Peggy O’Halloran 40% time.

Paul Smith, MD, WREN Director	0.80 FTE
Michael Grasmick, PhD, Network Coordinator	1.00 FTE
Adina Tucker, Administrative Assistant	0.50 FTE
Kelly Kwiatkowski, Project manager/Technical writer	0.75 FTE
Peggy O’Halloran, Regional Research Coordinator	0.60 FTE
Cindy Colombo, Regional Research Coordinator	1.00 FTE
Katherine Pronschinske, Regional Research Coordinator	0.50 FTE
Student hourly	10-15 hr/wk

IV. WREN Membership

WREN membership is available to primary care clinicians who actively practice in Wisconsin or academic researchers whose primary place of employment is located in Wisconsin. WREN confirms membership annually and offers a choice of becoming a dues-paying general member, an affiliate member, or a student member. Currently WREN membership includes 39 general members, and 89 affiliate members (128 total). WREN refined the definitions of affiliate and general membership, and promoted these new designations to attract members this year. Also in 2008, we made complete membership information available on the WREN website, and added the option for new members to register online. We will continue with these efforts in the coming year to expand our partnership with family practice clinicians across the state.



V. WREN Clinics

WREN has practice support agreements with five medical organizations at this time. Aurora Health Care Inc. is new to WREN in 2008 and has three practices participating in WREN projects: St. Luke’s Family Practice Center, Aurora Sinai Family Care Center, and Wiselives Center for Wellbeing. To facilitate implementation of WREN projects on site, these Full Support Practices are

assigned a WREN Regional Research Coordinator and receive \$10,000 per year for approximately 20% FTE of clinic staff time to facilitate implementation of WREN projects on site.

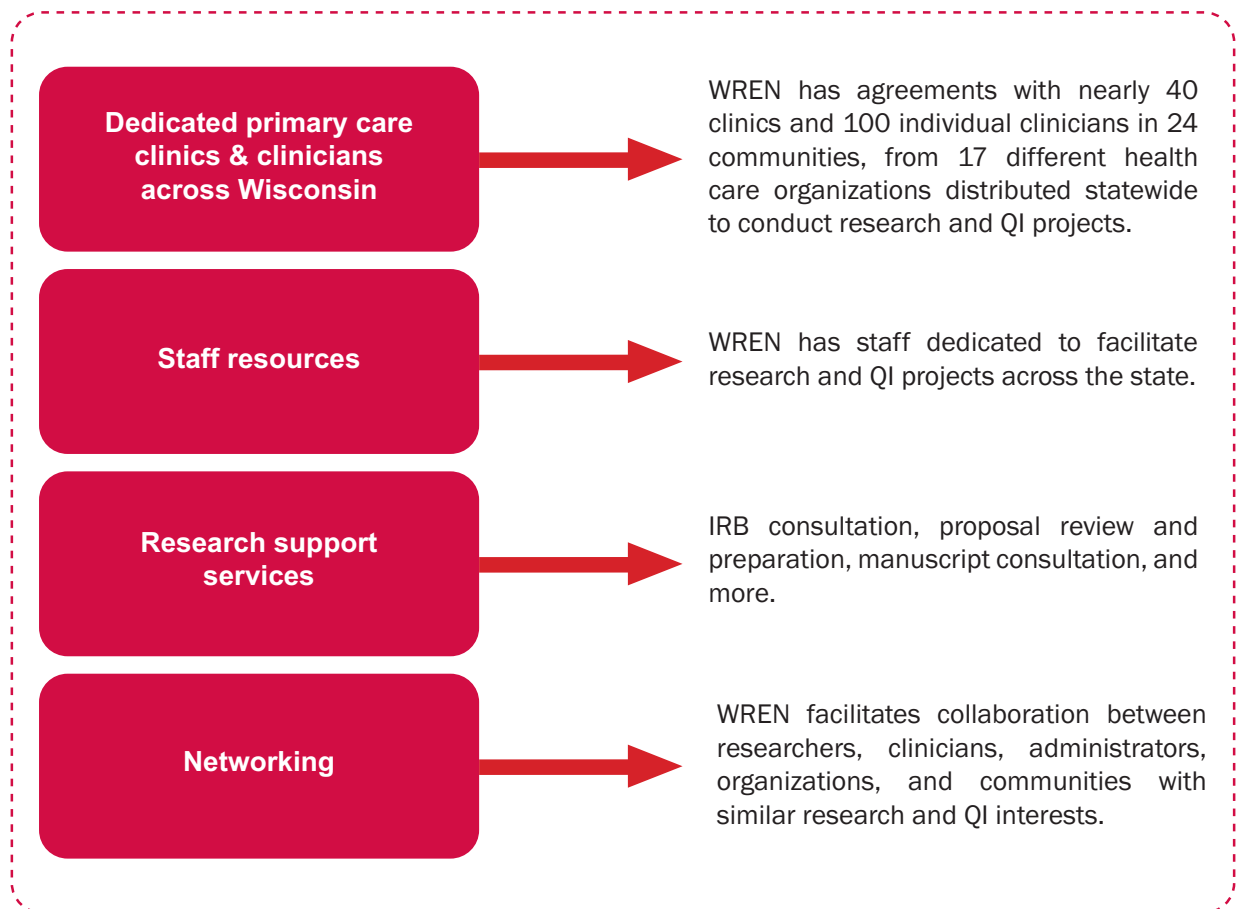
- Osceola Medical Center, Osceola, WI
- Mile Bluff Clinic, Mauston, WI
- Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, Lake Tomah Clinic, Tomah, WI
- The Medical Associates Clinic, Dubuque, IA
- Aurora Health Care Inc., St. Luke’s Family Practice Center, Aurora Sinai Family Care Center and Wiselives Center for Wellbeing, Milwaukee, WI

VI. WREN Infrastructure and Services

The Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN) is a statewide practice-based research network of over 128 primary care physicians and academic researchers who conduct translational research projects in “real world” family practices across Wisconsin. WREN provides investigators an established, efficiently run primary care research infrastructure that includes:

- A “real world” laboratory for conducting research that answers questions important to primary care.
- Research support services like grant proposal review and preparation, IRB consultation, subject recruitment, data collection, data analysis and manuscript consultation.
- Network facilitation of statewide collaborations between academic researchers, physicians, administrators and organizations.

WREN Infrastructure



VII. Projects

Problem Density, Mental Workload and Medical Error in Primary Care Practice

This was an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) funded project aimed at studying the interactions of the numbers of problems presented by the patient at clinical visits and the mental workload and errors associated with the number of problems. The study was conducted across four primary care practices affiliated with WREN—Wingra Clinic, Mile Bluff Clinic, Lake Tomah Clinic and Dubuque Medical Associates. Jon Temte, MD, PhD, is the principal investigator of this project. Analysis is complete and investigators are in the process of developing manuscripts for publication.

Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly (PRA)

PRA used proactive risk assessment methods to identify hazards and model risk in the primary care of elderly patients. This one-year project is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ) with Bentzi Karsh, PhD in the UW Department of Industrial Engineering as principal investigator. This project placed an engineering graduate student in 15 different practices to observe doctor-patient interactions during an office visit for patients over the age of 65. Data analysis and manuscript preparation are underway.

A Human Factors Intervention to Reduce Risk In Primary Care Of The Elderly

This project builds on the findings of the above PRA study to evaluate an intervention to improve care of the elderly in primary care practices. This three-year project is funded by the AHRQ with Bentzi Karsh, PhD in the UW Department of Industrial Engineering as principal investigator. This project will involve a care coordinator calling patients one week before their visit to clarify the agenda for the visit, and gather all information needed to address the agenda issues and brief the care team the day of the visit. This project is in the planning and clinic recruitment stage.

Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Healthy Lifestyles (WIPHL)

WREN entered the third year of its partnership with the Rich Brown, MD and the Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Health Lifestyles by providing quality improvement support to three clinics in Hillsboro, Wonewoc, and Elroy.

Quality of Life and Depression as Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertensive Patients

This project is funded by the American Heart Association with Leonelo Bautista, MD, PhD in the UW Department of Population Health serving as principal investigator. Patient recruitment for this project has reached 116 patients with newly diagnosed hypertension being started on antihypertensive medications to date with the goal of reaching 280 patients. Data collection has been ongoing since January 8, 2008 with 20 practices. In addition to 7 full support clinics participating, WREN partnered with 13 University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine Clinics to increase the number of patients recruited to the study. As a result, recruitment to the study increased dramatically this year with a target to meet the final recruitment goal in late 2009.

AZMATICS: AzithroMycin/Asthma: Trial in Community Settings

This project is funded from several sources including Pfizer and the Joint Grants Awards Program of the American Academy of Family Physicians/AAFP Foundation. David Hahn, MD is the principal investigator and Michael Grasmick, PhD is the Co-Investigator. This project is a pilot double blind randomized controlled trial of the treatment of adult asthma with azithromycin. This project has currently enrolled 73 randomized and 19 open-label patients and is slated to end recruitment in August 2009.

Assessing Risk in Ambulatory Medication Use After Hospital Transitions

This project is part of a federal K award for new researcher training and career development for Tosha Wetterneck, MD. Dr. Wetterneck and her research assistant have completed evaluation of two practices to assess and identify hazards during the transition from hospital care to ambulatory care, and data collection at the third and final clinic is underway. Findings will provide pilot data for a future federal grant.

Expanding Primary Care Treatment of Chronic Kidney Disease

David Feldstein, MD received funding from the UW Institute of Clinical and Translational Research to conduct a one-year project to develop and test a web-based system to track the treatment of patients with Stage 3 Chronic Kidney Disease. This project has completed telephone semi-structured interviews and focus groups with participating WREN and WiNHR physicians. WREN assisted with clinician recruitment and conducted focus groups for this project, and will assist with the second phase of this project in 2009.

Establishing Benchmarks for the Medical Office Survey on Patient Safety

WREN is one of 12 practice-based research networks across the country participating in this AHRQ project. Lyle J. Fagnon, MD from the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network is the principal investigator. WREN will recruit at least 25 practices to complete a survey about their patient safety environment. WREN member practices will be invited to participate along with practices from the UW-Madison's Departments of Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine. Survey results from the Wisconsin practices will be combined with those from other practices across the country to establish benchmarks for a national database on patient safety information.

Improving the Health Literacy Environment of Wisconsin Hospitals - A Collaborative Model

WREN began this project with funding from the American Academy of Family Physicians. Paul Smith, MD serves as the principal investigator. This project is training nine adult students enrolled in the GED program at Omega School in Madison to be consultants to St. Mary's hospital to improve the hospital's health literacy environment. The project is in the final phases of program evaluation.

VIII. Annual Meetings

On May 1-2, 2008, WREN held its annual Convocation of Practices in Wisconsin Dells with approximately 33 WREN members and friends of WREN attending. The group discussed the health needs of the state, and with the help of facilitator John Hickner, MD, helped to identify future research areas for WREN to pursue.

The annual WREN Research and Quality Improvement Forum took place on November 6-7, 2008. The forum was expanded to include quality improvement. This year's forum grew from 42 attendees last year to 72 attendees. WREN welcomed its first nationally recognized plenary speaker, Dr. Denice Cora-Bramble, who spoke about cultural competency in rural and urban clinical settings. Dr. Kenneth Schellhase gave a presentation on access to dental care for children. Dr. John Frey spoke on community-based health research and primary care. Ten quality improvement sessions were presented which covered topics like quality and safety in nursing education, parent satisfaction in pediatrics, best practices in cervical cancer screening, improving the health literacy environment, and more. Twelve researchers also presented their work.

IX. Communications

This year we have completed our branded look for WREN with a new logo. On the advice of the UW Foundation, we created a consistent WREN identity that will help us build awareness about WREN's mission and communicate more effectively about what we do. We used this branded look for our first fund raising campaign. This branding has further elevated WREN to a level that is perceived as reputable and professional. Materials created with this branding include: membership materials, annual meeting materials, website content, promotional posters, the annual report, policy papers, information sheets, and the WREN newsletter.

X. Presentations

To encourage membership and participation in WREN projects, Paul Smith, WREN Director, made seven formal presentations and attended numerous meetings to talk to numerous audiences about WREN and its mission in 2008. WREN staff and collaborating researchers also presented on WREN research projects nationally and in Wisconsin.

Temte, J. "Complexity in Primary Care." American Academy of Family Physicians National Research Network 2008 Convocation of Practices.

Kietzer, L. "Quality of Life and Depression as Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertensive Patients." 2008 AHRQ National PBRN Research Conference.

Grasmick, M. "What are Important Health Issues for Low Literate Adults?" A Focus Group Evaluation of Health Literacy Issues" 2008 AHRQ National PBRN Research Conference.

Grasmick, M. "Speeding the Application of Medical Research and Quality Improvements Through WREN?" 2008 PLATO Frontiers in Life Science [Televised on WHA Public Television].

Pronschinske, K. "Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly." 2008 AHRQ National PBRN Research Conference.

O'Halloran, P. "Complexity of Family Practice: A WREN Study." 2008 AHRQ National PBRN Research Conference.

Smith, P. "Health Literacy: The Strongest Demographic Determinant of Health Status and How to Measure It." [Workshop] 2008 AHRQ National PBRN Research Conference.

Smith, P. "Health Literacy: The Missing Demographic." [Workshop] 36th Annual Meeting of the North American Primary Care Research Group.

XI. Posters

Lapin, J. "Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly." 2008 AHRQ Annual Conference.

Smith, P. "Statewide Research and Quality Improvement Projects in Wisconsin." University of Wisconsin Health Quality Week.

XII. Publications

Proceedings from the Wisconsin Research and Education Network's 2007 Research Forum. Wisconsin Medical Journal. 2008; 107 (7): 339-341.

Temte, J. and Grasmick, M. Recruiting Primary Care Clinicians for Public Health and Bioterrorism Surveillance. Wisconsin Medical Journal. 2009 (accepted for publication).

Eddy JJ, Gideonsen MD, Song JY, Grobman WA, O'Halloran P. Pancreatitis in Pregnancy. Obstet Gynecol. 2008 Nov;112(5):1075-81.

XIII. Fundraising

WREN launched its first campaign in December 2008 to raise funds for an endowment to support primary care research. To date WREN has exceeded its goal of \$8,000. As of April 2009 WREN received \$8025 in donations. The UW-Madison Department of Family Medicine and the Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians will provide matching funds, each up to \$8,000, making the WREN fund \$24,025 this fiscal year. These funds are increasingly important to WREN given the current economic climate. WREN is making every effort to diversify its funding sources in order to continue its long tradition of conducting primary care practice-based research in Wisconsin.

XIV. Budget

During 2008-09 WREN had a total operating budget of \$581,629. This funding was from a diverse mix of sources including ICTR-CAP, AHRQ, AAFP-Foundation (funded 2 grants), WAFP, ICTR Type 2 Pilot Grant, American Heart Association and WiNHR. The table below illustrates the funding source as percent of the total.

FY 2008-09 Funding Sources	Amount Funding	Percent Total
ICTR-CAP	\$454,691	78.2%
American Heart Association	\$57,304	9.9%
AHRQ (PRA2)	\$28,540	4.9%
WAFP	\$8000	1.4%
DFM	\$8000	1.4%
Donations/Gifts	\$8025	1.4%
WiNHR	\$6000	1.0%
ICTR Pilot Funding	\$5748	1.0%
AAFP Foundation (Azomatics)	\$3321	0.6%
AAFP Foundation (Health Literacy)	\$2000	0.3%
Total	\$581,629	

