WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND BOARDS

BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBER OF THE YEAR

The purpose of this award is to recognize a board of health member who has made a significant contribution to WALHDAB at either the local, state or national level over a prolonged period.

Tara Johnson

Tara Johnson has lived in the La Crosse area for over 15 years. In this time, she has raised a family, won acclaim for her work as the Executive Director of the United Way, and become a well-respected and highly effective member of the La Crosse County Board.

Tara has displayed an outstanding commitment to improving the health of the community and she continues to fight for better health care for families, seniors and vulnerable populations. She has been a vocal advocate for a broad range of Public Health services such as nutrition, prevention, education, women’s health, dental care and home health care. Along with seven other team members from the La Crosse Area Dental Care Access Coalition, Tara is a 2007 graduate of the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute.

In her time on the County Board, Tara has worked to find innovative solutions to the problems facing the community. She is always willing to improve her understanding of the health needs of the public, take on difficult public policy issues, and support the expansion of public health services. In 2002, through Tara’s leadership as the Chair of the Health and Human Services Board, La Crosse County became the only county in the state to have a Smoke Free Dining ordinance.

Johnson has been an active member of the La Crosse Public Education Foundation, the Women’s Fund of La Crosse, Rotary International and the United Fund for the Arts and Humanities. She has served as Chair of the Health and Human Services Board and the Long Term Care Council. Tara is currently the Vice Chair of the La Crosse County Board, an officer of Western Wisconsin Cares, a regional Family Care District, and has been appointed by the Governor to The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission.

Tara and her husband, Tim Padesky, live in the Town of Shelby in southern La Crosse County with their two children, Nicholas and Layna. Along with her family, Tara now embarks on a new challenge, a race to become the next State Senator from the 32nd Senate District.