



Top Stories

Marshfield and Gundersen Discuss Merger

In big news for the patients of many rural hospitals and clinics in Wisconsin, Marshfield Clinic and Gundersen Health System have announced that they are discussing a merger between their enterprises. The merger would stretch across 13 hospitals and more than 100 clinics in Wisconsin, reports Alan Hovorka for the [Marshfield News Herald](#).



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Response Times Dictate Boundaries For EMS Districts

After years of discussion, the Town of Dane and Lodi have drawn new boundary lines for a response district based off of emergency response times rather than county lines. In a change that began on May 1st, Lodi Area EMS will respond to the calls in the northern part of the Town of Dane, while Waunakee Area EMS will keep the calls in the southern half.



New boundary lines for Lodi and Waunakee

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Policy Updates from NRHA 2019

Hello from the National Rural Health Association conference this week, where we're hearing all about rural health challenges and successes in every state. Follow what's happening [on Twitter](#) (no login needed).

An address from Tom Morris from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy outlined how the federal government is spending money to improve rural health, and [what it's prioritizing in 2019](#).



The Wisconsin Office of Rural Health delegation to NRHA

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More News

- Wisconsin lawmakers are [proposing a new bill](#) to increase the rural dental workforce.
- The University of Minnesota has established a [rural stress task force](#).
- CMS has proposed [bumping up the wage index](#) to help rural hospitals. A [policy brief](#) outlines the rural and urban disparities in the wage index.
- She didn't plan to follow in her mother's footsteps of [working as a physician in a rural Wisconsin community](#), but a rural rotation in Spain convinced her otherwise.

Funding & Opportunities

- Loans and grants to help [expand broadband infrastructure](#) and services in rural areas. Deadline: May 31 for grants, June 21 for loan/grant combinations, and July 12 for low-interest loans.

- Grants to fund public food program service providers, tribal organizations, and private nonprofit entities to **enhance community food projects**. Deadline: June 3.
- Grants to help improve housing and community facilities and to spur community and economic **development in rural communities**. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that will combat substance use disorder in high-risk rural communities. Deadline: June 5.
- Two-year grants for **disseminating training and technical assistance** to rural communities addressing opioid abuse issues. Deadline: June 7.
- An initiative to **expand Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)** will grant an estimated eleven awards to those in rural counties. Webinar on May 16. Deadline: June 10.
- An initiative to **establish three "Centers of Excellence"** that will provide information, best practices and more related to the treatment for and prevention of substance use disorders within rural communities. Deadline: June 10.

Events

- May 16: A **workshop series** in Wausau and Rhinelander will help attendees understand addiction and facilitate recovery.
- May 20-21: A **workshop** will train individuals on how to deliver the Matrix Model--an evidence-based outpatient substance use disorder treatment program. Register by May 10.
- May 21: A **webinar** will highlight current research and programs related to improving oral health in rural communities. 12pm Central.
- May 23: An **EMS regional meeting** in Chicago will provide education on collecting and using data.
- May 29: The Surgical Collaborative of Wisconsin will host its **virtual spring meeting** that will focus on rural surgical care in the state.



Wisconsin Office of Rural Health