



## Top Stories

### More On A Potential Marshfield Clinic/Gundersen Health Merger

Two major Wisconsin health systems serving primarily rural areas are discussing a potential merger that would span about two-third of Wisconsin's counties.

The potential merger between Marshfield Clinic Health System and Gundersen Health System was first announced earlier this month, and it's still unclear what a union would mean for rural healthcare. But the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* delved deep into the specifics.



[Read more](#)

### Legislation Would Help CAH Designation

Critical Access Hospitals are unique hospitals that are designed to sustain access to care in rural America. It's a designation that provides rural hospitals benefits in recognition of the unique challenges they face.

Currently, a rural hospital must be at least 35 miles away from another hospital to receive the designation of Critical Access Hospital.

But **newly introduced legislation** would remove the mileage requirement for a state to designate a hospital as a CAH. The legislation is **strongly endorsed** by the National Rural Health Association.



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### Bill Would Boost Volunteer Workforce/EMS Workforce

Wisconsin's rural areas face a chronic shortage of volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians, but state legislators have introduced new legislation to boost the volunteer workforce for these professions.

The **B.R.A.V.E. Act** (Beginning Retention and Attraction for Volunteer Emergency personnel) would create three refundable tax credits aimed at attracting and retaining firefighters and emergency medical personnel.



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## More News

- An organization helps millennials **strengthen their rural communities**.
- Lawmakers have introduced legislation to **expand the Conrad 30 Waiver** program.
- The country's first trial over **whether a pharmaceutical company is liable for the opioid crisis** began this week in Oklahoma.
- A report outlines a way to find the rural counties in highest need of **additional safety net providers and resources** and **primary care providers**.

## Funding & Opportunities

- Registered nurses can apply for projects that enhance **knowledge and awareness of cancer prevention**, detection, and treatment. Deadline: June 15.

- Planning and implementation grants to support the **consumption and access to locally and regionally produced food**. Deadline: June 18.
- Grants to construct, expand, or modernize small tribal **ambulatory healthcare facilities**. Deadline: June 28.
- Grants to **organizations that work to rehabilitate and preserve** affordable housing for rural, low-income homeowners and renters. Deadline: July 8.
- Grants to expand **health and wellness in Indian Country**. Deadline: July 12.
- Grants for projects that **improve access to oral health care**, including the purchase of equipment and supplies for low income clinics and oral health education programs. Deadline: July 31
- The application for our office's **Health Professions Loan Assistance Program** is now open. Eligible health care professionals who agree to work in federally-defined health shortage areas are invited to apply. Deadline: September 12.

## Events

- May 31: A **webinar** will focus on overcoming communication and strategy barriers for rural initiatives. 11am Central.
- June 4: A **webinar** will highlight how providers have incorporated trauma-informed care into their day-to-day practice treating substance use disorder.
- June 6: A **free boot camp** in Appleton will cover the basics of infection prevention. Deadline to register: May 31st.
- June 12-14: Say hello to us at the Wisconsin Rural Health Conference in the Wisconsin Dells. Find the **agenda** and **registration details** here.



Wisconsin Office of Rural Health