

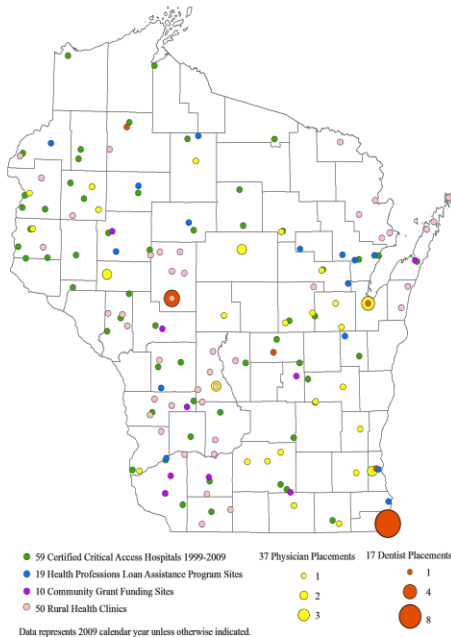


# Wisconsin Office of Rural Health

## Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program

Kathryn Miller  
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 Wisconsin Office of Rural Health  
 August 2010

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



### Workforce

- Full time Physician and Dentist Recruiters
- (Allied) Health Careers Website
- Loan Assistance Program
- WI Academy of Rural Medicine (WARM)

### Rural Hospitals/Clinics/EMS

- Flex Program
- SHIP Program

### Informational Resource

- Daily News Feed
- Website of resources
- Fed/State/Regional research

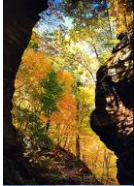
### Rural Communities

- Rural Capacity Building
- Rural Health Development Council
- Health Information Technology

### Advocacy (Federal, state and regional)

- Connecting independent efforts
- Academic/community partnerships

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## The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program: History

- The “Flex” Program was established by the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997
- Created the Critical Access Hospitals designation, allowing for cost-based reimbursement
- Provided Federal Funds for:
  - CAH Conversion
  - Creation of Rural Health Networks
  - Promoted regionalization of rural health services
  - Improved access to hospitals & rural health care



## Program Basics: State Flex Programs 101

- Health Resources and Services Administration, Office of Rural Health Policy administers the Flex Program nationally
- Program guidelines for 10/11 focus on:
  - Quality Improvement (QI)
  - Operational and Financial Improvement
  - Emphasis on multi-state and multi-CAH projects
  - Supporting and Sustaining Critical Access Hospitals
  - Health System Development & Community Engagement
  - One-Third of funding for EMS-related projects
- 45 states participate annually
- Wisconsin was fully funded for 10/11. Grant starts 9/1/2010

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Supporting and Sustaining CAHs

- Workshops and training
- Community Grants
- Quality Improvement Initiatives
- Technical assistance: Regulations, Reimbursement
- CAH Relocation assistance & support
- Cross-Collaboration: CAHs, RHCs, EMS
- Listservs: CahCoalition, CAH Nurses, CAH Financial Managers, RHCs, EMS

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Quality Improvement

- Wisconsin Pressure Ulcer Reduction & Prevention Project (with MetaStar)
- Rural Hospitals Stroke Improvement Project (with RWHC and American Heart Association)
- Improve the rate of the administration of vaccinations to eligible inpatients (with RWHC)
- Reduction in “Potentially Preventable Hospital Readmissions” (with WHA)

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Health Information Technology

- A “How-To” Manual for Meaningful Use Quality Reporting Requirements
- Weekly monitoring of national HIT, TeleHealth and ARRA news ([www.worh.org/hit](http://www.worh.org/hit))
- Both are collaborative efforts with RWHC

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Financial/Operational Improvement

- 2011 Financial Impact of CAH Conversion Report
- Foundation Workshop
- Grants Management/Stewardship Workshop
- CAH Finance Workshop in 2011
- Lean Management Course
- Rural Health Clinic Conference
- Board Training Workshop “Trustee Boot Camp”

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Rural General Surgery Initiative

- At least five Rural Hospitals will participate in a pilot program
- Goal: to assist in assuring timely access to general surgery for rural residents
- Goal: Rural hospitals are provided the right strategies to sustain appropriate general surgery services
- WORH will partially subsidize the cost of hospital participation
- WORH and RWHC will contract with a Rural Health Consultant to conduct a study

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## 2010/2011 “Flex” Projects

### Emergency Medical Services

- “Frequent User” Study/Pilot that will determine the feasibility of EMS, CAHs, social services and Public Health working collaboratively to reduce “frequent users” of EMS and ER services
- Management and Leadership training courses
- Sponsorship of the Emergency Care and Trauma Symposium

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## Small Rural Hospitals Improvement Program (SHIP)



- Applications were submitted from 58 Hospitals (of 50 Staffed Beds or less)
- Grants for approximately \$9,000 each
- Funding should start 9/1/2010 (WORH has not been given the grant award...yet)
- Funds could be used in four project areas:
  - Value-Based Purchasing
  - Accountable Care Organizations
  - Payment Bundling
  - Prospective Payment Systems

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## Upcoming Events



- Educational Webinar: Be Prepared: Take Charge of the Survey Process: August 23, 2010 at 11:00 am
- 340B Webinar: To be scheduled in September 2010
- Wisconsin Community Health Center Stakeholder Workshop: August 25<sup>th</sup> (WPHCA, HRSA, DHS, WORH and WHA partnership)

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# Contact Information

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