



Rural Health Development Council

December 9, 2021

Virtual Meeting Notes

Attending:

- Tim Size, Rural WI Health Cooperative
- Marie Barry, Rural WI Health Cooperative
- Nicole Schweitzer, Black River Memorial Hospital
- Jo Preston, Rural WI Health Cooperative
- Hendrik Lai, Dental Consultant
- Jaime Olson, DHS Division of Public Health
- Rian Podein, Sauk Prairie Healthcare
- Jon Temte, UW School of Medicine and Public Health
- Jeremy Levin, Rural WI Health Cooperative
- Richelle Andrae, WI Primary Health Care Association
- Amanda Wilkins, Midwest Aid Training + Education Center
- Leslie Ruffalo, Medical College of Wisconsin
- Kevin Jacobson, WI Office of Rural Health
- John Eich, WI Office of Rural Health
- Penny Black, WI Office of Rural Health
- Kevin Jacobson, WI Office of Rural Health
- Kye Richards, WI Office of Rural Health
- Kathryn Miller, WI Office of Rural Health
- Tim Dybevik, WI Office of Rural Health

LAP Award Discussion - Kevin Jacobson and RHDC

- Overview of program: Kevin provided an overview of the two LAP programs and summary information about applications this year. The group discussed the drop off in the number of applicants this year; Kevin suggested it may be due to the large influx of NHSC funding, discussions at the federal level on loan forgiveness, and general uncertainty in the health care sector. This has been seen nationally as well. Kevin also noted that he is planning to increase LAP promotion to increase the number of applications next year.
- Award recommendations – Health Professions LAP
 - Reviewed list of proposed awardees
 - Reviewer comments: Nicole Schweitzer said that each year she has participated she's enjoyed reading the stories from both the applicants and employers' standpoints. Jo Preston echoed that. Leslie Ruffalo expressed strong confidence in the process. The quantitative aspect and subjective review feels like a great combination and a smooth process. Reviewers take it very seriously (there is a lot of money at stake), and while they start with the quantified rank, there are robust conversations in the committee to verify that rank and make any needed changes. Kevin fosters that environment and process that allows for informed decisions

- Jeremy asked why a dentist in Madison is ranked highest and two dentists in rural are not getting awarded. Jon - this is someone at an Access clinic who will only see indigent/high need patients; John - this program serves underserved urban and rural; Kevin - for this program, we can't weight rural more heavily than urban
- Verbal vote on approving the list, unanimous approval
- Award recommendations - RPLAP
 - Reviewed list of proposed awardees
 - Comments from reviewers:
 - 🗣️ Ryan - second year as part of the process, provides a re-energizing of the soul, reading letters from applicants, thank you
 - Verbal vote on approving the list, unanimous approval
- Next steps: Kevin will send out letters to everyone, either with an offer or better luck next time (the skinny envelope)

Kevin presented an overview of the loan assistance programs. It has existed since 1989, lodged at WI-ORH for the last 14 years. Provider types allowed, budget, three legislative programs coordinated (HPLAP, RPLAP, and Rural Dentist LAP).

In 2021 we had a large drop off in applicants (about half of previous years). Kevin believes it will continue next year, with a large influx of funds into the NHSC from the federal gov't. Physicians and NPs had the largest drop-off. Kevin stated this has been seen nationally as well.

Kevin reviewed the award selection criteria (objective measures, plus subjective factors from the review committees). Thanks to all the review committee members!

John described WORH's concern about the next year and not having enough applicants. Kevin showed the award recommendations from the committees.

Reviewer comments: Nichole said that each year she's participated she's enjoyed reading the stories from both the applicants and employers' standpoints. Jo echoed that. Leslie Ruffalo expressed strong confidence in the process, both the quantified aspect and subjective review feels like a great combination and a smooth process. Reviewers take it very seriously (lot of money at stake), and while they start with the quantified rank, there are robust conversations in the committee to verify that rank and make any needed changes.

Jeremy asked about a Madison dentist being at the top of the list, vs 3 rurals that didn't make the cut. Jon T spoke up for the Access dental clinic in Madison (where that dentist practices), talking about the incredible amount of indigent patients served. John and Kevin described the process of scoring that would put them up high. Amanda W described the qualitative factors that impressed the committee. She also brought up a question about the salary vs loan balance ratio, and Kevin responded that the quantitative algorithm includes that ratio.

Kevin asked for a vote of approval for the HPLAP recommended awardees, and it was carried unanimously by voice vote.

- Kevin then moved on to the RPLAP, and gave an overview of the program. He asked for committee input: Rian Podein said that he appreciated the chance to read the letters and stories from applicants Award recommendations - HPLAP

- Award recommendations – Rural Provider LAP
 - Kevin then moved on to the RPLAP, and gave an overview of the program. The state budget included funding for a rural dentist Program. Because it comes from the same source, he folded this Program into RPLAP, renaming the Rural Provider LAP. He asked for committee input: Rian Podein said that he appreciated the chance to read the letters and stories from applicants. Kevin pointed out that although only five applicants were funded, all but one of those not funded for RPLAP were funded by HPLAP.

The Council approved the recommended lists of awardees for both Programs unanimously by voice vote.

HPSA Update - Jaime Olson

- There have been a number of federal shortage area changes in recent months. Jaime discussed the changes, their impact, and actions DHS is taking to address them.
- Every two years, HRSA reevaluates every shortage area in the state. For the most recent evaluation, HRSA introduced new criteria that changed scores but a glitch in the system regarding travel times and rational service areas ended up wiping out 140 of our shortage areas
- Jaime is working with contractors on the appeals process; the goal is to get all of the HPSAS redesignated by March 15

Community & Economic Development and Social Determinants of Health - Marie Barry

- The Rural WI Health Cooperative has launched a new area of work this year, community economic development. Marie Barry, RWHC's Director of Community Economic Development, presented an overview of RWHC's work and explain how it relates to the health of rural residents as well as the viability of rural healthcare delivery. (see presentation)

Legislative Update - Jeremy Levin

Federal

- Congress passed the infrastructure bill and a continuing resolution to avoid budget default. In Build Back Better bill, including funding for the federal loan assistance program, CHIP, graduate medical education, broadband, etc. is still in negotiation.

State

- There is a bill pending to allow veteran military medics and other providers to receive temporary licenses while waiting for their permanent license. A bill is pending to address "white bagging" and access to specialty drugs, e.g., infusion drugs. These are provided by specialty pharmacies, not the patient's hospital, at the insurer's request. The issue is that a patient's status and drug needs may change so these white bagged drugs may no longer be appropriate. The dental therapist bill seems to be stalled in the Assembly, but the expanded dental assistant practice looks optimistic.

Member and Guest Reports

- Amanda Wilkins - MATEC has been working with DHS on expanding access to PReP medication, including education, and it working with regional groups on access.

Meeting adjourned 11:45am