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A Quarterly Insight of the WPHA Retired Professionals Section

# Retiree News

### current topics >>>

## Seeking Section Leadership in 2020-2021

Please consider volunteering to serve as our 2020 Retiree Section Co-Chair or to assist with the Retiree Section Newsletter in 2020 and/or 2021 (immediate openings available).

The Co-Chair position takes about 4 hours per month and would transition to Chair in 2021. This person would help develop and guide the accomplishment of the Section Workplan for 2020-21 and would be invited to attend in person or by phone the WPHA Board, Committee, and Section Leadership Meetings, held two-three times per year.

The volunteer(s) assisting with the *Retiree Section News* would work with the current Newsletter volunteer(s) and WPHA staff for about 3 hours, working from home, for each of the 3 or 4 newsletter editions in 2020 and/or 2021. Work on only one issue or many or just write an article, it's up to you.

If you are interested in learning more about these positions, before actually volunteering, please contact:

Yvonne Greer [yeatright@aol.com](mailto:yeatright@aol.com) or  
Doug Mormann [dmormann40@gmail.com](mailto:dmormann40@gmail.com).

## Welcome, Retired Professionals(Retiree) Section Members!

I, Yvonne Greer, your current Retiree Section Chair, and Doug Mormann, Immediate Past Chair, are pleased to bring to you the first of four *Retiree News* (newsletters) publications for 2020. The intent of the newsletter is to provide current public health news, senior health information, Retiree Member spotlights, and to keep you up-to-date and engaged in the WPHA priorities and activities, such as the Racial Equity Awareness priority.

We currently have 33 active members and realize that although most have transitioned into some form of retirement status, we find that many are still quite active in public health activities as consultants, part-time staff, and private practice professionals. While others are engaged as church or social club volunteers, as well as many other non-employment responsibilities, including taking care of our precious grandchildren.

It is our hope that this newsletter will provide a way to connect you to a unique group of seasoned professionals who have met the challenge, fought the fight, and now have a wealth of information and insight that can be showcased and shared, remaining a valuable asset to the WPHA community. We welcome any ideas, suggestions, or feedback (including pictures!!!) on how to make this newsletter the best that it can be (see contact information in the sidebar).

*Have a wonderful day and stay safe!*

Yvonne D. Greer, MPH, RD,CD,  
Retiree Section Chair

set the stage >>>

# Getting to Know Your Retiree Section Members

**Doug Mormann** - I served as the Director of the La Crosse County Health Department when I retired in 2015. During my several decades of WPHA membership I have had the opportunity to serve on almost all of its committees and as the 89-90 Board President. My wife and I now live in Seattle WA to be near our three children and their families.

When the COVID-19 outbreak started here, I was able to volunteer to work at a COVID outdoor sample taking site for a few days and then also at the call center as part of the local Public Health Medical Reserve Corp. However, when guidelines on volunteer age changed, which prevented me from volunteering, I got drafted by one of my daughters to be a home-school teacher for my first and second grade grandchildren!



**Tim Ringhand** - Retiring from a 30-year public health career just before a worldwide pandemic has definitely been an unusual experience. The excitement of retirement is muted when family plans are impacted and great colleagues you have just left are being put under enormous stress. Not that I didn't enjoy any of the time since my Feb. 14 retirement, but with other family members in the nursing profession too, there are lots of reasons to be anxious. So, when my local health officer, Jen, asked if I could come back and support their incident command response, I went to work as a limited term employee for the La Crosse County Health Department. It was not what I had planned, but it felt right and so I'm doing what I can there three days a week. A return to normalcy (and "real" retirement) will occur as we better understand and develop Covid-19 prevention. And, I'm sure we all look forward to that. But for a little while, I'm back to fighting the spread of a communicable disease as my retirement plan.

On a more personal note, I have two daughters in Madison, each with two boys. One is a social worker with the State and the other is a nurse working ICU in Madison. That's the scary job! My son is also a nurse and lives in Dunedin, NZ. So, it has been interesting and frustrating to hear the difference in the two country's response to the pandemic.

## Consider Mentoring

WPHA is seeking volunteers to mentor public health students and public health workers early in their career. Through the mentoring process, the mentee identifies professional goals they wish to achieve and benefits from the support of the mentor to achieve those goals.

Mentees usually are not necessarily seeking guidance on how to deal with specific issues at school and/or work but rather learning how experienced public health workers navigate or navigated their successful careers.

Learn more about becoming a mentor at <https://www.wpha.org/page/MentoringProgram?&hsearchterms=%22mentor%22>.

## Update: Seniors Day at the Brewer's Game

**THE INFORMATION BELOW IS CURRENTLY ON HOLD DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WHEN THE BASEBALL SEASON RESUMES AND I HEAR FROM THE BREWERS, I WILL NOTIFY EVERYONE ON MY "LIST" OF THE STATUS OF OUR GAME. ANYONE STILL INTERESTED, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. IN THE MEANTIME, STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE! Liz Zelazek**

Liz Zelazek, former Retiree Section Chair and current member, has again set-up an opportunity for our Retiree Section members to come together for a Brewer game on Seniors Day at the park this summer. **Save the Day** note: "I've reserved tickets for **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 at 1:10 PM**. The Brewers will be playing the Toronto Blue Jays, so we get to hear and sing two national anthems! I believe tickets will be \$22 (Senior Day price) and advanced preferred parking \$17. Our seats will once again be in the Club Infield Box. **Please let me know** if you would like to attend. Spouses and friends are welcome. No need to send money yet; the Brewers will contact me and invoice us in a few weeks. I will send out an email to those interested once I have a count. Please consider joining us. It should be a fun afternoon. **Email me at:** [ezelazek@wi.rr.com](mailto:ezelazek@wi.rr.com) or **text at:** 414-331-4847."



## Racial Equity and Awareness of the Impact of Whiteness

### An Historical Perspectives:

### “Whiteness, Racial Equity, and the Covid-19 Pandemic

By: Yvonne D. Greer, MPH, RD, CD

*As we begin to explore the issues of Racial Equity and the Impact of Whiteness, we will need to acknowledge that this will not be easy. These are subjects grounded in long-standing racial tension, systematic racism, and oppression by the dominate culture. Yet, with the passage of the WPHA Resolution that declared “Racism as a Public Health Crisis in Wisconsin,” we are taking a bold move to rise above the discomfort and work together to achieve an equitable and just future for all. YGreer*

Today as we listen to the updates on the death rates from Covid-19, we are seeing that the African American population is being hit very hard, disproportional to the population size. For example, although making up 32% of the population of Louisiana, they make up 70% of all of the deaths. The same is true in Wisconsin, whereas, African Americans make up only 13% of the population, but 42% of the deaths. Plus, certain cities and zip codes with the highest populations of African Americans or other people of color, like Milwaukee’s northside, have higher concentrations of deaths (26% of city, 67% of deaths). These death disparities might be alarming to many, but it follows the health and economic disparities that have been known for years. And, it is easy for some to just chalk it up to a lack of personal responsibility due to lack of physical activity or poor eating habits, which leads to higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases. However, the root causes run *far deeper*. Looking at historical perspectives reveals how racial inequities stemming from unjust economic, health, housing, educational, and environmental policies to favor the white dominate society forms the foundation for the generational disparities that still exist today. As quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “You can’t just tell people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, when they have no boots.”

Below is a list of policies issues that has kept African American and other community from achieving the so-called “American Dream.”

- ✓ **Economic Injustice** – institutional racism in hiring and promotional practices, limited working-class income with few minimum wage reforms to keep up with inflation
- ✓ **Red Lining Policies in Housing** - limiting housing mobility to congested, inner city spaces, fosters highly segregated communities
- ✓ **Environmental Injustice** - living in urban cities with higher industrial air pollution, lead in paint, drinking water, and soil, with higher asthma rates and other respiratory illness
- ✓ **Inferior Schools** – inequitable funds & resource allocations, with higher trauma needs, lead to lower graduation rates and higher crime
- ✓ **Healthcare Inequity** – location of hospitals, lower employer offered medical insurance, medical provider bias and racism, trust issues from past inhumane experimentation
- ✓ **Nutrition Injustice** – living in food deserts with higher food cost, lower access to fresh food, and a saturation of fast food outlets

Our challenge, over the course of the year, is to be open to increasing our awareness of the issue of “Whiteness” and its impact on racial equity. This is not to place blame or shame, but to discover solutions so that we can create a better world for all to thrive together.

“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh  
[https://psychology.umbc.edu/files/2016/10/White-Privilege\\_McIntosh-1989.pdf](https://psychology.umbc.edu/files/2016/10/White-Privilege_McIntosh-1989.pdf)

### WPHA Racial Equity Assessment Report

WPHA was pleased to host an informational webinar, led by President-Elect, Robin Lankton, to share the results of the WPHA Racial Equity Assessment. During this webinar the results of the assessment were summarized while also allowing participants the opportunity to provide feedback and ideas for implementing the assessment results.

### Webinar recording of the Report on the Racial Equity Assessment

<http://badgerbay.adobeconnect.com/po9xdsonre3v/>

### Power Point of Racial Equity Assessment Presentation

[https://www.wpha.org/resource/resmgr/2020/wpha\\_racial\\_equity\\_assessmen.pdf](https://www.wpha.org/resource/resmgr/2020/wpha_racial_equity_assessmen.pdf)

### Full WPHA Racial Equity Assessment Report

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.wpha.org/resource/resmgr/2020/wpha\\_findings\\_report.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.wpha.org/resource/resmgr/2020/wpha_findings_report.pdf)

## Racial Equity Awareness – Part One

The first priority action step agreed upon by all Sections/Committees at the 2020 WPHA Leadership Retreat was to make space for addressing the issue of Racial Equity and Increasing Awareness of the Impact of “Whiteness.” Three specific actions were proposed that the Retiree Section could take to inform its members about this Racial Equity priority. By consensus, at our first meeting, it was agreed that we would:

- 1) Add an article on Racial Equity Awareness to each Retiree Newsletter
- 2) Identify resources that could be sent out prior to our August Zoom Meeting devoted to having an enhanced discussion on “Racial Equity and the Impact of Whiteness” (look for emailed articles and other resources in the coming weeks)
- 3) Identify and provide a self-assessment tool on the issue of “Whiteness” and what that means to impacting racism, to include suggestions on what can be done to increase awareness in the home settings and within the local community

### Links to More...

<https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-most-and-least-racial-progress/18428/>

[https://www.wpha.org/page/Racism\\_resources](https://www.wpha.org/page/Racism_resources)

<https://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/316/2019/11/Health-and-Racial-Equity-Resources.pdf>

# Nutrition & Boosting Immunity...

*This information is being offered as proactive adjunct measures that can be taken to boost your body's immune responses during this pandemic. There is no cure for Covid-19, and you should always follow the advice of your healthcare provider.*

With Covid-19, advanced age over 60 has been lauded as a factor that increases the risk of progressing to severe respiratory illness (pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome) which could lead to ventilation and higher death rates. One contributing factor that have been uncovered in this population was a lower level of "innate" immunity. There are three major immune defense categories. First your skin and the linings of your lungs, stomach, and kidneys provides a protective barrier that keeps invaders out of the body. The *Innate Immunity*, which includes our white blood cells and other cells that can initially identify foreign invaders that enters the body and begin the process of fighting them off. And finally, the *Adaptive or Acquired Immunity*, your fighter T-Cells and B-Cells, produced specifically to fight the invader should it attempt to invade your body again. Given that Covid-19 is a new (novel) strain of the coronavirus, no one has any acquired immunity to Covid-19.

So, your innate immunity needs to be strong to spring into action should you contract the virus. As we age, due to changes in absorption rates, appetite, medications, and other factors, our innate immunity may decrease. Consuming a diet rich in the following nutritious foods have been shown to increase innate immunity: 1) *Fermented Foods*: kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, yogurt; 2) *Vitamin C Rich Foods*: all citrus fruits, kiwi, strawberries, red, yellow, and green peppers; 3) *Vitamin D, E, and Selenium Rich Foods*: eggs, fish (salmon, sardines), cashews, chickpeas, lentils, oats, seeds (flax, pumpkin, squash, hemp); 4) *Glutathione Foods*: avocado, garlic, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, asparagus; 5) *Vitamin A Foods*: green leafy vegetables (spinach, chard, collards), orange vegetables (sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkin, carrots); 6) *Zinc*: meats, spinach, mushrooms, shell fish (oysters), seaweed, sea moss; *Other Items*: Green Tea, Turmeric, and Fresh Ginger.

But, if you can't remember all of these, just go with the tried and true remedy above all others...*Grandma's Homemade Chicken Soup!* By: YGreer, MPH, RD, CD

## In Memoriam...

Robert James Harris Jr., Ph.D., WPHA Lifetime Member, Past President, and WPHA Retired Professionals Section member passed away on December 6, 2019, at the Circle of Life Hospice in Bentonville, Arkansas. Bob, as he was affectionately called, taught at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and later took the position of Director of the Division of Health Education for the City of Milwaukee Health Department, retiring in 1991

Robert (Bob) Harris was an inaugural member of the Retired Professionals Section at its inception. His mentoring of public health workers and WPHA members enabled our Association to better protect the health of the public. Most of all though, Bob will be remembered for his sense of humor whether at work, at WPHA annual conferences, or in retirement. He was truly a great leader worthy of praise and acknowledgment. The following is a link to his obituary:

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/legacy/obituary.aspx?n=robert-james-harris&pid=194702106&fhid=2380>

**Retired Professionals Section, Contact us:**

**Yvonne Greer, Chair, [yeatright@aol.com](mailto:yeatright@aol.com) or**

**Doug Mormann, Past Chair, [dmormann40@gmail.com](mailto:dmormann40@gmail.com)**

Wisconsin Public Health Association

[www.wpha.org](http://www.wpha.org)

## Taking Extra Precautions: The Covid-19 Pandemic, Older Adults, and High-Risk Groups

Older adults and individuals of any age living with serious medical conditions such as chronic pulmonary disease, heart disease, or diabetes are at a higher risk for progression to severe illness from Covid-19 and should take extra precautions to guard against contracting the virus. This may include not only enhanced personal hygiene and sanitation practices, but also maintaining social distancing from family members, friends, and from broader social support networks such as your church or social club. Below are some websites with helpful information that can assist you in knowing what precautions to take to stay safe and sound, both physically and mentally.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

<https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Wisconsin-COVID-19-Resource-Toolkit-numbered-1.pdf>

coming soon >>>

## Retiree Section Meeting...

The next meeting of the Retiree Section is tentatively scheduled for **May 29, 2020 from 12:00 Noon to 1:30 PM**. Members will be able to join via the internet on ZOOM or by phone-in. The agenda and logistics for attending will be sent out in mid-May.