“Rural is happier than urban because low bandwidth reduces daily political news.”
Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Tim Size has no real or apparent financial relationships to report apart from working for 42 rural hospitals.
Presentation Outline

1. Brief Overview of RWHC
2. Why We Must Invest in Rural Health
3. The Opportunities
4. RWHC’s Champions of Health Campaign
1. Brief Overview of RWHC

**RWHC Mission** (Future We Seek): Rural Wisconsin communities will be the **healthiest** in America.

**RWHC Vision** (How We Do It): RWHC is a **strong** and **innovative** cooperative of diversified **rural hospitals**; it is (1) the “**rural advocate** of choice” for its Members and (2) develops and manages a variety of **services**.
RWHC at 10,000 Feet

- Founded in 1979 by rural hospital CEOs in several southwestern counties.
- Non-profit cooperative of 42 rural hospitals creating $3.6 B in economic activity, and 25,000 community jobs.
- 9 PPS & 33 CAH; ≈ 20 independent, ≈ 22 affiliated.
- RWHC: all employees ≈ 70.
- RWHC: all budgets ≈ $18 M; 75% member services, 15% non-members, 6% dues & 4% grants.
RWHC Top Advocacy Issues

1. Appropriate Medicare/Medicaid Funding/Regulation
2. Local Care via Health Plan Network Adequacy
3. Relevant Volume to Value & Wellness Incentives
4. Avoiding Rural Collateral Damage as Giants Battle
5. Focus on Statewide Workforce Supply & Distribution
6. All Caregivers Working Top of Education & Training
7. Focus on Caregiver Engagement/Retention
8. Promote Rural Economic & Community Growth
Rural Focused Shared Services

**RWHC Educational Services**
Professional Roundtables & Listservs, Nurse & Leadership Residencies, Preceptor Workshops, Agency Staff & Student Orientation Portal

**RWHC Professional Services**
Representing Members with Health Insurers, Legal Consultation, Clinical Services, Medical Record Coding, Medicare/Medicaid Sanction Monitoring

**RWHC Quality Programs**
Credentials Verification & Peer Review Services, Quality Indicators & Improvement Programs, Mystery Shoppers

**RWHC Technology & Other Services**
Workers Compensation Captive Insurance Company, Data Protection, Email Encryption, Information Tech Network
2. Why We Must Invest in Rural Health

The rural health challenge in Wisconsin could not be clearer: **2/3 of rural compared to 1/4 urban counties have health outcomes in the bottom half of the state.**

![Wisconsin County Health Rankings Outcomes - 2019](image)

- Top Quartile
- 2nd Quartile
- 3rd Quartile
- Bottom Quartile

- Metro Counties
- Rural Counties
Rankings Not Failure of Rural Providers

- The county health rankings do not point to a failure of talented and hard-working rural healthcare providers.

- It is what anyone would expect when most rural counties are worse than average in the “health factors” or social determinants of health that drive health outcomes—like access to care, education and employment and the alcohol and drug use that occurs in their absence.
The Two Wisconsins

Wisconsin Metro Area vs. Rural Job Growth
Index: 2008=100

Annual job totals cover all QCEW industries and all ownership types. Metro includes all WI counties that are part of an MSA (26 of 72 WI Counties).

Compiled by: Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Projected Population Change

2015 – 2025

Rural Wisconsin Aging & Losing Population

Population 65+

Source: WI Dept of Workforce Development. In addition, between 2010 and 2017, the US Census Bureau estimates 38 of 72 WI counties lost residents, with most of those counties being rural.
Baby Boomer Workforce Crisis

Nursing Deficit
≈ 27% by 2035

PCP Deficit
≈ 14% by 2035

Sources: WI Center for Nursing & WI Council Medical Education & Workforce
A Nurse Education Bottleneck

Qualified students interested in becoming nurses

Demand for nurses in the workforce

Nursing Faculty Shortage

Source: Dean Linda Young, UW-Eau Claire, College of Nursing, 11/2/18
3. The Opportunities

The ProMedica health system in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan has launched with others a 10-year community revitalization initiative that will include housing, community development, job creation & education.
Focus on Healthcare Payments

- Many are rightly calling on providers to help address the social determinants of health.
- As a key part of rural community and state leadership, we can make a real difference.
- But rural providers can only be part of solving their communities bigger problems if they are financially healthy.
- Medicaid dollars are critical and we are very grateful for WHA leadership on this issue.
Focus on the 4 Rules for Rural Prosperity*

1. Maximize Local Ownership & Jobs
2. Maximize Local Business Diversity
3. Focus on People, Profit & Planet
4. Create a Rural Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:
   - Planning—Plug the leaks & boost the business
   - People—Support entrepreneurs
   - Partners—Compete through Collaboration
   - Purse—Harness savings locally
   - Purchasing—Spearhead “Local First” campaigns
   - Policymaking—Remove anti-local biases

* “The Local Economy Solution,”
  Michael Shuman, 2015
Focus on the Healthcare Workforce

- Rural hospitals’ **financial viability depends** on an available **healthcare workforce**.
- This is not only due to **baby boomer retirements** creating a shortage of rural clinicians but also the **chronic shortage of behavioral health and dental caregivers**.
- A **strong rural economy requires a strong healthcare workforce**, and **vice versa**.
Our Healthcare Workforce Needs a Strategy

- There are new education and training programs showing promising results.
- There have been noteworthy retention innovations.

**HOWEVER**

- Workforce demand will outstrip projected supply due to major demographic changes.
- The demand for primary care cannot be met solely by the physician workforce.
- We must shift from piecemeal solutions to a statewide comprehensive & coordinated plan.

Source: George Quinn, WI Council Medical Education & Workforce, 11/2/18
Wisconsin Not Immune to Rural Closures

North Carolina Rural Health Research and Policy Analysis Center, 5/24/19
4. Champions of Health Early Adopters
Campaign Tells the Rural Story

The Champions of Health theme is designed to:

- **Elevate** the **rural provider**
- **Inform** residents about the **quality** care in **their** community hospital
- Instill **pride** in and **loyalty** to their local hospital
Champions of Health Strategy

- **Counteract urban bias**—the tendency of people to think that bigger is better.

- **Build confidence**—in the exceptional talent and technology available to residents at their local hospital.

- **Create internal and external advocates**—we want to instill pride in staff, physicians, donors, board members and volunteers, as well as residents and businesses in their community hospital.
All Revenue to Expand Current Toolkit

- Digital Display Ads
- Outdoor Ads
- Pull Up Banners
- Indoor Posters
- External Banners
- Print Ads
- Radio Ads
- Employee Brochures
- Employee Infographics
- Talking Points & FAQs
- Employee Champion Awards Program
- Search Engine Keywords
- Events/Grassroots Ideas
- TV-Web Video
Monteverde, Costa Rica