From the editorial “President-Elect Trump” in The Wall Street Journal, 11/9/16:

“He will now need to pick smart advisers and show generosity in victory.”

“Mr. Trump’s voters understood the choice, and their judgment can’t be dismissed as merely a fluke of an unconventional and bitter election year. Mr. Trump can congratulate himself for seeing around corners to spot political opportunities where very few did.”

“Mr. Trump’s support is a testament to the democratic power of discontented voters. It turns out that many of them live in states like Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin that Mitt Romney didn’t carry but Mr. Trump did.”

“The lesson the political class should learn—we include ourselves here—is to be more respectful of voter sentiment and the refusal of the American public to accept economic decline without a fight. We didn’t expect the Obama counter-reaction to take the form of Mr. Trump, who lacks any political experience and whose convictions on public policy are especially elusive.”

“The businessman likely didn’t win on his program, to the extent he has one. Voters decided he was an agent of change and rejected the progressive agenda and the third Obama term that Mrs. Clinton represented.”

“Enough voters were so dissatisfied that they were willing to take a risk on Mr. Trump’s unusual political profile and volatile temperament. They did so despite his disorganization and, well, idiosyncrasies—and despite all the traditional advantages like fundraising and get-out-the-vote that Mrs. Clinton had on her side. Mr. Trump ran the least conventional campaign in modern times, but it triumphed over Mrs. Clinton’s campaign that boiled down to disqualifying Mr. Trump on his character.”

“The question now is whether the President-elect will recognize the awesome responsibilities he is assuming. Millions of Americans have invested him with their hopes for a better future. Adversaries like China and Russia will soon test the mettle of the new Commander in Chief.”

“Mr. Trump’s job, like any President-elect, is to provide confidence and reassurance. He set the right tone in his remarks Wednesday morning, pledging to unite the country and unleash every American’s ‘potential.’”

“One of the first tests will be his personnel decisions, starting with his picks for Treasury Secretary and Secretary of State, as well as how he staffs the West Wing. Does he surround himself with smart, sound people who know how to use the White House’s levers of power and who will tell him what he doesn’t know—as he did when he selected Mike Pence as his running mate? Or does he continue to rely on his own instincts and a small coterie of advisers?”

“You must be able to say ‘I understand,’ before you can say ‘I agree or disagree.’” Mortimer Adler

RWHC Eye On Health, 11/14/16
“After an intense and divisive campaign, Mr. Trump also sounded the right note of magnanimity toward Mrs. Clinton. He should go further and drop his campaign threats to investigate her and call off the Republicans in Congress.”

“One immediate need is for more allies, and Mr. Trump could find some if he starts to repair his relations with Capitol Hill. He and House Speaker Paul Ryan have policy differences, but the re-elected GOP Congress will be crucial to a successful Trump Presidency. He should also reach out to Senate Democrats. Mr. Trump’s traditional impulse has been to get revenge on his enemies, real and imagined, but purges will waste his political capital. Even Republicans who have differences with Mr. Trump really do want him to succeed, and to help him do so.”

“Mr. Trump would also be wise to follow the example of Ronald Reagan, who adopted the reform agenda that Jack Kemp and other House Republicans prepared. Such a ready-made agenda is awaiting in the House GOP’s ‘Better Way’ plan. Most of it overlaps with the themes the businessman outlined in his prepared general-election speeches, and these ideas would contribute to a faster-moving economy that increases incomes and creates jobs. His trade protectionism and the wall with Mexico would do the opposite.”

“Mr. Trump has a chance to succeed if he follows through on his pledge to prioritize the economic growth that creates jobs and lifts incomes for all Americans. Voters tend to judge Presidents on tangible results in their own lives, and prosperity solves a lot of problems.”

“We realize that this assumes that Mr. Trump can govern differently than he campaigned, but sometimes the institution of the Presidency enlarges unlikely figures. Maybe flush with ‘winning, winning, winning,’ he’ll discover a more optimistic and inclusive politics. Or so we can hope, if only for comity and the good of the country. The President-elect is about to learn, and fast, that the office he will soon hold is the ultimate art of the deal.”

“Populism like Mr. Trump’s is not unusual in American history, but rarely do such tendencies obtain actual power. The next weeks and months are not merely a test of Mr. Trump as a manager and a leader but also of the strength of the federalist separation of powers and the American tradition of the peaceful transition between the Administrations of fiercely divided parties.”

“In Lincoln’s Second Inaugural, in 1865, he appealed to his ‘fellow-countrymen’ to work toward reconciliation and domestic peace, ‘with malice toward none, with charity for all.’ The 16th President always repays attention, but his words seem particularly rewarding after a long night like Tuesday.”

What’s Next for Washington & Rural Health?

By Jeremy Levin, RWHC Director of Advocacy

“Wait for the voters to make their judgment. How about that?”

And did they ever. The above quote is attributable to Tom Brokaw, who made the comment back during the 2008 election, but could have easily been applied to the 2016 election and how the polls never saw Donald Trump coming, at least in Wisconsin. Wisconsin, the birthplace of the Republican Party, hadn’t supported a Republican candidate since 1984 and Ronald Reagan, The Great Communicator, but on Tuesday, November 8th, Wisconsin gave its Electoral College votes to Donald Trump, The Great Tweeter.
While his unconventional campaign will likely be remembered more for its harsh rhetoric, it is his scant and loose address of policy proposals that are currently leaving those who didn’t support him, and even some who did, to wonder about both his approach to governing and moving America forward. The Trump campaign exposed, but more aptly hardened, divisions within our country: race, gender, education (which is becoming more and more a proxy for class division) and geography.

While none of these divisions are new, they became more pronounced. The rural/urban divide was stronger than I have ever recalled in my political lifetime, where once “Blue Dog” Democrats meant margins would be close, those margins expanded in favor of Donald Trump, and where Establishment Republicans in urban areas seemed to bypass “filling in the dot” for the top of the ticket. Immediate post-election ramifications are being seen in nightly urban protests across this country, but maybe they should have listened more to President Obama, who famously said, “Don’t boo. Vote!” Urban vote in Wisconsin and across the country was down from 2008 and 2012 levels. Rural vote totals were more in line with past elections and the rural voters movement towards Trump’s message may be in part illustrated by Katherine Cramer’s The Politics of Resentment, which is further analyzed elsewhere in this issue of Eye on Health.

The simple fact is the reverberations of this election will be felt in the halls of Congress, our Statehouses and our rural areas. The 2008 election saw the ushering in of healthcare reform, the 2016 election is certainly going to drastically change the healthcare models again. While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was not a panacea to the high healthcare costs that people were experiencing prior to its enactment, we should recall that farm families were previously paying outrageous sums of money for coverage that was little more than asset protection, and all because they’ve chosen a life’s work to feed this nation, which is one that comes with significant health risks. According to Donald Trump’s policy on his campaign website, he is proposing to follow “free market principles and working together to create sound public policy that will broaden healthcare access, make healthcare more affordable and improve the quality of the care available to all Americans.” This sure sounds like the Triple Aim, which healthcare has been seeking for more than a decade and a half, and one that also was a guide to the ACA. Donald Trump is also calling for major infrastructure investment, something that I sincerely hope he’ll be able to accomplish in both urban and rural, strengthening our physical connections may help to lessen our political and philosophical divisions. For rural hospitals, access to capital can sometimes be tough, but not only are these facilities necessary for the life and safety of their communities they are also economic drivers in their communities.

There is now one party control of the Executive and Legislative branches of government; I’m not sure that I will go so far to call it unified yet. Here’s a couple of policy ideas to get Washington working right away in 2017, if not sooner. Pass the Critical Access Hospital Relief Act of 2015, which repeals the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services under which a physician must certify that a patient may reasonably be expected to be discharged or transferred to a hospital within 96 hours after admission to the critical access hospital. Pass the Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services Act, which, except with respect to high-risk or complex medical services requiring direct levels of supervision, would reduce the requirement of supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services furnished under a physician or non-physician practitioner to general supervision. Don’t do anything to curtail the
340B Drug Pricing Program, which offers significant savings for overpriced pharmaceuticals to rural and other healthcare entities that can be passed on to patients to subsidize other underfunded programs for the benefit of their community.

So the election is over, President-elect Trump is currently visiting Washington, DC, a place where he and his supporters feel they have little connection and much angst against. While elections won’t heal divisions leftover from brutal campaigns or generations of history, our great democracy needs to move forward, respecting the outcome and working towards a more prosperous future for us all.

Rural/Urban: Judge Less, Understand More

From “A new theory for why Trump voters are so angry—that actually makes sense” by Jeff Guo in The Washington Post, 11/8/16:

“If you’re wondering about the widening fissure between red and blue America, why politics these days have become so fraught and so emotional, Kathy Cramer is one of the best people to ask. For the better part of the past decade, the political science professor has been crisscrossing Wisconsin trying to get inside the minds of rural voters.”

“Well before President Obama or the tea party, well before the rise of Trump sent reporters scrambling into the heartland looking for answers, Cramer was hanging out in dairy barns and diners and gas stations, sitting with her tape recorder taking notes. Her research seeks to understand how the people of small towns make sense of politics—why they feel the way they feel, why they vote the way they vote.”

“Cramer’s recent book, ‘The Politics of Resentment,’ offers a perspective. Through her repeated interviews with the people of rural Wisconsin, she shows how politics have increasingly become a matter of personal identity. Just about all of her subjects felt a deep sense of bitterness toward elites and city dwellers; just about all of them felt tread on, disrespected and cheated out of what they felt they deserved.”

“Cramer argues that this ‘rural consciousness’ is key to understanding which political arguments ring true to her subjects. For instance, she says, most rural Wisconsinites supported the tea party’s quest to shrink government not out of any belief in the virtues of small government but because they did not trust the government to help ‘people like them.’”

“‘Support for less government among lower-income people is often derided as the opinions of people who have been duped,’ she writes. However, she continues: ‘Listening in on these conversations, it is hard to conclude that the people I studied believe what they do because they have been hoodwinked. Their views are rooted in identities and values, as well as in economic perceptions; and these things are all intertwined.’”

“Recently, Cramer chatted with us about Trump and the future of white identity politics.”

“For people who haven’t read your book yet, can you explain a little bit what you discovered after spending so many years interviewing people in rural Wisconsin?”

“Cramer: To be honest, it took me many months—I went to these 27 communities several times—before I realized that there was a pattern in all these places. What I was hearing was this general sense of being on the short end of the stick. Rural people felt like they are not getting their fair share.”

“That feeling is primarily composed of three things. First, people felt that they were not getting their fair share of decision-making power. For example, people would say: All the decisions are made in Madison and Milwaukee and nobody’s listening to us. Nobody’s
paying attention, nobody’s coming out here and asking us what we think. Decisions are made in the cities, and we have to abide by them.”

“Second, people would complain that they weren’t getting their fair share of stuff, that they weren’t getting their fair share of public resources. That often came up in perceptions of taxation. People had this sense that all the sense that all the money is sucked in by Madison, but never spent on places like theirs.”

“And third, people felt that they weren’t getting respect. They would say: The real kicker is that people in the city don’t understand us. They don’t understand what rural life is like, what’s important to us and what challenges that we’re facing. They think we’re a bunch of redneck racists.”

“So it’s all three of these things—the power, the money, the respect. People are feeling like they’re not getting their fair share of any of that.”

“Was there a sense that anything had changed recently? That anything occurred to harden this sentiment? Why does the resentment seem so much worse now?”

“Cramer: These sentiments are not new. When I first heard them in 2007, they had been building for a long time—decades.”

“Look at all the graphs showing how economic inequality has been increasing for decades. Many of the stories that people would tell about the trajectories of their own lives map onto those graphs, which show that since the mid-‘70s, something has increasingly been going wrong.”

“It’s just been harder and harder for the vast majority of people to make ends meet. So I think that’s part of this story. It’s been this slow burn.”

“Resentment is like that. It builds and builds and builds until something happens. Some confluence of things makes people notice: I am so pissed off. I am really the victim of injustice here.”

“I want to get into this idea of deservingness. As I was reading your book it really struck me that the people you talked to, they really have a strong sense of what they deserve, and what they think they ought to have. Where does that come from?”

“Cramer: Part of where that comes from is just the overarching story that we tell ourselves in the U.S. One of the key stories in our political culture has been the American Dream—the sense that if you work hard, you will get ahead.”

“Oh, holy cow, the people I encountered seem to me to be working extremely hard. I’m with them when they’re getting their coffee before they start their workday at 5:30 a.m. I can see the fatigue in their eyes. And I think the notion that they are not getting what they deserve, it comes from them feeling like they’re struggling. They feel like they’re doing what they were told they needed to do to get ahead. And somehow it’s not enough.”

“Oftentimes in some of these smaller communities, people are in the occupations their parents were in, they’re farmers and loggers. They say, it used to be the case that my dad could do this job and retire at a relatively decent age, and make a decent wage. We had a pretty good quality of life, the community was thriving. Now I’m doing what he did, but my life is really much more difficult.”

“I’m doing what I was told I should do in order to be a good American and get ahead, but I’m not getting what I was told I would get.”

“The hollowing out of the middle class has been happening for everyone, not just for white people. But it seems that this phenomenon is only driving some voters into supporting Trump. One theme of your book is how we can take the same reality, the same facts, but interpret them through different frames of mind and come to such different conclusions.”

“Cramer: It’s not inevitable that people assume that the decline in their quality of life is the fault of other
population groups. In my book I talk about rural folks resenting people in the city. In the presidential campaign, Trump is very clear about saying: You’re right, you’re not getting your fair share, and look at these other groups of people who are getting more than their fair share. Immigrants. Muslims. Uppity women.”

“But here’s where Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump running alongside one another for a while was so interesting. I think the support for Sanders represented a different interpretation of the problem. For Sanders supporters, the problem is not that other population groups are getting more than their fair share, but that the government isn’t doing enough to intervene here and right a ship that’s headed in the wrong direction.”

“One of the really interesting parts of your book is where you discuss how rural people seem to hate government and want to shrink it, even though government provides them with a lot of benefits. It raises the Thomas Frank question—on some level, are people just being fooled or deluded?”

“Cramer: There is definitely some misinformation, some misunderstandings. But we all do that thing of encountering information and interpreting it in a way that supports our own predispositions. Studies in political science have shown that it’s actually those of us who think of ourselves as the most politically sophisticated, the most educated, who do it more than others.”

“So I really resist this characterization of Trump supporters as ignorant.”

“There’s just more and more of a recognition that politics for people is not—and this is going to sound awful, but—it’s not about facts and policies. It’s so much about identities, people forming ideas about the kind of person they are and the kind of people others are. Who am I for, and who am I against?”

“Policy is part of that, but policy is not the driver of these judgments. There are assessments of, is this someone like me? Is this someone who gets someone like me?”

“I think all too often, we put our energies into figuring out where people stand on particular policies. I think putting energy into trying to understand the way they view the world and their place in it—that gets us so much further toward understanding how they’re going to vote, or which candidates are going to be appealing to them.”

“All of us, even well-educated, politically sophisticated people interpret facts through our own perspectives, our sense of what who we are, our own identities.”

“And so whenever a liberal calls out Trump supporters as ignorant or fooled or misinformed, that does absolutely nothing to convey the facts that the liberal is trying to convey.”

“Maybe it would be good to end on this idea of listening. There was this recent interview with Arlie Hochschild where someone asked her how we could empathize with Trump supporters. This was ridiculed by some liberals on Twitter. They were like, ‘Why should we try to have this deep, nuanced understanding of people who are chanting JEW-S-A at Trump rallies?’ It was this really violent reaction, and it got me thinking about your book.”

“Cramer: One of the very sad aspects of resentment is that it breeds more of itself. Now you have liberals saying, ‘There is no justification for these points of view, and why would I ever show respect for these points of view by spending time and listening to them?’ ”

“Thank God I was as naive as I was when I started. If I knew then what I know now about the level of resentment people have toward urban, professional elite women, would I walk into a gas station at 5:30 in the morning and say, ‘Hi! I’m Kathy from the University of Madison?’ ”

“I’d be scared to death after this presidential campaign! But thankfully I wasn’t aware of these views. So what happened to me is that, within three minutes, people knew I was a professor at UW-Madison, and they gave me an earful about the many ways in which that riled them up—and then we kept talking.”
“And then I would go back for a second visit, a third visit, a fourth, fifth and sixth. And we liked each other. Even at the end of my first visit, they would say, ‘You know, you’re the first professor from Madison I’ve ever met, and you’re actually kind of normal.’ And we’d laugh. We got to know each other as human beings.”

“That’s partly about listening, and that’s partly about spending time with people from a different walk of life, from a different perspective. There’s nothing like it. You can’t achieve it through online communication. You can’t achieve it through having good intentions. It’s the act of being with other people that establishes the sense we actually are all in this together.”

Leadership Insights: “I Have Confidence”

The Leadership Insights series is by Jo Anne Preston, RWHC Workforce & Organizational Development Senior Manager. Back issues at www.RWHC.com.

“My 2 year old granddaughter, looking up while walking and unexpectedly seeing herself in a mirror, exclaimed with delight, ‘Oh! ME!’ It is fun to watch a child with their self-centered view of the world experience joy in just being themselves. In contrast, facilitating a recent leadership workshop, participants walked into the room having to pass a huge mirror in the doorway, no escaping looking at themselves. Reflecting upon what they saw, it begged the question, What happens over the years that leaves confidence tentative, intermittent at best even for leaders?”

“Some of it is a natural evolution from self-centered to other-centered, learning humility as we experience a mix of success and failure. And while confidence is not a static state, some ride the waves with more drastic dips than others.”

“BELIEVE! Psychologist Albert Bandura coined the term self-efficacy, defined as ‘one’s belief in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task.’ This belief structure is the foundation for self-confidence. Good news–beliefs don’t have to be true. We just need to choose to believe them, AND we can change our beliefs. Bring to mind someone who demonstrates the confident presence you would like to have. Applying that image to yourself, what if you more consistently believed you could succeed?”

- “Picture it: How would you stand differently? How would your facial expression change? When others looked at you, how would they describe what they see? Look for an opportunity to step into this posture and experience what it is like for you.”

- “Imagine feeling this way: How would it feel on the inside to wholeheartedly believe that you had the ability to succeed? How would that feel different from the times you doubt yourself and your abilities? What kind of energy would be freed up if self-doubt did not weigh you down? Sit with this for a few minutes to truly experience the emotional state of confidence.”

- “Conjure up the words: What kinds of things would you say to yourself and others if you were confident? What do you say to yourself and others when confidence is low that you would stop saying? Tune in to key confident phrases that you would like to more readily call to mind.”

“Make a list of your accomplishments. Instead of just starting the next thing, take note at the end of the day or week what you have been able to achieve. Include your team, it’s uplifting to everyone. And for that inner nag that asks, ‘But what about the things you did not get done?’ Quiet this voice by making sure that each day you take at least one small action toward something that you tend to put off because of low confidence. Avoidance of accountability weakens confidence so walk toward the challenge. It helps to break it down into small steps. For a fun tactic to address the inner nag, view this 3-minute video on how to STOP IT: http://ow.ly/cY2l3067ABT.”

“Make your mistakes work for you. Identify what you learned from them. Facilitate a discussion among your peers, ‘What is one of the biggest mistakes you have made in your career and what did you learn from it that still sticks with you today?’ Peer support puts your mistakes into perspective and reduces that gap
between how you see yourself and how you see others who you perceive to be more successful.”

“Change the story. Emotions come from the story that accompanies an experience (much like the development of a conflict) where you:

a. Observe something (such as someone speaking before you in a meeting who does a great job)
b. Tell a story in your head about it which you believe to be true (they are a great speaker, I can never do that well, why did I ever agree to speak, I am going to fail, etc.)
c. Respond to the story with an emotion (fear, sweaty palms, stomachache, dread)
d. Act on that emotion (hide, speak too quietly, perform like there are concrete blocks hanging from your brain, and then beat yourself up during/after)”

“New and improved story:

a. Observe something (someone speaking before you in a meeting who does a great job)
b. Tell a story in your head about it which you believe to be true (I can learn from great speakers like this, I will do my best, I have things to share that the audience can relate to and benefit from)
c. Respond to the story with an emotion (calm, openness, compassion, nervous but also excited)
d. Act on that emotion (breathe deeply, speak up, look at people you are speaking to, smile)”

“And lastly, for a confidence brainworm if you just need that extra boost to keep working on it, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PX9SIQdCjs .”

Contact Jo Anne Preston for individual or group coaching at jpreston@RWHC.com or 608-644-3261. For Info re the RWHC Leadership Series go to www.RWHC.com/Services.aspx or contact Carrie Ballweg at cballweg@RWHC.com or 608-643-2343.

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