



# Rural Wisconsin Hospital Cooperative

## Executive Director's Report

as of November 2, 2010

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### **NRHA Annual Meeting-San Francisco**

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You should have received a registration pack to the 17th Annual National Conference on Rural Health, May 25th-28th at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. These are excellent conferences on a diverse array of subjects critical to the future of rural health in general and rural hospitals in specific. Let me know if you need a packet.

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### **Eye To The Sky And Hand On Pocket**

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A recent Mayo Clinic promotional newsletter shows much of western and central Wisconsin inside their claimed range for "Mayo-Flight" out of Rochester and Eau Claire base stations. The air wars over rural Wisconsin communities may be heating up. "EMS helicopters are an efficient, safe, and cost-effective way to deliver critical care to rural areas within 150 miles of the base station. Continuing studies at the Mayo Clinic and elsewhere will determine the most appropriate patients for EMS helicopter transport."

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### **Fraternalizing With Aurora Health Care**

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Before you start hearing ugly rumors, you need to know that I met with Ed Howe in the board room of St. Luke's Hospital. It was a "site visit" by the Wisconsin Health and Education Facilities Authority—combining our regular business meetings with the opportunity to meet a variety of hospital leaders and facilities around the state. While Aurora is increasingly a name to be feared by its competitors or take-over targets in Wisconsin, it is clear that their vision is very consistent with the direction of healthcare reform—"seamless, high quality, cost effective care." The question remains for many, can rural providers develop equally effective alternative approaches without selling out?

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### **RWHC Exec. Reform Talks Continue**

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This month presentations will have been given to the Prairie du Chien Hospital Board, the Wisconsin AHEC Advisory Committee and the Illinois Rural Health Association.

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### **WI & WDC Buyer Cooperative Views**

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Chris Queram at the Madison based Alliance (Employer Health Care Alliance Cooperative) and I have had a series of discussions re the future implications of employer purchasing cooperatives and health reform in rural areas. As a part of that ongoing dialogue, I recently arranged a meeting between Chris and another friend, Ann Hoyt, Chair of the National Cooperative Business Association's Health Reform Task Force. Ann is a faculty member in the Center for Cooperatives at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both are very interested in promoting the organization of employers into health care and health insurance purchasing cooperatives. The recent shift in Washington away from mandating employers into quasi-governmental organizations significantly expands the potential role of the Alliance in southern Wisconsin as well as the possibility of using the traditional cooperative model as the basis for regional purchasing alliances.

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### **NRHA Promotes RWHC Perspective**

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NRHA staff lobbyists are using with the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Finance Committee and Bruce Vladick at HCFA a copy of the letter we recently sent to Wisconsin's Congressional delegation on the devastating problem of using Medicare as the basis for an all payer system. While Congressman Pete Stark's particular proposal will hopefully not be viable, this is an opportunity to increase people's understanding of the ongoing problem an inequity of the current calculation of the Medicare wage index.

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### **Farming Magazine Promotes RWHC**

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For the second month in a row we made ma-

ior space in *Successful Farming* as part of a two part series on rural health. Enclosed are both articles.

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### **Conference: Rural Managed Care**

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The Bureau of Primary Care in Washington and the Group Health Association of America are presenting a conference series entitled "Delivering Managed Care to the Underserved in Rural and Urban America." The sessions are repeated as follows: 4/20-21 in Orlando; 5/4-5 in Chicago and 11/30-12/1 in Phoenix. If you did not receive a copy of the flyer and want one, let me know.

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### **DHSS OK's Five Year Loan Payback**

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Inspired by Glen Grady's parsimony, we proposed a pay back schedule for the disputed \$30,000 to be stretched over a five year program, starting with the beginning of our 94-95 fiscal year on July 1st. We have a verbal acceptance from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Service to accept our proposal. Pat and I consider this to be a reasonable and manageable pace.

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### **Florida Bound For Spring Break**

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In a rare break with recent bad habits, your Executive Director is taking his family on a vacation. We will be in the area of Orlando, Florida from 3/26 through April 4th. The RWHC office knows how to contact me if a need arises.

