



## WREN sets direction at 2008 Convocation

Thirty-three WREN members and friends attended the WREN Convocation of practices in Wisconsin Dells, May 1-2, to discuss the future direction of WREN and to learn more about the role of primary care in public health.



Pat Remington reviews Wisconsin County Health Rankings

After introductions, Pat Remington, Director of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Master of Public Health Program, and professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health presented data from Wisconsin's Health Report Card and Wisconsin County Health Rankings. He introduced examples of how local media can engage communities to improve health outcomes and affect health policy at the community

level. Remington and his research group are currently studying whether a low-cost health communication intervention can improve community health.

David Kindig followed with his presentation "Why is Minnesota Always Healthier than Wisconsin?" Kindig is Emeritus Professor of Population Health Sciences and Emeritus Vice-Chancellor for Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Medicine. He is also senior advisor to the UW Population Health Institute and Co-Director of its project "Making Wisconsin the Healthiest State." The objectives of this project, which he presented, are to characterize the population health of Wisconsin, including health disparities, and compare that data to the rest of the U.S., identify evidence of the most cost effective programs and policies to improve outcomes, and develop recommendations for a portfolio of policies and interventions to guide Wisconsin in becoming the healthiest state in the U.S. The *see DIRECTIONS, page 6*

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### SAVE THE DATES

Annual Wisconsin  
Primary Care  
Research and Quality  
Improvement Forum  
November 6-7, 2008



WREN Convocation  
May 8-9, 2009

### Steering Committee Highlights

The WREN Steering Committee met at the Great Wolf Resort in the Wisconsin Dells May 2 where Director Paul Smith presented his annual report and discussed WREN's plan to increase the number of full support clinics in the network. WREN will be adding at least four clinics in the Milwaukee area.

The group discussed fundraising plans for WREN, the assembly of an advisory committee, increasing WREN membership and generally identifying more ways to promote WREN.

In other committee business, John Beasley will replace Jon Temte on the steering committee, however the office of Secretary, which Jon held, will be vacant until a position description can be developed. Dennis Baumgardner was confirmed steering committee chair and Kari Lathrop-Capaul chair-elect. WREN steering committee members Dennis Baumgardner, Rod Erickson, Kari Lathrop-Capaul, and Paul Treder were also confirmed.



*Steering Committee Member Paul Treder*

### Meet the newest member of the WREN team



Kelly Kwiatkowski joined the WREN staff as a project manager and technical writer in April. Kelly earned her B.A. in comparative literature from the UW-Madison and M.A. in education from the University of Connecticut.

Since 1998, Kelly has worked as a communications professional and project manager in both the academic and corporate sectors, focusing primarily on health research. She brings to WREN experience in grant and scholarly writing, news and copy writing, public relations, desktop publishing and design, developing communications strategies, and project management.

Kelly's research interests include health informatics research, specifically patient-centered IT resources to support better health decisions and nutrition and lifestyle modification for disease prevention.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two small children, reading and writing poetry, gardening, and working on home improvement projects.

### WREN staff to present at AHRQ

June 11-13, WREN staff will attend and present at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's 4th Annual PBRN Research Conference in Bethesda, MD.

WREN director Paul Smith will conduct a workshop titled, "Health Literacy: The strongest demographic determinant of health status and how to measure it." Later, REPSS Lisa Kietzer, Peggy O'Halloran, and Katie Pronschinske will present WREN studies in progress, including the Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertension Study, Complexity in Family Practice, and the Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly Study. WREN Coordinator Mike Grasmick will discuss the health literacy focus group findings, lessons learned from the study, and recommendations for successfully conducting focus groups with low literate adults.

# More growth for WREN



Welcome to the spring edition of the WREN Review. The long winter is behind us and I hope everyone is getting outside and enjoying the warm weather and spring flowers. Just like the changing weather, a lot of things have been happening with WREN since our last issue.

WREN continues to grow with the addition of new staff and new project investigators. We are delighted to have Kelly Kwiatkowski on staff as a project manager and technical writer. She's already busy helping us get a few manuscripts published, developing a branded look for WREN communications, and creating a WREN fundraising plan. We are also pleased to be working with two new investigators—Tosha Wetterneck, MD who received federal funding to support her research training and project and Todd Varness, MD who was awarded funding from the UW Institute for Clinical Translation Research (ICTR). Tosha will study the transition between hospital discharge and the first office visit as it relates to medication use and patient safety at three WREN practices. Todd's study will investigate insulin resistance and diabetes in middle school children.

We held the annual WREN Convocation of Practices in the Wisconsin Dells earlier this month where we carried on lively discussion to help shape the future direction and areas of focus for WREN.

Mike Grasmick, Peggy O'Halloran, Lisa Kietzer and Katie Pronschinske all had abstracts accepted for presentation at this year's Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) National Practice-Based Research Network meeting in Bethesda, Maryland. This will be an excellent opportunity to showcase what we do in Wisconsin while learning from and networking with others around the country doing similar work.

On a new front, we are working with the UW Foundation to develop a fundraising plan for WREN. In the coming months you will see some new materials—brochures and posters for example—as we try to create a consistent look and feel for WREN communications. This effort will help all of our stakeholders identify who we are and what WREN is all about.

We will keep you informed of new projects as they come our way, until then, have a great summer!

Paul Smith, MD  
WREN Director

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*The WREN Review is published quarterly. If you have questions or article suggestions please contact Peggy O'Halloran at [peggy.ohalloran@fammed.wisc.edu](mailto:peggy.ohalloran@fammed.wisc.edu) or 715-855-2057.*

# B e c o m e   a   W R E N   M e m b e r

It is that time of the year again to renew your WREN membership or become a new member of WREN. We offer two levels of membership. For \$50, you can become a **General Member**, which allows you to serve on the Steering Committee, vote on Steering Committee officers and vote on WREN policy changes. **Affiliate Members** pay no annual dues and will have all the rights and responsibilities of general members except affiliate members cannot serve on the Steering Committee and cannot vote on WREN business.

All funds from WREN dues will go directly for WREN activities. Funds support meetings and future small projects. No WREN dues funds will be used for other UW Department of Family Medicine activities or administrative support.

WREN dues are to be paid each July and are not tax deductible. However, many parent organizations or companies will pay for or reimburse professional organization membership fees.

**Thank you for your participation and we appreciate your support of WREN.**

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### WREN Membership Form July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- WREN General Membership [\$50]
- WREN Affiliate Membership [\$0]
- I would not like to become a WREN member at this time but please keep me on your list for future surveys and communications.

I prefer to be contacted via:

- Phone       Email       Fax       U.S. Mail

Make checks payable to WREN and send them along with this form to:  
Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN), ATTENTION: Adina Tucker, Department of Family Medicine,  
777 South Mills Street, Madison, WI 53715

### WREN Partners with UW Health Extension

The Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) at the UW Madison is building infrastructure to facilitate research that involves communities. ICTR has chosen to work with WREN and the newly developed Health Extension Office to meet this goal. The two groups are discussing ways to work collaboratively. REPSS Katie Pronschinske and Peggy O’Haloran have already planned to participate as members of Health Extension’s Regional Research Councils. Look for more information on this developing partnership in the coming issues.

### Project Looks at Medication Use After Hospital Transitions



Tosha Wetterneck, MD, Associate Professor at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health will be investigating system failures in the medication information management (MIM) process after patients transition from the hospital setting to the primary care clinic setting. Her project, “Assessing Risk in Ambulatory Medication Use after Hospital Transitions” is funded

by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Dr. Wetterneck will conduct workflow analysis and interviews with clinic directors, primary care providers, clinic staff, and patients at three WREN primary care clinics, followed by proactive risk assessment of the MIM process to meet the goals of the study. This is exciting work because it will be the first proactive risk assessment on the subject.

Researchers will spend 4 to 5 months at each clinic site performing the interviews and observations, verifying the information and assembling it into the PRA format, and performing the PRA. The study has been approved by the IRB and should get underway soon.

### New Study: Diabetes Risk Assessment in Children

WREN will work with Todd Varness, MD, MPH, a Pediatric Endocrinology Fellow in the Department of Pediatrics at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health to conduct his project to develop and validate a cost-effective and feasible field-based tool for diabetes risk assessment in children.

This tool will utilize field-based measurements of key risk factors in order to predict insulin resistance.

Key variables include validated field-based measures of fitness (the Progressive Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Run, or PACER), body composition (body mass index, or BMI), and genetic predisposition.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction will help us enroll 180 children from five middle schools around the state for this study. This innovative project will translate research performed in an exercise

physiology lab to the classroom and to the community by transforming known risk factors for Type II Diabetes into a practical tool to identify a child’s risk for the later development of the disease. It will also provide critical information that can be used at many levels—to guide public policy, target community resources, evaluate interventions, and assist individual children.

### WREN project news

Data collection on patient encounters for the **Complexity study** is now complete. Study results show that primary care clinicians manage an average of 3.23 problems per encounter and the number of problems per encounter is highly correlated to clinician mental work load. WREN staff are now conducting brief interviews with clinicians to understand what makes certain outlier encounters unique.

Promotional materials for the **Hyper-tension study** have been developed and recruitment of patients is under-

way at Osceola Medical Center, Lake Tomah Clinic, and the UW Health Monona, McFarland and Odana Atrium Clinics in Madison. So far, 27 patients have been enrolled and data collection is running smoothly. Mile Bluff Clinic in Mauston will receive training and begin recruiting patients to the study in June.

Clinic observations have been completed at approximately one third of the study sites for the **PRA study**. WREN will conduct separate focus groups of patients and physicians to discuss the hazards identified during the next phase of the study.

We are doing a “full-court press” to meet the enrollment goal for the **AZMATICS study**. To this aim, we have applied for funding from the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, we received approval for study coordinators to conduct surveys over the telephone, and we are increasing study promotion at participating Milwaukee clinics. Dr. Hahn will visit Aurora to provide a project overview for physicians and clinic staff.

*For more information about WREN studies contact Mike Grasmick at [mike.grasmick@fammed.wisc.edu](mailto:mike.grasmick@fammed.wisc.edu).*

### *DIRECTIONS, cont'd from page 1*

bottom line, Kindig said, is that Minnesota ranks healthier because it does a bit better on all measures compared with Wisconsin.

John Hickner, Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Chicago and former Associate Chair for Research in the Department of Family Practice at Michigan State University moderated the morning discussion about future research areas WREN might pursue. If Wisconsin ranks number one in health care quality, Hickner asked, should WREN focus its efforts elsewhere? Several topics emerged, including health behaviors, influencing health policy, practice redesign, physician social activism in their communities, and health disparities. The group also discussed what structure WREN should take as it moves forward in the new healthcare landscape.

During the afternoon session, John Temte, Medical Director of the Wingra Family Medical Center and former WREN Director provided an overview of WREN's history and Paul Smith, Director of WREN, gave an update about the status of WREN and resumed discussion on the direction WREN should take in the next few years.

Three major areas of focus came out of the two day convocation—a physician speaker's bureau, research on practice redesign, and ways to study the 20% of the population at the lowest end of the socioeconomic spectrum. These and other ideas will be reviewed by the WREN steering committee during their strategic planning session later this year.

The next Convocation will take place Friday, May 8 and Saturday, May 9, 2009.