



Top Stories

Join Us On Our EMS Listening Tour!

We're very excited to be in several areas next week on our EMS Listening Tour. The sessions will give rural providers an opportunity to discuss their work and the conditions in which they operate, and the final portion of each evening will be dedicated to sharing ideas for solutions that could help rural EMS providers keep their doors open while providing quality patient care.



Photo: Airman 1st Class Thomas Karol

Each session will take place from 6:30-8:30 pm. We're inviting legislators, county and municipal leaders, hospital leadership, reporters, members of the community, and YOU to attend.

- On Monday, October 8th, we'll be at Spooner Health, at 1280 Chandler Drive, in **Spooner**.
- On Tuesday, October 9th, we'll be at Howard Young Medical Center, 240 Maple Street, in **Woodruff**.
- On Wednesday, October 10th, we'll be at HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital, 855 S Main St, in **Oconto Falls**.

And, stay tuned for footage from the sessions and to learn about more sessions happening throughout Wisconsin in late October and early November.

[Read more](#)

Unpaid Medical Bills On the Rise in Wisconsin

Unpaid medical bills **are on the rise** in Wisconsin. Last year, the amount of uncompensated care exceeded a billion dollars across 150 hospitals in the state, **according to a new report put together by the Wisconsin Hospitals Association.**



Photo: andibreit on Pixabay

That figure includes both charity care, e.g., situations in which patients cannot afford their medical expenses, and bad debt, in which patients who are able to pay choose not to.

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Community-Wide Suicide Prevention in Jackson County

A commentary in the latest issue of *The Journal of Rural Health* examines the intersection of suicide trends in rural communities and the governmental resources for addressing death by suicide.

The article highlights a **coalition in Wisconsin's Jackson County** that's working to create a comprehensive, community-based suicide prevention program. Led by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Service, the coalition has significantly decreased behavioral health provider-to-patient ratios.

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More News

- A **sweeping opioids package** passed the Senate on Wednesday. The legislation places a particular emphasis on programs that aid treatment and recovery from opioid use disorder. (Source: *The Washington Post*)
- Occupancy rates in nursing homes have dropped significantly, and hundreds of nursing homes close each year. As occupancy levels go down, experts predict staff levels will decline as well. **And with most nursing home staffs stretched too thin already, that could hurt.** (Source: *The New York Times*)
- The Food and Drug Administration has announced **draft guidance that will set how it evaluates drugs for use as medication-assisted treatment** of opioid use disorder. Submit your electronic or written comments about the guidance before Tuesday, October 9th. (Source: Federal Register)
- Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) was **recognized by Wisconsin's**

telecommunications industry association for his work to promote rural broadband expansion in Wisconsin. Sen. Marklein authored several initiatives to increase broadband access during the recent legislative session. (Source: Wisconsin State Telecommunications Association)

Grants & Funding Opportunities

- The **Assistance to Firefighters Grant** provides financial assistance to eligible fire departments and nonaffiliated Emergency Medical Services agencies. The funds may be used for vehicles, training, and equipment. (Deadline: October 26th)
- The National Institutes of Health is funding culturally-relevant **research projects to address opioid use in tribal communities** and identify effective prevention and/or treatment approaches to opioid use, misuse, and opioid use disorder. (Deadline: October 29th)
- Farmers in many Wisconsin counties are eligible to enroll for **a chance to direct \$2,500 awards to local nonprofit organizations and civic groups** that are important to them and their communities, including schools and fire departments. (Deadline: November 1st)
- Accredited institutions of higher education or behavioral health professional training programs can **apply for funding to enhance training focused on opioid use disorder for students** preparing to become behavioral health professionals and paraprofessionals. (Deadline: November 6th)
- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will fund **programs for volunteers aged 55+ to serve their communities in a variety of ways**. Program volunteers tutor children, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, assist victims of natural disasters, and more. This opportunity is only available for the following counties: Outagamie, Calumet, Rock, Kenosha, Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, and Marathon. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent by October 10th. (Deadline: November 7th)
- An initiative seeks to improve access to quality health care and services for women, infants, children, and families, and will fund **programs that seek to eliminate disparities in perinatal health and improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy**, and reduce racial/ethnic differences in rates of infant death. (Deadline: November 27th)

Events

- Spooner, Woodruff, Oconto Falls: **Join us next week** on our EMS Listening Tour. (Monday, October 8th - Wednesday, October 10th)
- A webinar for critical access hospitals will cover post-acute transitional care for utilizing the swing bed program. By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to understand the key steps to initiate, implement and track progress in developing care. **Register here**. (Tuesday, October 9th)
- A **webinar** will discuss how to cope with burnout, stress, and other challenges experienced among clinicians and physicians who treat opioid use disorder. (Thursday, October 11th, 1 p.m.)
- Hear about the latest national trends in obesity among adults and youth in rural areas, in a **webinar** from the National Center for Health Statistics and FORHP.

(Thursday, October 11th, 1 p.m.)

- The **MetaStar Health Care Quality Symposium** will feature different tracks on effective communication between patients and providers, the impact of alcohol on patient care, the Quality Payment Program, and the state of palliative care in Wisconsin. The symposium will be held at the Glacier Canyon Conference Center in the Wisconsin Dells. (Wednesday, November 14th)



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