

**Regional Health Cooperative
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 8, 2008
- MEETING NOTES -**

Present: Pam Grove, Margi Miller, Linda Skoglund, Patty Draxler, Greg Burns, Steve Healy, Darcie Paradies, and William Rubin

Absent: Bill Warner, Jerry Chasteen, and Larry Knegendorf

Welcome and Introductions

William Rubin welcomed the group and said their contributions would be vital to the success of this project. He said that in the same spirit there was a need for electricity and telephone service in rural areas many years ago, there is a need for affordable and expanded health care for small businesses and the self employed.

Rubin said he would create a distribution list for the steering committee, but electronic transmission would be the preferred choice for communications.

The steering committee introduced themselves.

Designate a Chair

Steve Healy said he would serve as chair of the steering committee. Healy spent 36 years with a rural electric cooperative and believes that there is a great need for a health care cooperative in this region.

Debrief on the April 18th Workshop

Healy asked for comments on last month's workshop.

One committee member said the large turn-out was impressive, particularly on a Friday afternoon. Another said the wrap-up conversations may have resembled a Town Hall-style meeting. All agreed that time is of the essence.

Healy also discussed some procedural items:

- (1) Meeting Location - The Ag Center in Baldwin is a good location for a meeting. Greg Burns volunteered the Baldwin Area Medical Center as an alternative location
- (2) Time of Day - Meetings later in the day or earlier are preferred
- (3) Meeting Date: No Mondays or Fridays
- (4) Work Assignments: The Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives represents a good resource

Before a cooperative can be set up, it will be necessary to get a structure in place, including a board of directors, service area and a plan for member services.

Review Cooperative Care Basics

The steering committee reviewed several slides from the April 18th presentation

Where to start? Someone suggested partnering with a larger group.

What are the roles of a health cooperative? It must be affordable. It must offer several plans (i.e.

catastrophic, wellness, 100% coverage for preventative, and education).

Someone asked about medical coverage versus the addition of vision and dental? It was suggested that the committee concentrate on medical and negotiate discounts on other areas of coverage.

The board of directors must come from a pool of community leaders from across the region.

Financial Resources

Rubin said the AgStar assisted with the launch of the farmer's and agri-business cooperative. However, AgStar's grant assistance cycle for 2008 was just awarded and the application cycle for 2009 starts this Fall.

Margi Miller said most foundations require that grant awards go to IRS 501(c)(3) organizations, and not to steering committees.

Healy said he would check with WESTconsin Credit Union and Royal Credit Union (RCU).

A committee member asked why is was necessary for some financial assistance? It would offset legal costs, marketing, and mailing costs.

Work Plan

A committee member asked about the upper limits of including small businesses in the cooperative - - 100 employees - - 200 employees - - 500 employees? Rubin said County Business Patterns, as published by the census bureau, will give the steering committee a snapshot of the range of establishments by employment size. He will create a document for a multi-county region.

Another committee member suggested a quick assessment of questions that could be directed to some of the companies in the region to gain an assessment of their renewal periods, and of how many participants they have in their plans, etc.

Larger companies renew throughout the year, while smaller ones renew toward the end of the year. With that, the steering committee is operating on a short time frame for potential coverage in 2009. It may take a few months to develop a Request For Proposals (RFP), but responding to the RFP may only take 30 days or so.

Healy suggested contacting a few of the employers who attended the meeting. Rubin will provide him with the names.

Healy suggested cutting off discussion at this point. He will contact the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives to determine if one of their staff can join the steering committee in the future for a teleconference.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

~William Rubin