Rural Health Challenges and Opportunities:
The Importance of Community
Rugby Community Forum
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Connecting resources and knowledge to strengthen the health of people in rural communities.

Center for Rural Health
• Established in 1980, at The University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Grand Forks, ND
• One of the country’s most experienced state rural health offices
• UND Center of Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
• Focus on:
  – Education, Training, and Resource Awareness
  – Community Development and Technical Assistance
  – Native American Health
  – Rural Health Workforce
  – Rural Health Research
  – Rural Health Policy
  – Program Evaluation
• Web site: ruralhealth.und.edu

Primary Questions
• Why is community important to rural health?

• What are some of the important rural health issues?

• How do you see local health care?

A Guiding Principle for Rural Health

“Vision is the art of seeing things invisible”

Jonathan Swift
So Why Is Community Important to Rural Health?

• **Rural culture** – more interdependence, connectedness, cohesiveness, collaborative, and people identify with institutions and each other

• **Relationships** – things get done because of people, and sometimes don’t get done because of people – are the right people at the table?

• **Rural health contributes to the community** – provision of health services (access), improvement of health, economic contributions, community development, health facilities are a sense of community identity

• **Communities contribute to the rural health system** – employees, purchase of health services, financing, fund raising, volunteers, ideas and vision

What are Some Important Rural Health Issues?

• **Access to and availability of care**

• **Financial concerns facing rural hospitals and health systems**

• **Health workforce**

• **Quality of Care**

• **Health Information Technology**

• **Networks** – rural hospitals, urban hospitals, clinics, others

• **Emergency Medical Services** – EMS, ambulance, quick response units

• **Community and Economic Development**

• **Health System Reform**
Health Care and Economic Sectors Contribute to Community Development

**Health Care Sector**
- Health Status
- Services
- Employment
- Finance
- Resources
- Element in the local economy

**Economic Development Sector**
- Wealth and prosperity
- Product – goods and services
- Employment
- Capital, investment, income
- Resources
- Grow and maintain local economy

**Health and Economic Convergence**
- Global or macro level goals
- Acquisition and management of resources
- Employment – primary and secondary jobs
- Finance – inflow and outflow
- Economic impact
- Overall community building

(Source: Brad Gibbens, Center for Rural Health, 2009)

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