



# Wisconsin Office of Rural Health

Improving the quality of, and access to, rural health care.

## Supporting Rural Hospitals, Clinics & EMS

The Wisconsin Office of Rural Health manages an extensive program providing support to small rural hospitals, **Critical Access Hospitals**, **Rural Health Clinics** and **Emergency Medical Service (EMS)**. We provide training opportunities, resources and technical assistance on issues like regulation, reimbursement and relocation. We work closely with our partners to provide essential programming on quality improvement, health information technology, workforce training and financial sustainability. Our EMS programming includes free or discounted educational opportunities for rural volunteer EMTs, and efforts to more closely integrate them with Wisconsin's rural healthcare delivery system.

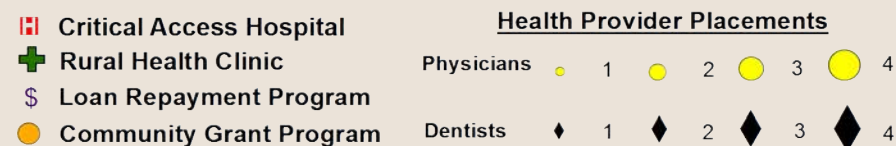
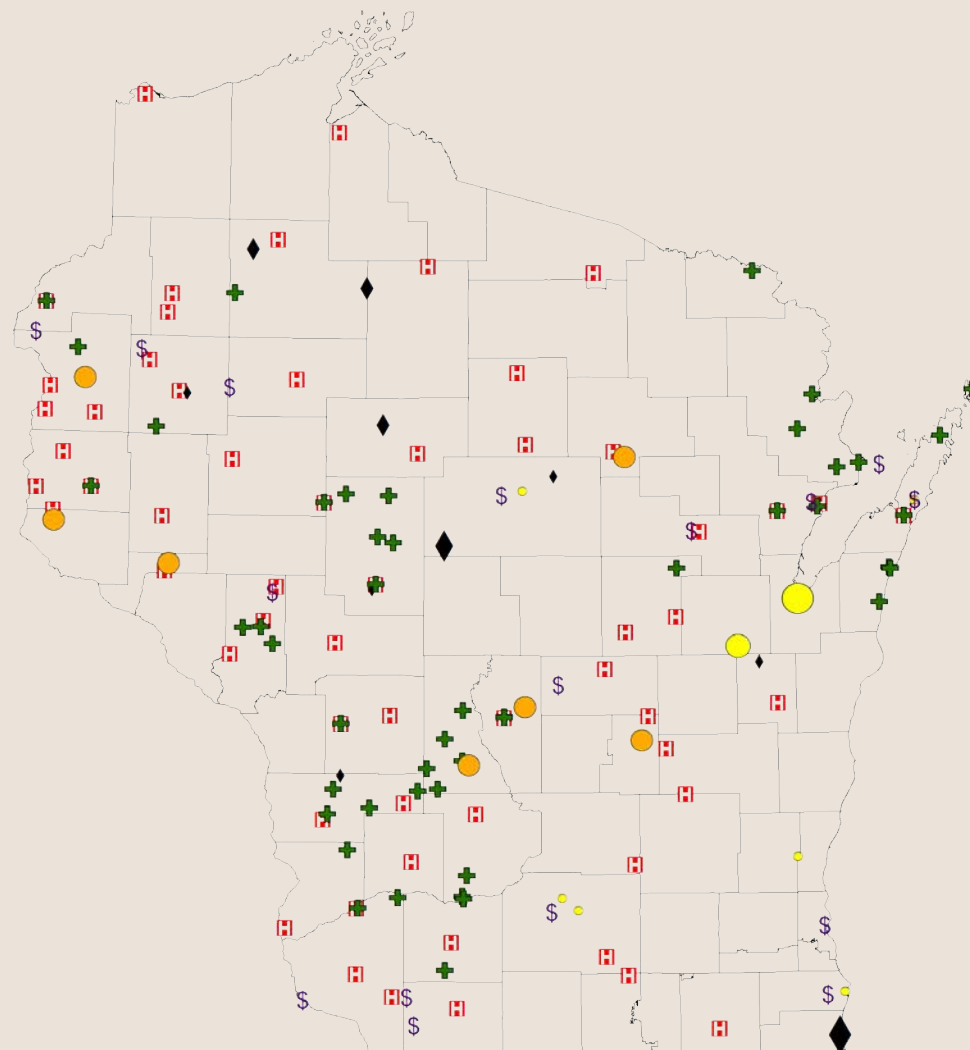
The Office of Rural Health was instrumental in creating one of the largest groups of Critical Access Hospitals in the nation – a funding designation designed to improve the financial viability and performance of small rural hospitals, thereby preserving and increasing access to rural health care. Our Office coordinates the **Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP)**, a federal grant program which provides annual funding opportunities for Quality Improvement, Value-Based Purchasing and Bundled Payment/ACO projects in rural hospitals (under 50 beds).

Each year, our Office convenes the Wisconsin Rural Health Summit, bringing together representatives from all healthcare sectors. The Summit offers opportunities for rural health professionals to network and collaborate on innovative projects to strengthen rural health in Wisconsin.

## Strengthening Rural Communities

We strive to look at the larger context around hospitals, clinics and providers – the communities they work in and the partnerships they form. We host the **Rural Health Development Council**, a governor-appointed body staffed by our office which examines the areas of overlap between healthcare and economic development in rural areas. This group has generated many innovative projects, from worksite wellness to dental access.

Our Rural Epidemiologist digs deeper into the **health data of rural populations** and the outcomes from their community providers. As we paint this data picture of the state, we can target our efforts on the communities that need the most support, highlight the ones who are thriving and present an evidence-based "State of the Rural State" to government policy makers. As we gather, analyze and illustrate this rural health data, we become both an advocate and resource for positive change.



## Advocating for Rural

The Office of Rural Health is **part of a statewide network** of skilled partners: associations, governmental agencies, universities, non-profit organizations and community coalitions all working together to improve rural healthcare. The Wisconsin Office is also **part of a national network** – the other State Offices of Rural Health, national associations, federal agencies and rural research institutes that help us learn from innovative models around the nation, speak with a unified voice for rural needs, and keep Wisconsin's place as a pioneer in rural health.

## Improving the Healthcare Workforce in Wisconsin

We have several programs that address provider shortages in rural and underserved Wisconsin. Since 1979, we have run the **New Physicians for Wisconsin Program**, with a full-time recruiter who provides a friendly and knowledgeable link to job openings all over the state, making Wisconsin an ideal destination for job-seekers. It's been so successful that in 2005, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, we duplicated the format to create the **Dentist Placement Program**, offering a full-time recruiter who connects much-needed dentists with openings in Community Health Centers and private practices all over Wisconsin. We manage the **Health Professions Loan Assistance Program (HPLAP)**, which attracts providers to underserved areas of the state by offering Physicians, Dentists, Physician Assistants, Advanced Practice Nurses and Dental Hygienists a school loan repayment of up to \$50,000 in return for a 3-year commitment to practice in a provider-shortage area of the state. Rural primary-care physicians are eligible for up to \$100,000.

To address the larger workforce needs we've teamed up with the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative to provide a **job-posting website for health professionals**, which offers instant access to openings in healthcare around the state – visit it today at [www.rhcw.org](http://www.rhcw.org)!

We're very proud of the **Wisconsin Academy of Rural Medicine**, in which the UW School of Medicine and Public Health added 25 new spots for medical students committed to working in rural areas. By providing specialized curriculum, support and rural training sites, this initiative is working today to develop the rural doctors of tomorrow.

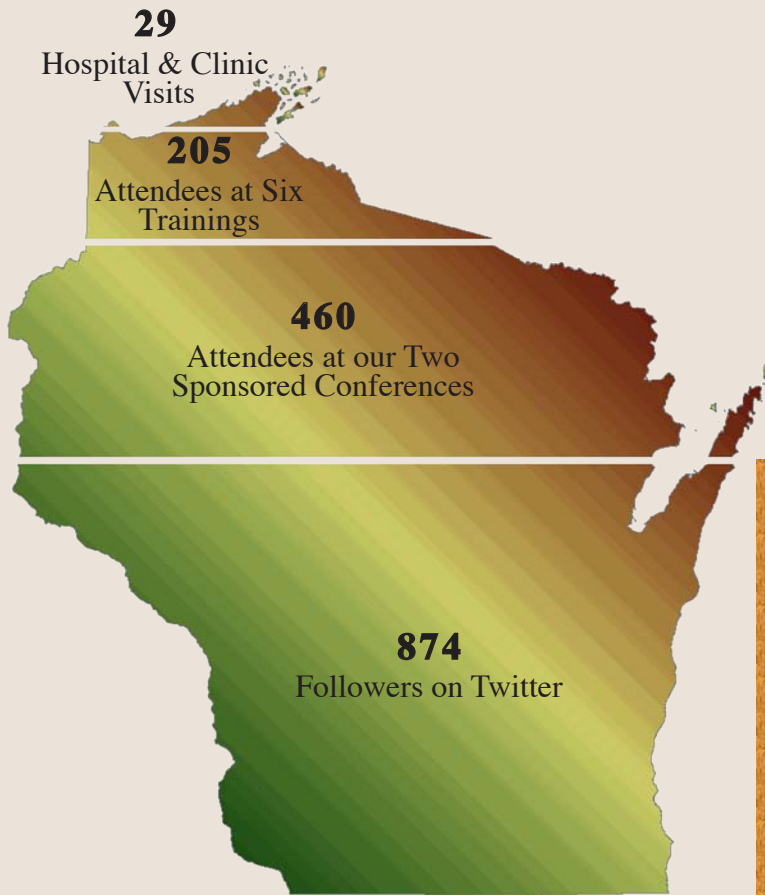
## Providing Resources for Rural Health

Our daily news feed, the **Rural Reporter**, has long been a go-to source for important state and federal news, upcoming legislation, funding opportunities and events important to rural health.

We strive to grow our online resources, with a **virtual library** of the best articles, links and tools, **recorded videos and live webinars** of our workshops and trainings. As healthcare becomes more digital, we too are creating a more virtual Office of Rural Health that allows our constituents to choose the resources they need – when and where they need them.

# Our Accomplishments: By The Numbers

## Outreach



## Health Provider Recruitment



2009-2010 WORH  
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION  
*\*Highlights\**

- Annual Rural Health Summit
- Rural Reporter eNews Letter (New Format for 2011!)
- Rural H.I.T. Blog ([www.worh.org/hit](http://www.worh.org/hit))
- Rural Hospital Stroke Improvement Project
- Rural Hospital Finance Workshop
- Federal Grant Technical Assistance
- Grant Writing and Resources Workshop

## Subscription

The *Rural Reporter* news feed is updated daily with news related to rural health and healthcare. Twice a month we send out a brief summary of the most important items: links to rural health news articles, current legislative information, upcoming events and funding opportunities. Subscribe today!



Wisconsin Office of Rural Health  
 UW School of Medicine and Public Health

800-385-0005

[www.worh.org](http://www.worh.org)

