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Living Great Leadership

It's the hospital that is affectionately known as the "trucker's hospital" along Interstate 80 in Iowa. Yes, they treat many truckers, but not because it is a convenient exit. The buzz repeated on the CB radios resonates throughout the region as a result of the service excellence that is an every day occurrence at Grinnell Regional Medical Center.

Todd Linden, FACHE, president/CEO, Grinnell Regional Medical Center, Iowa, said his job as a leader is to provide employees the tools to do their work and provide a shared vision as to where they, as an organization, are going. He also believes that a hospital should be an important part of the economic health of the community.



Steve Brenton, WHA President; Todd Linden; Ken Buser, WHA Chair

"When the community is vested in a hospital, it IS the community's hospital," he said. "It is a time of unprecedented change and challenge in our organizations, but we have an opportunity to make a difference in our community. The hospital is a strong, and valuable, member of the community," he added.



Bill Bruce, Chair, WHA Council on Rural Health and CEO of St. Joseph's in Hillsboro; Clint Maun, CSP

The liberal use of humor in his presentation served **Clint Maun, CSP**, senior partner, Maun-Lemke, Omaha, Nebraska, well in stressing his main point - leaders have a responsibility to understand those they lead. That seems simple enough, but it isn't easy when generational differences start to creep in and raise havoc in the relationship.

He pointed out that people are not naturally drawn to work in teams, rather most are trained to work and be evaluated on personal accomplishments. It is the job of a leader to pull these disparate parts together.

"Leaders have the ability to move co-workers to followership...to the solution side of the river," Maun said.

Maun said aging is the biggest workforce issue facing hospitals. "You have older patients being brought to the hospital by their older children, being cared for by your older employees," Maun said. Understanding the issues, attracting and retaining younger employees, and instituting change in the workplace are all critical elements of future success.

WHA President **Steve Brenton** briefed hospital trustees on key health care issues during a breakfast meeting. Brenton said hospital CEOs and board members identify physician recruitment as their number one issue. He said WHA is working closely with the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce to develop a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the number of physicians working in Wisconsin. Brenton also said the issue of health reform will continue to be in the spotlight as proposals are floated into the public realm from the presidential candidates and state legislators. The WHA Task Force on Access and Coverage developed a set of principles that WHA will use to evaluate these proposals as health care organizations navigate this changing environment.

Trustee Breakfast



WHA President Steve Brenton

Trustee Education



Larry Walker; Dana Richardson, WHA

Sustaining strategic success is a major challenge for today's hospitals. **Larry Walker**, president, The Walker Company, said hospital board members face difficult choices in a time of burdensome government regulation, inadequate reimbursement, increasing competition and shifting community needs. Demands for a greater level of governance accountability require trustees to understand how to think and lead strategically. Walker described the role of a trustee in this changing environment and offered "action agendas" useful in developing strategic plans.

In what could have been one of the most entertaining sessions at the Rural Conference, WHA members and hospital trustees chosen in advance recreated a hospital trustee meeting. While the meeting was punctuated by comedic moments,

Walker's goal was one of making trustees and hospital administrators aware of their role in managing a productive board meeting.



DeAnn Thurmer, COO, Waupun Memorial Hospital, Waupun; Paul Ginkel, Board President, Prairie du Chien Memorial Hospital, Prairie du Chien; Phil Stuart, CEO, Tomah Memorial Hospital, Tomah; Jim Casanova, MD, Physician Leader; Sandy Anderson, President, St. Clare Hospital & Health Services, Baraboo; Scott Polenz, Administrator, Memorial Medical Center, Neillsville, Bill Bruce, President/CEO, St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Hillsboro; Sharyn Richardson, Board Chair, St. Joseph's Community Health Services, Hillsboro

Following the reenactment, Walker quipped that out of the nearly 20 times he has held one of these sessions, the Wisconsin cast ranked "in the top five." (We're not sure if they advance to the semi-finals in Las Vegas, but stay tuned next year!)

Information Technology

While hospitals use of health information technology (HIT) is increasing, it is not without its challenges, especially for rural hospitals. **Neal Neuberger**, president, Health Tech Strategies, LLC described the current situation in rural hospitals, characterizing some of the reasons why HIT adoption rates are lower in rural hospitals than in urban. In spite of the obstacles, rural hospitals are adopting HIT. In a recent AHA survey, more than half of the rural respondents reported they have a HIT plan in place, and 92 percent said they have high-speed Internet access.



Neal Neuberger; Louis Wenzlow; Paul Merline, WHA

Neuberger also surveyed the federal legislative landscape and commented on several federal legislative initiatives intended to encourage the development of health information technology.

With the help of an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality planning grant, the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC) established the Information Technology Network (ITN) project. ITN Director **Louis Wenzlow**, director, Health Information Technology, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, said the goal of the project is to implement a collaborative electronic health record (EHR) environment initially consisting of a hospital information system and a physician practice EMR system that can be shared by multiple hospitals from a common datacenter and supported by a pooled staff.

Wenzlow said the benefits of belonging to the ITN include: group purchasing discounts on software, support costs and installation costs; shared infrastructure; and a low capital expenditure.

The National Movement Toward Evidence-Based Practice



Cynthia Eichman, CEO, Our Lady of Victory Hospital, Stanley; Robert Hyzy, MD

Robert C. Hyzy, MD, associate professor of internal medicine, University of Michigan Health System, a leader with the Keystone Center for Patient Safety and Quality, described the Center's efforts aimed at improving ICU care. Funded by the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, the project included 108 ICUs in Michigan and used proven evidence-based interventions. Michigan's Blue Cross Blue Shield incorporated the project into a hospital incentive program. The goal was to reduce blood stream infections. The results were exceptional: 1,700 lives saved and a \$246 million savings in intensive care units since 2004.

Hyzy said the era of patient safety is here and performance measures are coming soon. "We can only manage what we measure," according to Hyzy.

The Changing Landscape of Health Care Delivery: A Physician's Perspective

Much has changed in the health care delivery landscape over the past few years in Wisconsin, according to **Charles Shabino, MD**, WHA senior medical advisor. Wisconsin is one of the most highly integrated health care delivery systems in the country. Half of Wisconsin's hospitals are corporate members of multi-hospital systems and the number of hospital-employed physicians increased nearly 50 percent from 1997-2005. Fewer than six percent of the physicians in Wisconsin are in solo practice and nearly 65 percent of the physicians practice in groups with more than 50 physicians.



Charles Shabino, MD

The shortage of physicians is the most challenging issue facing Wisconsin hospitals. Shabino suggested increasing the use of advanced practice providers to ensure timely access to medical care along with aggressive recruitment campaigns to attract physicians.

Improving the flow of Pharmacists to Rural Hospitals Through Clerkships



Judy Warmuth, WHA; Mara Kieser, MS, RPh; Peter Vrabec

Pharmacists top the list of the toughest positions to recruit for hospitals. The good news is the UW School of Pharmacy will increase its pharmacy class size from 130 to 140, but since only about 9 percent of the class chooses to work in Wisconsin hospitals, increasing that number could also reduce the shortage hospitals are feeling. The question is how to attract pharmacists to rural hospitals.

Mara Kiser, RPh, MS, clinical associate professor of pharmacy and director of experiential education at the UW School of Pharmacy, described a newly expanded program launched at the school designed to give pharmacy students more field experiences in a larger number of settings. The clerkship program puts pharmacy students in practice experiences across Wisconsin.

Peter Vrabec, director of pharmacy, St. Clare Hospital and Health Services, Baraboo, is a major proponent of the program. He described his experience with the clerkship program as extremely rewarding, while noting that connecting the pharmacy students with a rural community provides them with an opportunity to learn more about that practice setting.

USDA Rural Development Financial Assistance Program



Barbara Brewster; Virginia Morgan; Bill Bazan, WHA

Rural development specialists **Barbara Brewster and Virginia Morgan** from USDA Rural Development, Stevens Point, help connect rural hospitals to USDA economic development funds. Through case studies and a question and answer session, participants learned how these funds could be used in their communities for a number of projects.

Performance Improvement Approaches: Selecting the Right Tool



Judy Warmuth, WHA; Janice Ahlstrom, Director, Wipfli, LLP



John Eich, Director, Wisconsin Office of Rural Health; Jay Gold, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, MetaStar; Tim Size, Executive Director, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative; Stephanie Harrison, Executive Director, Wisconsin Primary Care Association

Rural Health Partners Panel

Many organizations offer assistance to rural hospitals. During this year's 2008 Rural Conference, four organizations outlined the services that they have that are specifically targeted at rural health care providers. MetaStar, the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health and the Wisconsin Primary Care Association all presented, while Laura Leitch from the Wisconsin Hospital Association served as moderator.

Ethics in the Workplace



Nan DeMars, CPS, President, Executary Services



Harold Brown was recognized for more than four decades of service to the Wisconsin health care community by the Wisconsin Hospital Association and the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative during the 2008 Rural Health Conference. Pictured here are Tim Size, Steve Brenton, and Harold Brown.

Reinventing Service in Health Care: Lessons Learned From the Best *Special session presented by the Wisconsin Chapter of ACHE* June 20, 2008



Terry Brenny, Stoughton Hospital and Nicole Clapp, Grant Regional Health Center. Not pictured, Kristin Baird, moderator.

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