Observations from the Interface of Politics, Policy & Research
As Illustrated in Recent Issues of *Eye On Health*, the Newsletter of the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative by Tim Size, Executive Director

1. Both public and private policy makers have constituencies that may trump any research. (Dec. ‘06)

   "Tell me again how this works for people to re-elect me."

2. To paraphrase Victor Fuchs paraphrasing Machiavelli & Thomas Jefferson: reform requires “hope of gain to be greater than the fear of loss.” (Dec. ‘07)

   “We don’t have to tackle healthcare reform until voters’ hope of gain outweighs their fear of loss.”
3. Research needs to make the impact of current trends real to us today. (Dec.'07)

Healthcare's perfect storm: a tidal wave of aging baby boomers meet small raft of Xers and Yers seeking lives beyond work.

4. The impact of personal income on policy tends shouldn’t be overestimated. (Dec.'07)

“That’s where you’re wrong, we are businessmen first, dentists second.”
5. Government agencies sometimes act at odds with direction of elected officials. (Nov. ’07)

7. Never underestimate the prevalence of unexamined biases. (Oct. '07)

RWHC Eye On Health

“No. Around here, I’ve never heard of any rural backwater or Lake Wobegon.”

8. Identifying root causes is easier than acting on them. (Oct.'07)

RWHC Eye On Health

“Sure we can just keep dousing fires, or we can find the kid with the matches.”
9. While preserving objectivity, helpful to be seen as sharing ownership of the problem. (Aug.'07)

10. The stated public policy and actual underlying intent may differ. (Aug. '07)
11. Conflicting values (politics) in government reflect the “politics” outside government. (Jun. ’07)

12. In an era of quality transparency, the statistical limits of “small numbers” risk marginalizing providers serving rural communities. (May ’07)
13. Tradition conceals important unexamined questions. (Apr. '07)

RWHC Eye On Health

“Why do we try not to chop off infected toes but we routinely pull out ‘bad’ teeth.”

14. There are reasons policy makers may want to stay uninformed. (Mar. '07)

RWHC Eye On Health

“Why would I want to know something that costs me time and money to fix?”
15. Research in direct conflict with cultural norms faces uphill challenge. (Mar. ‘07)

16. On the other hand, research that helps us to see our world differently can lead to us thinking differently and facilitate implementation of new policy. (Mar ’07)
17. Biggest challenge facing population health improvement may not be the availability of funding but acceptance of mechanisms to access that funding. (Jan. '07)

18. Being shot at as the messenger comes with the territory. (Sep. '07)