

Wisconsin Rural Hospital Flexibility Program  
Rural Communities Grant Program 2006-07

**GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

**Project Title:** RWHC Club Scrub      **Funding Requested:** \$50,000

**1. Applicant Organization (entity with which the grant contract is to be executed)**

**Legal Name:** Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative

**Address:** 880 Independence Lane, Box 490  
Sauk City, WI 53583

I certify that the information contained within this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I submit this application on behalf of the applicant organization.

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## **Executive Summary:**

The Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC), a non-profit network of thirty (30) rural providers, is teaming up with eight (8) member hospitals and their respective school districts to address one of the most significant threats to the healthcare infrastructure in rural communities – *workforce shortages*. Recruiting and retaining an adequate workforce is *critical* to enhancing local health care delivery in rural areas. Numerous studies have shown that early, direct exposure to health careers (i.e. awareness campaigns targeting middle school students) has a positive impact on a rural hospital's ability to provide quality services and improve access to care.

Funding through the Rural Communities Grant initiative will be used to develop and implement an interactive, after-school program called "Club Scrub" at all eight sites. In each case, Club Scrub will be a community partnership involving the local hospital and school system. The primary goal of the program is to increase awareness of health-related professions through hands-on activities. There is no cost to those students who take part. Participants will work/learn side-by-side with hospital employees representing a broad spectrum of disciplines, including: emergency services, dietary, rehabilitation, respiratory therapy, nursing, radiology, laboratory, and more. Prizes, healthy snacks and refreshments will be provided to the students at each of the six sessions.

The project coordinator, Dawn Johnson, has been planning Club Scrub with Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital and Sauk Prairie Middle School for the past six months. The first session will take place at the hospital on October 11<sup>th</sup> of this year. There are now seven other RWHC hospitals that wish to collaborate with local school systems and replicate Club Scrub in their communities. If funding is awarded, planning for the additional sites will begin in November, 2006, with an eye toward implementing all six sessions in a half-year program that will run from January 1 – July 31, 2007.

The overall goal of Club Scrub is: *To improve future rural workforce recruitment and retention by creating and implementing a health care career club targeted at middle-school-age students.*

The program objectives are:

1. Increase student awareness of health career opportunities through interactive, hand-on activities
2. Increase student knowledge of educational requirements of specific health careers by offering informative, accurate information and resources
3. Provide a positive learning environment outside of the school settings for rural youth who are interested in the health care professions

Club Scrub will go a long way in enhancing the hospitals' capacity to recruit and retain a qualified work force through a proven, "grow-your-own" approach. There are already discussions taking place about expanding the program into the high school level in the future. Given the geographic distribution of the eight hospital-community-school coalitions, this program will have a *powerful and regional* impact on the rural health system in Wisconsin.

### **Coalition Information:**

This initiative involves eight hospital-community-school coalitions and a coordinating body, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC). RWHC will oversee all aspects of planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting for the project. The following are descriptions of all the project partners:

#### **Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative**

Since 1979, Rural Wisconsin health cooperative has served as a catalyst for regional collaboration and an aggressive, creative force on behalf of rural communities and rural health. Owned and operated by 30 non-profit, acute, medical-surgical hospitals, RWHC offers its members a wide range of shared services that meet local community health needs, including: staffing, consulting, management, networking and education. Specific services include: a wide area network and data center, managed care contracting, credentials verification, quality indicators, patient satisfaction surveys, recruitment services, legal services, clinical services, peer review, financial/coding consultation, and over 35 professional roundtables. Recently, RWHC hired a workforce development manager, Dawn Johnson, to spearhead joint initiatives focusing on recruitment and retention. Successful projects to date include: an interactive recruitment web site

(developed in partnership with the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health); discounted, group contracts with placement agencies; and various telehealth applications. Ms. Johnson will serve as the “project coordinator” for Club Scrub.

### **Participating Hospitals**

*Columbus Community Hospital (Columbus)* - Is a 25-bed, acute care facility offering a wide range of inpatient and outpatient services. Inpatient services include an Intensive Care Unit, Obstetrics (Women & Childbirth Services), Surgery, Medical/Surgical Unit, Swing Bed Program and Respite Care. Diagnostic services include laboratory, medical imaging, EKG, and respiratory therapy. Rehabilitation services include physical, occupational, speech, audiology, and cardiac rehabilitation. With a staff of 240 employees, CCH serves a population of about 27,000. Their service area includes: Columbus, Fall River, Rio, Waterloo, Marshall, Sun Prairie, Reeseville, Lowell, and other surrounding communities.

*Moundview Memorial Hospital & Clinics (Friendship)* - Is a Critical Access Hospital located in South Central Wisconsin. They are based in Adams County and serve an area that is designated as Medically Underserved and a Health Professional Shortage Area. Their facility consists of: a 15 acute care beds; 10 swing beds; an 18-bed nursing home; and a four-bed, outpatient observation area. In addition, MMH&C operates a 24-hour emergency room and ambulance service, a home health care agency, a rural health clinic, and an outpatient specialty clinic.

*St. Joseph's Community Health Services (Hillsboro)* - Is an independent corporation sponsored by the Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration. They provide medical services to their community through a 15-bed critical access hospital, a nursing home, and three outlying clinics. Their service area spans five counties and consists of many small, rural towns including Hillsboro, Elroy, and Wonewoc. Their total service area population is approximately 18,000 people.

*Memorial Health Center (Medford)* - Is a 25-bed, not-for-profit, primary care hospital and clinic organization. Medford is a rural community with a population of 5,000. MHC serves several smaller communities through their satellite clinics. The hospital has been

designated a Critical Access Hospital that includes: a nursing and rehab center; an attached 101-bed skilled nursing facility; a 28-unit residential care apartment complex; and a 24-unit senior low income housing complex. The Medford Clinic has satellite locations Gilman, Prentice, and Rib Lake.

*Divine Savior Healthcare (Portage)* - Is a private, not-for-profit healthcare system sponsored by the Sisters of the Divine Savior. The Divine Savior Healthcare family consists of a hospital (59 beds), a nursing home (111 beds) and other clinics offering a full range of services including: acute care, dialysis, emergency services, surgical services, maternity and obstetrics, cardiac rehab, physical and occupational therapy, sleep lab, speech and language pathology, sports medicine, primary care, home care, skilled nursing, independent living, diagnostics, laboratory services, community health education programs, occupational health, and cardiopulmonary services. They serve Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green Lake, Marquette, and Sauk counties.

*Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics (Prairie du Sac)* - Operates as an independent, community-based healthcare provider. Their service area encompasses several rural Wisconsin extending from Poynette to Lone Rock, and from Plain to Black Earth. The hospital includes 36 acute care beds. They also operate four primary care clinics in Lodi, Black Earth, Plain, and Spring Green. Their reputation for superior clinical quality is evidenced by the fact that we are a three-time recipient of the "100 Top Hospitals: Benchmarks for Success" award from the Solucient Leadership Institute.

*Richland Hospital (Richland Center)* - Is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Richland County in Southwest Wisconsin. They offer a full range of medical-surgical, special care, birth center, and swing bed services. In addition, The Richland Hospital offers emergency and outpatient services. They maintain a close relationship with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Viterbo University, and UW-Richland.

*Stoughton Hospital (Stoughton)* - Is currently licensed for 35 beds, including: 18 med-surg, four ICU, and 10 geriatric psychiatry, Stoughton Hospital is a not-for-profit organization. Their active medical staff includes physicians board certified in family medicine, emergency medicine, cardiology, internal medicine, general surgery,

orthopedics, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, pathology, radiology, otolaryngology, plastic surgery, podiatry, sports medicine and urology. The hospital employees over 350 people; it is the fifth largest employer in Stoughton. The city of Stoughton has a population of 14,000 and is located 15 minutes south of Madison.

### **History of the Planning Process**

The project coordinator for this initiative, Dawn Johnson, serves as the workforce development manager for Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative. In that capacity, Dawn assists rural hospitals with their immediate staffing needs and develops programs that address *future* workforce challenges. As a former registered nurse and a health occupations educator in a secondary school setting, she has extensive experience assisting with their career choices. Dawn has discovered that early exposure to health career programs encourages students to: explore careers they may not have been exposed to; tailor course selection for post-secondary education; and consider related community service and scholarship opportunities. Many students currently lack the knowledge about the curricula that are required for admission to health career programs at most academic institutions.

These experiences led Dawn to research the development of a health career program that targets middle-school-age students, since this is a time when adolescents begin to see a connection between what they learn in school and future careers. Appropriate course selection is critical at this stage. It was found that very little health occupations education exists at the middle-school level in the Wisconsin schools, so Dawn decided to explore other, national programs and discovered a model that is similar to Club Scrub...an interactive, after-school program designed for seventh and eighth graders.

Dawn approached Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital and Clinics (SPMHC), an RWHC member, about the possibility of piloting a career club in the Sauk Prairie community. SPMHC enthusiastically agreed to participate. In May, 2006, SPMHC contacted the Sauk Prairie School District regarding Club Scrub, and they were also enthusiastic about this educational opportunity. Since that time, RWHC and SPMHC have met monthly to develop a work plan that includes: appropriate target groups and shareholders, select activities, and program promotion focusing on school registration, newspaper articles, and the hospital newsletter. As a result, SPMHC easily exceeded

their participation goal of twelve students for the first year of Club Scrub. Their inaugural session (focusing on nutrition services) will take place on October 11, 2006.

Since then, Dawn informed the other RWHC human resource directors and education coordinators about Club Scrub at their quarterly roundtables; there was *strong* interest in developing similar programs at other sites. When the 2006-2007 Rural Communities Grants were announced, Dawn contacted all 30 RWHC hospitals regarding the opportunity to replicate the pilot program. The eight hospitals described above signed memoranda of understanding and submitted letters of support that demonstrate solid partnerships with their local school systems.

### **Problem/Need Being Addressed:**

The need for an adequate health care workforce in rural settings is equal to or greater than what is required in most urban settings. The Rural Assistance Center in Duluth, Minnesota, states that “many communities experience health care workforce shortage problems which carry a negative impact on health care quality through reduced health care access and increased stress on providers”. This not only affects the health of rural populations, it also impacts their ability to retain health care employees. Approximately one-third of the residents in Wisconsin live in rural counties that have higher poverty levels, less insurance coverage, and older populations...which leads to a diminished overall health status.

In 2002, the Governor’s Health Care Worker Shortage Committee identified *healthcare* as the fastest growing industry sector in Wisconsin, with a 20% growth rate expected by 2008. While the need for health care workers is immediate, future demand will be greater due to our aging population and the brisk retirement rate for the present healthcare workforce. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce states that the healthcare workforce is expected to expand by more than 30% over the next 10 years, which is the same time frame when today’s middle school students will be graduating from post-secondary educational programs.

Retention and recruitment strategies for rural communities focus on greater community involvement than in urban settings. This means identifying strategies that target the unique needs of rural populations. Nurses Week (April, 2006) states that “grow-your-own” techniques tend to work best for rural communities and are often the

*only* way to assure that an adequate workforce is available locally. This pipeline approach has proven to be quite successful at Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital (PDC), an RWHC member located in Crawford County. In 2002, PDC boasted a 71.4% retention rate, which the hospital CEO credits to “grow-your-own” recruitment and retention strategies. It has been proven that, over time, ‘grow-your-own” techniques can generate more local, entry level jobs that have greater opportunity for advancement.

One major challenge facing rural communities is the migration of young adults to urban settings. It is known that a key factor in the likelihood of an individual returning to a rural community for work is whether that individual (or his/her spouse) originally came from a rural area. Although most of the research is directed at rural physician recruitment, this dynamic also holds true for other health care professions. This is due to the relatively short training time for other health care professions; closer access to academic institutions; and the ability to offer more advanced opportunities. In fact, many allied health programs are now offered via distance learning, which increases the likelihood of recruiting and retaining a local workforce. With a self-reliant, loyal and educated workforce, trends in out-migration can be stemmed.

There is also a strong incentive for rural hospitals to partner with local school systems in an effort to offer students healthcare education opportunities that are not typically available within the current curriculum. In 2004, the Wisconsin Superintendent of Schools stated that, due to budgetary constraints, rural schools need become “flatter” organizations and employ more creative approaches to education. Rural schools tend to build strong business and cooperative partnerships in their communities; school-to-work programs have become a highly valued part of this mix.

Providing encouragement and local opportunities will lead to a generation that is more likely to remain in rural communities. A significant policy statement issued by the State Superintendent was: “Rural schools should work in active partnership with local groups and organizations (governmental, business, civic organization and boards) to provide meaningful educational opportunities and experiences for rural youth. These efforts should concentrate on helping to develop leadership skills and abilities”.

## Work Plan:

<b>Project Goal:</b>	<b>To improve future rural workforce recruitment and retention by creating and implementing a health care career club targeted at middle-school-age students</b>		
<b>Objective 1:</b>	<b>Increase student awareness of health care career opportunities through interactive, hand-on activities</b>		
Outcome Measure:	Students demonstrate increased knowledge of career opportunities available in the health care field through survey data and verbal feedback		
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Measures and Anticipated Outcomes</b>
Develop curriculum of hands-on activities for participating hospital departments	May, 2006	Project Coordinator	Hospitals adopt recommended list of activities
Create a work plan that identifies individual(s) at school(s) and hospital to assist with the promotion of the club; determine meeting dates, times and location	November 7, 2006	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Individualized work plans that identify school contact names and numbers, hospital personnel, and a schedule of meeting dates, times, and locations
Create and distribute promotional materials	November 15, 2006	Site Coordinators w/ Marketing Depts.	Promotion/recruitment materials are distributed to schools, newspapers, youth organization, religious organizations, hospital newsletters, libraries
Select students	December 8, 2006	Site Coordinators	Each hospital selects approx. 12 students to participate in Club Scrub
Create a work plan to identify personnel to assist with activities	December 15, 2006, then 6 week intervals	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Personnel from six (6) different career areas are selected to present career information and facilitate a hands-on activity specific to their field
Hold six (6) monthly or bi-monthly meetings focusing each meeting on a different career area	July 31, 2007	Site Coordinators w/ Site Presenters	A total of six (6) meetings are held at each hospital
Evaluate student experiences following each meeting	Last Club Scrub meeting	Site Coordinators & Presenters	Students complete evaluation form indicating level of knowledge of health careers

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<b>Objective 2:</b>		<b>Increase student knowledge of educational requirements of specific health care careers by offering informative, accurate information and resources</b>	
Outcome Measure:		Students demonstrate an increased knowledge of the educational requirements needed in high school and post-secondary schools for a range of health care careers	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Measures and Anticipated Outcomes</b>
Hospital employees discuss high school and post-secondary educational backgrounds with students at Club Scrub meetings	Each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators & Presenters	Students gain an understanding of educational requirements and career ladders within each health care profession
Distribute career sheets at each meeting that address: career ladder, educational requirements, and state educational institutions that offer specific programs for that career	Each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators & Presenters	Students have access to information that will assist them in selecting appropriate high school and post-secondary education courses
Share web site addresses with students so they have an opportunity to further explore specific health careers	Each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators & Presenters	Students independently research health care careers in their field of interest to obtain more information
At the completion of Club Scrub, evaluate student understanding of educational requirements	Last Club Scrub meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators & Presenters	Students indicate that they have knowledge of the educational requirements for the field of interest

Objective 3: Provide a positive learning environment beyond the school setting for rural youth interested in the health care professions			
Outcome Measure:		Students attend five of the six meetings, come prepared to learn, are engaged in learning activities, and share their experiences with their community and their peers	
Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Person	Measures and Anticipated Outcomes
Provide scrub shirts for each student	First Club Scrub meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Students keep shirt following completion of Club Scrub which serves to promote the program and reward students for participation
Provide healthy, after-school snacks for club participants	Each meeting	Site Coordinators	Students are prepared to learn
Survey students' areas of interest	First Club Scrub meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Students identify areas that they are most interested in learning about; meetings focused on students' specific needs
Provide prizes and participation gifts	Each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Students demonstrate enthusiasm for program and attend majority of meetings
Promote club and students in local newspaper	Following each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators & Marketing Depts.	Increased community awareness of Club Scrub and related activities. Students acknowledged by community and peers for their involvement
Evaluate club meetings to assess students' satisfaction with program	Following each meeting	Project Coordinator w/ Site Coordinators	Students demonstrate that the meetings are engaging and the content is educational and informative
Offer ongoing opportunities to explore health care careers through mentor/job-shadow/volunteer experiences	Upon completion of Club Scrub	Site Coordinator w/ Job Shadow and/or Volunteer Coordinator	Students continue to explore the health field and become involve in community volunteerism projects

## **Evaluation Plan:**

See “Project Workplan” (above) for detailed measurements and outcomes for specific activities and objectives. It will be difficult, if not impossible to measure whether the overall project goal has been achieved since the participating students will not be entering the workforce for another 6-10 years. For the short term, the eight Club Scrub hospitals are committed to providing a positive learning environment where students can learn about various health care career opportunities/resources, as well as the educational requirements for those careers. This will be accomplished through interactive, hand-on activities.

The project coordinator, Dawn Johnson, will develop/distribute evaluation forms to all sites and collect data at the end of each session (i.e. every six weeks). This information will be used a) to make “real time” adjustments to the program and b) for the mid-term and final reports required of this project. In addition, session attendance records will be used in combination with the results from a final evaluation/satisfaction survey. This information will help gauge the students’ knowledge level re: health careers in general, and the educational requirements for a specific career of their choice. One simple but important question that will be posed...”Where do you see yourself, career-wise, in ten years?”

**Project Budget:**

<b>(A) Salaries</b>						
Project Coordinator						
Site Coordinators/Presenters						
				Subtotal		
<b>(B) Fringe Benefits</b>						
Project Coordinator						
Site Coordinators/Presenters						
				Subtotal		
<b>(C) Travel</b>						
Project Coordinator						
				Subtotal		
<b>(D) Supplies</b>						
Prizes						
Food/Refreshments						
Other						
				Subtotal		
<b>(E) Marketing/Promotion</b>						
				Subtotal		
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>						
<b>IN-KIND MATCH CONTRIBUTION</b>						
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>						

**Budget Narrative**

**(A) Salaries**

*Project Coordinator (250 hours @\_\_\_\_.)*

To be responsible for *overall* coordination and management of the project, including: planning, training, implementation, marketing/promotion, and evaluation.

Qualifications for this position are included in “Appendix B: Biographical Information”.

This individual will be based at the RWHC office in Sauk City, Wisconsin. RWHC will

contribute all related overhead (inc. office space and administrative support) as in-kind support.

*Site Coordinators / Staff Presenters (60 hours @ \$\_\_\_/hr X 8 sites)*

To be responsible for on-site planning, coordination and implementation of Club Scrub sessions at the participating hospitals. In most cases, the hospital HR director or a staff nurse will serve as the primary coordinator. Content for the sessions will be organized and presented by department managers and front-line staff representing a wide range of disciplines, including: emergency services, dietary, rehabilitation, respiratory therapy, nursing, radiology, laboratory, etc.

**(B) Fringe Benefits**

Fringe benefits are \_\_\_% and \_\_\_% respectively of annual salary expense for project coordinator and site coordinators/presenters. Fringe benefits include: FICA, Federal and State unemployment tax, workers compensation insurance, term life insurance (\_\_\_% of base salary X2), disability insurance (\$\_\_\_/ premium), and retirement (\_\_\_% of base).

**(C) Travel**

Project coordinator will make a roundtrip visit to each site to meet with site coordinators/staff presenters during both planning and evaluation phases of the project. (Total: 1,760 total miles @ \$.\_\_\_/mile = \$\_\_\_)

**(D) Supplies**

As an incentive, participating students will receive a small prize at the end of each of six sessions, starting with an embroidered "Club Scrub" scrub top for the first session. It is anticipated that approximately 96 students will go through the program during the grant period. That equates to 576 prizes at an average cost of \$\_\_\_ per prize (subtotal: \$\_\_\_). Healthy snacks will also be provided at each session at a cost of \$\_\_\_/session X six sessions X eight sites (subtotal: \$\_\_\_). The cost of miscellaneous supplies (including lab/medical equipment) is estimated to be \$\_\_\_ per site (subtotal: \$\_\_\_).

**(E) Marketing / Promotion**

\$\_\_ has been budgeted per site for the development of printed marketing materials, including: flyers, posters, and newspaper ads. This money will also be used to offset the costs of having the PR/Marketing Department at each such document the entire program and submit press releases to the local media. The participants have also agreed to contribute best practices/material to the project coordinator for a “Club Scrub Guidebook” that other rural facilities can use to replicate the program going forward.

**Sustainability**

The eight hospitals participating in this initiative have already pledged internal resources to sustaining Club Scrub in their local community once the grant period is over, and have even offered to help train/orient new sites that come on during the 2007-2008 academic year. RWHC will not need to be involved beyond the scope of the proposed project, unless the participants request guidance/support as they expand their respective programs to include high school-age students. This has already been mentioned as a possibility. If the group decides to expand their programs in year two, the Area Health Education Centers will be approached as potential partners as that is their area of expertise.