



National Rural Health Day Key Messages

In Wisconsin, approximately 1.5 million people – one in four Wisconsinites – live and work in rural areas. Join with farmers, business owners, health care practitioners, families and community leaders as they celebrate National Rural Health Day on November 16, 2017 to recognize the vital role health care takes in our rural Wisconsin communities.

Rural communities are wonderful places to live and work. Great things are happening there:

- Rural community leaders are ordinary people willing to step forward, share and implement a vision, and drive changes that benefit their neighbors.
- Thousands of individuals and families visit rural areas to enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources located in parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and trails.
- Rural Wisconsin is an economic engine which helps to drive the State and National economy. Rural hospitals, clinics and other health care organizations are often the leading employer in rural communities.

Rural Wisconsin's health professionals, hospitals, and clinics are dedicated to delivering high-quality and innovative care to underserved Wisconsinites:

- Health care professionals in rural Wisconsin focus on building personal relationships with patients and families.
- Rural doesn't necessarily mean "remote." Through growing telehealth and electronic health records initiatives, rural health professionals are able to coordinate care and stay connected with each other and their urban partners.
- The total time rural patients spend in the Emergency Room is 56 minutes less in rural hospitals than in urban hospitals.
- New models for community health workers, community EMTs and paramedics and oral health professionals have originated in rural communities and have become models for urban neighbors.
- Wisconsin's Federally Qualified Health Centers provided needed services to underserved rural populations. Veterans Health Administration Community Based Outreach Clinics provide access to specialized health care in rural communities, where many of our veteran's live.

Collaboration is crucial to address the barriers that remain:

- Rural healthcare providers, stakeholders and local and state partners work collaboratively to improve access to care in the communities they serve.
- Emergency medical services are overwhelmingly volunteer dependent in rural Wisconsin, where approximately 30% of the our population lives, but 65% of trauma deaths occur
- Rural workforce education and training programs are needed to help recruit, retain and increase the number of well-qualified medical providers.
- Rural clinics, hospitals and other health providers are collaborating in their communities to deliver care specific to rural Wisconsin.

Celebrating the Power of Rural = Healthy Changes. Healthy Lives. Healthy Families. Healthy Communities.