Top Stories

Rural EMS Departments Face Unique Challenges

For many emergency departments in rural Northwoods towns, responding to a call frequently involves leaving work, heading to the station, and going to an emergency scene with few reinforcements. EMS departments in rural areas face low numbers, in large part because getting younger people to join has become more difficult. Rose McBride of WJFW speaks with squad members at the Phelps and Land O Lakes EMS Departments.

And, WJFW previously reported on our EMS listening session in Woodruff held earlier this month. For the results and "highlight reel" on our listening sessions, watch this space.

Read more

Federal Officials Approve Changes to BadgerCare

Federal officials signed off Wednesday on a waiver that will bring several changes to BadgerCare, Wisconsin's largest Medicaid program. Under the changes, some childless adults on the program will be required to participate in worker training programs, or be involved in "other community engagement," for at least 80 hours a month. Individuals deemed unfit for employment- including those who are mentally or physically unfit, are homeless, or are participating in substance abuse treatment-are exempt.

The waiver includes several other policy changes, such as establishing small monthly premiums and emergency room copayments, requiring members to complete a health and wellness questionnaire, and full coverage of residential treatment for substance abuse disorder for all BadgerCare recipients.

(Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel)

Read more

Announcing the Winners of the Outstanding Contribution to Rural Health Awards
We are proud to recognize three winners (one each for an organization, individual, and program) for our inaugural Outstanding Contribution to Rural Health Awards. Each will be recognized in a local ceremony this week or next. The awards are part of our celebration of Wisconsin Rural Health Day, which falls this year on November 15th, 2018.

The winners are:

**Mary Schneider, RNC-CEN** in Ladysmith, for her volunteerism and fundraising, assistance to individuals, and contribution to her community.

**Ascension Good Samaritan Hospital** in Merrill, for their inventive approach toward addressing health priorities in the community.

**A-F County Market** in Adams, for its Veggie Voucher program, which enables residents to increase their consumption of fresh food.

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**More News**

- Data from the state's Controlled Substances Board indicate opioid prescriptions have decreased 32 percent over the last three years. (Source: Wisconsin Public Radio)

- A new guide provides resources for rural leaders looking for federal grants, technical assistance and guidance, and partnership opportunities to help address substance use disorder and misuse. (Source: Rural Opioid Federal Interagency Group)

- Job growth in rural areas continued to lag behind their metropolitan counterparts over the past year, according to an analysis that looked at data from August 2017-2018. (Source: Daily Yonder)

- Palliative care focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness-regardless of the diagnosis. The Rural Health Information Hub looks at what's being done in rural community-based palliative care. Did you know our office is currently involved in a project exploring palliative care delivery mechanisms for several communities in Wisconsin? (Sources: RHIHub and WI-ORH)

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**Funding & Opportunities**

- Grants from the Federal Transit Authority will fund transit coordination projects
that improve access to healthcare. The grants will help improve options for people with limited transportation choices and bridge the gap between service providers in the transportation and health sectors. (Deadline: November 13th)

- The Healthy Start Initiative: Eliminating Disparities in Perinatal Health program provides grants to high-risk communities with high infant mortality rates and adverse perinatal outcomes, such as low birthweight and maternal mortality. Open to public or private entities, organizations, tribes, and tribal organizations. (Deadline: November 27th)

- The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging will provide mini-grants to community programs for health living, focusing on such programs like falls prevention, chronic conditions, diabetes, and chronic pain. (Deadline: November 30th)

- The Academy of General Dentistry Foundation is accepting applications for grant support of up to $5,000 for nonprofit community-based outreach programs that provide free oral cancer screenings and education to the public, especially for underserved communities. (Deadline: December 1st)

- Implementation grants, planning grants, and training grants are available from the USDA to support Farm to School programs. (Deadline: December 4th)

Events

- **November 6th:** A full-day workshop in Wausau will help nursing home workers develop their skills in caring for those with dementia.

- **November 7th:** We want to hear your concerns and solutions about EMS at another stop on our EMS Listening Tour in Boscobel.

- **November 7th:** A webinar from the National Rural Health Association will examine the impact of clinician burden and burnout (2pm CST).

- **November 9th:** A conference in Madison will offer an opportunity for physicians and medical staff to update their knowledge about caring for those with Alzheimer’s and related dementias.

- **November 15th:** Celebrate Wisconsin Rural Health Day! Our office has a dedicated page of celebration ideas and activities for your community to celebrate the power of rural.

Hope You Had a Spooooky Halloween!