

OPEN MEETING MINUTES

Name of Governmental Body: Rural Health Transformation Program Advisory Council		Attending: Members - Ana Tochterman, Ann Price, Bridget Ray, Chelsea Van Gundy, Eilidh Pederson (Chair), Eric Stader, Gustavo Perna, James Small, Jessica Coburn, John Russell, Julie Bulin, Kandyce Dunlap, Kimberly Lansing, Kristin Weiler-Nytes, Melodi Malone (alternate for Andrew Miller), Robert VanMeeteren, Sara Cook (Vice Chair), Sara Wajek, Sarah Endicott, Sarah Pouzar, Tiffany Allen, Tiffany Palecek, Tracy Schlegel Non-Voting Members - Chrystal Seeley-Schreck (alternate for Dani Cook), Danielle Williams, Diana Mass, John Eich, Katie Roberts (alternate for Dani Cook), Sheryl Zajdowicz (alternate for Wayne Weber) DHS - Angela Miller, Darcy Vanden Elzen, Deb Standridge, Ellena Keener, Jen Laakso, Karen Odegaard, Stephanie Chamberlin
Date: 4/23/2026	Time Started: 1:00pm	Time Ended: 3:00pm
Location: Virtual		Presiding Officer: Eilidh Pederson

Minutes

Welcome and Agenda Overview

Chair Eilidh Pederson called the meeting to order and introduced herself and Sara Cook, council vice chair.

E. Pederson introduced Department of Health Services Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge for opening remarks. Deputy Secretary Standridge welcomed council members and thanked them for serving on the council.

Introductions

Karen Odegaard, External Affairs Liaison in the DHS Office of the Secretary Council, facilitated member introductions, including members who:

- have lived experience with rural health care
- provide or support the delivery of health services in a variety of settings in rural Wisconsin,
- represent a diversity of provider types, and represent several state agencies or offices involved with program implementation as non-voting members.

Rural Health Transformation Program Overview

Stephanie Chamberlin, director of the Rural Health Transformation Program, provided a program overview, including:

- RHTP timeline and key milestones including February 2026 CMS budget approval, program implementation, and planned grant funding opportunities through 2026.
- Overview of Wisconsin’s rural and semi-rural counties and vision statement.
- Three major initiatives: Strengthening the rural health care workforce, driving rural technology and innovation, and transforming rural care through coordinated care.

Advisory Council Overview and Purpose

E. Pederson and S. Chamberlin shared the council’s purpose, member roles, and expectations with members.

- The council provides strategic guidance and input to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services as a part of the state’s implementation of the program.
- Members have an opportunity to contribute to shaping how rural health priorities are addressed, bringing diverse provider, community, and lived experience perspectives to the table.

- Council members must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the program director.
- Meetings will be held quarterly.
- Reviewed draft member agreements, members shared input on fostering a welcome, productive, and trusting environment.

Program Updates and Discussion

S. Chamberlin, Darcy Vanden Elzen, Program and Policy Supervisor, Jen Laakso, Office of Grants Management Deputy Director, and K. Odegaard provided program updates on each of the three major initiatives. Updates included:

- Initiative 1, Workforce
 - Projects include: Rural workforce grants, workforce readiness, and community health workers
 - Grant funding opportunities to be released late spring/early summer 2026.
- Initiative 2, Technology
 - Projects include: Facility technology transformation and public navigation transformation
 - Grant funding opportunities to be released late spring/early summer 2026.
 - Rural health care collaborative request for services closed 4/20/26.
- Initiative 3, Care Coordination
 - Projects include: Care coordination grants, behavioral health innovations, and Medicaid reform and other investments
 - Grant funding opportunities to be released late spring/early summer 2026.

Council members had the opportunity to ask questions and engaged in discussion around the following questions.

- What makes a grant funding opportunity accessible to a diverse set of applicants?
- We expect a diversity of projects to be proposed through these applications. To what extent is it helpful to provide categories that projects might fit into?
- The Rural Technology Transformation Funds will be a formula-based allocation. How do we validate who to include, how funds can be used, and allocation amounts?

Meeting Schedule

E. Pederson reviewed upcoming meetings dates for the remainder of 2026, which have been set for July 23 and October 22. Noted in-person options for October, location TBD.

Call for Agenda Items

None

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

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Prepared by: Ellena Keener on 4/28/2026.

These minutes are in draft form. They will be presented for approval by the governmental body on: 7/23/2026