

**Rural Health Development Council
Strong Rural Communities Initiative
Steering Committee Minutes
June 11, 2008**

Attendees (in person and by conference call): Dr. Sayed Ahmed (Medical College of WI), Randi Arneson (Jackson County), Zach Baeseman (WI Office of Rural Health) Dr. Byron Crouse (UW School of Medicine and Public Health), Sue Duffy (Sawyer County), Eric Gass (Medical College of WI), Liz Lund (Jackson County), Linda McFarlin (Adams County Public Health), George Quinn (WI Hospital Association), Amy Wergin (Manitowoc County), and Kevin Jacobson (WI Office of Rural Health, recorded these minutes).

John Eich convened the meeting at 9:00a and began with community updates.

1. Manitowoc

- 23 businesses and over 600 employees participated in a Community Wellness Challenge. They lost 2,079 pounds in 100 days using the Lighten Up Wisconsin program (lightenupwisconsin.com). This program allows participants to access a program specific webpage and post to a forum.

2. Hayward

- Energy at Work is in the middle of a 16 week program with Louisiana Pacific. 29 employees (27 men) are participating.
- More Energy, a program run through the hospital for people with chronic health problems, currently has about 20 participants.

3. Black River Falls

- Working on a program with 30 participants at the Ho Chunk Majestic Pines Casino. This supplements their own wellness programs.
- Businesses that are not part of the coalition, e.g., Wal-Mart, Lunde Construction, have approached the hospital to complete health risk assessments.
- They will soon begin another program with the school district, working with 28 employees.
- About 450 attended the Healthy Taste of Jackson County event, up from 350 in 2007. Nine vendors participated. They intend to continue this next year, after the grant ends.

4. Sauk (Kevin Jacobson gave this report)

- The FIT (Fitness Improvement Teamwork) Holiday Support program and health cooking classes received excellent evaluations.
- The school district's Community Education program received a UW School of Medicine and Public Health grant to implement a worksite wellness program, modeled on FIT.
- The Villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac will participate in FIT.

- The FIT Advisory Board met with John Morgan, Department of Health and Family Services, and discussed introducing businesses to the Worksite Wellness Resource Kit, so they could implement their own programs.
- They are purchasing software, Motivation by BSDI (bsdifitness.com/Motivation.aspx), that tracks HRA and Fitness assessments and health outcomes. Participants can access their information online.

Langlade and Waupaca were not able to make the call, but Jessica Kerner provided an update for Langlade after the meeting. They are working with the City of Antigo to begin a worksite program and are soliciting for two more businesses. She said in retrospect, she would have created a memorandum of understanding with each participating employer. This would have clearly assigned duties and responsibilities to each employer and the SRCI work group.

Linda McFarlin asked if anyone has formal plans to follow up with participants and track changes. Liz Lund (Black River Falls) said they are designing a follow up survey for 2-3 years after participation and will conduct focus groups. Manitowoc said their goal is working with employers on year round wellness, not just a finite program. The focus is on continuous wellness. They're working to create a network of HR directors that will continue this work after the grant ends.

John Eich asked if the Office of Rural Health created a SRCI online forum, would others be interested? Liz said we have the list serve, but need reminders to use it. We could use direction on what we produce that's valuable to share with others. Now, we send *all* material (articles, forms, etc.) along with regular required reports.

Kevin Jacobson reported that the UW Center for Health Research and Analysis, who completed their evaluation in January, has created an evaluation tool that will be available on the ORH website.

Byron Crouse reported that the academic partners (UW School of Medicine and Public Health and the Medical College of WI) recently met and are interested in identifying lessons learned from the program. John suggested some type of mechanism or process to share ideas before the August face to face meeting. Sayed Ahmed said it would be useful to develop a method to sustain the work of all SRCI communities. The academic partnership could be a model for collaboration. He added that the Healthier WI Partnership Program at MCW is interested in seeing local media coverage of projects they fund and he encouraged all the communities to share local media stories.

Liz Lund said she would like assignments to bring specific material to the August meeting.

John adjourned the meeting at 9:50.