

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEWS FROM RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE
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TECHNOLOGY GRANT BOOSTS RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE INNOVATIVE HEALTH SERVICES IN MARATHON COUNTY

Grant Awards \$4,323 to fund mobile technology and portable medical equipment.

The Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin (CFONCW) awarded \$4,323 to the Rural Health Initiative to boost innovative health services to area farmers and agribusinesses in Marathon County.

The Rural Health Initiative plans to utilize grant funds to purchase a mobile tablet for storage and viewing of culturally-appropriate educational videos during visits with non-English speaking individuals and to allow participants to complete an online health survey versus the traditional pen-and-paper method. The additional funds will be used to purchase a certified, portable Siemens DCA Vantage (A1C machine), a portable machine used to test for diabetes-related conditions.

The Rural Health Initiative provides on-site *Kitchen Wellness* directly at a farmer's kitchen table or agribusiness conference room. A trained healthcare professional, called an Outreach Health Coordinator, brings portable medical equipment to perform preventive health screenings, provides practical health education and shares critical referral services for mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, social service agencies, and healthcare specialists, as needed. Before the end of the visit, the participant knows the results of his or her blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose (sugar), height, weight, and body mass index (BMI) and knows what next steps to take to maintain or improve health --- at *no cost* to the farmer.

The Community Enhancement Grant is an ongoing grant focused on providing funding for innovative projects that have a positive impact on enriching life in our community. Gail Kell, Rural Health Initiative Project Manager, is encouraged by the impact it will have. *"Focusing on preventing disease and injury before it happens is the ideal way to influence the health and well-being of our community,"* she said, *"The tablet will enhance the program's communication with traditionally underserved populations by providing technology that will enable the Outreach Health Coordinator to better communicate with non-English speaking participants."*

Registered Nurse Brittany Schreiber, one of the three Outreach Health Coordinators at the Rural Health Initiative, is also optimistic. Prior to the grant, all coordinators shared one A1C machine across four counties. *"It allows me to provide more immediate and accurate care to our participants whose test results show high blood sugar values, as well as provide increased follow-up care to participants who currently live with diabetes,"* she said.

In May 2014, the Rural Health Initiative officially launched in Marathon County in partnership with local health systems Marshfield Clinic, Aspirus, and Ministry Health Care. Additional collaborative partners include UW Extension and the Marathon County Public Health Department, and local regional financial partners include United FCS and B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation. To date, over 150 individuals have accessed and benefited from Rural Health Initiative services.

Rural Health Initiative is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to be *"A Bridge to Improve and Sustain the Health and Safety of Farm Families"*. For more information about the Rural Health Initiative, please visit www.wiruralhealth.org. Media may contact Gail Kell, Project Manager for Rural Health Initiative - Marathon, at gail@rhiwi.org or (715) 675-5280.

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