



## Community Grant Outcome Report

**Name:** Strong Rural Communities Initiative

**Grantee:** Rural Health Development Council

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**Academic Partner:** Byron Crouse, MD; UW SMPH Professor/Associate Dean for Rural and Community Health

**Program:** Implementation

**Grant Duration:** 03-01-2007 to 02-28-09 (24 months)

**Expenditures:** \$288, 778 (96%)

**Use of Funds:** Coalition Development and Pilot Worksite Wellness Programs

► **Description:** Coalitions in Jackson, Sawyer, and Sauk Counties collaborated to implement worksite and community wellness programs. These groups engaged local academic, community, public health, government, health professionals, and business partners to address disease prevention, active lifestyles, and improved nutrition.

► **Results:** Participants in the programs showed evidence of improved health, including weight loss, smoking cessation, and decreased blood pressure. As the project progressed, each coalition developed strategies to engage initially skeptical employers. By the end of the program, small businesses approached the coalitions in hopes of participating. Among the highlights:

- Over 300 people participated in the programs.
- The *Healthy Taste of Jackson County*, a community wellness project attracted more than 400 community members.
- The UW Center for Health Systems Research and Analysis completed an analysis of the community collaborative process finding that coalitions were strengthened during the grant period.
- All three hospitals involved planned to continue their programs following the end of the project.

► **Met Objectives:** Project complete

► **Baseline Progress on State Health Plan Objectives:** Not measured. The project addressed coordination of state and local partners.

► **Academic Partner Role:** Support and resources, including assistance in grant writing, coordination between communities, and site visits.

The expanded role of the partnership included significant technical and resource support from the UW SMPH Office of Rural Health. The project was further strengthened by the collaboration with the Medical College of Wisconsin and the SRCI team.

► **Matched Dollars (cash or in-kind):** \$63,960

► **Dissemination:** Regular updates on these programs appeared in the hospital newsletters and bulletins. Community and project managers worked with local media to publicize their programs. Some events, like the Healthy Taste of Jackson County, received extensive media coverage. The SRCI team members developed a web-based policy paper and contributed a chapter to the upcoming book *Case Studies in Community-Based Participatory Research* (Spring 2010). The Sauk County team gave a presentation to the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services.

► **Sustained:** Employers, coalition members, and hospitals have committed to continuing worksite and community wellness programming. A Sauk County employer is now providing a \$300 cash stipend per family to cover health promotion services.