



Dr. Byron Crouse is the director of the WARM program.

UW program trains rural physicians

This information was submitted to the Mile Bluff Times by Alison Klein, MPA, Assistant Director of the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine.

The Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM) is a new medical education program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UW SMPH). The program's goal is to increase the number of physicians practicing in rural Wisconsin and to help improve the health of rural Wisconsin communities. The WARM program expands on the longitudinal rural rotation (LRR), a five to six-month rural immersion experience offered to medical students during the last eight weeks of the third year and the first sixteen weeks of the fourth year. Mauston is one location where students can participate in the LRR.

The WARM program is looking for students who have a strong desire to practice medicine in rural Wisconsin. The strongest applicants will be those who demonstrate their ties to rural Wisconsin and have strong records of community involvement. The first five students matriculated in fall 2007 and thirteen applicants will be admitted to WARM for fall 2008. When fully implemented, WARM will admit 25 students per year. The first five WARM students will graduate from medical school and begin residency in 2011.

A rural curriculum will be integrated into the four years of medical school. While the first two years of the program are in Madison and follow the traditional medical doctor program curriculum, WARM students are encouraged to participate

in the Rural Health Interest Group and rural electives. The real change comes as WARM students begin their third year of medical school when they relocate to a "regional/rural learning community."

Marshfield Clinic, Gundersen Lutheran and Aurora BayCare are academic affiliates of the UW SMPH and are partnering to host WARM students, with the first group of students relocating to Marshfield and Rice Lake in July 2009. The WARM program will tailor student experiences based on the students' specialty interest area since WARM encourages its students to pursue any specialty of their choice, including family medicine, surgery, radiology and others. The program will provide students with a great deal of hands-on learning that will familiarize them with many clinical skills relevant to rural practice.

Dr. Byron Crouse is serving as Director of the WARM program. He has served as the Associate Dean for Rural and Community Health at the UW SMPH since 2001. He is a governor's appointee to the Wisconsin Rural Health Development Council, and is also a professor of family medicine, and serves in several leadership roles in the Department of Family Medicine and practices family medicine at the UW Health Family Medical Clinic in Belleville, Wis. Prior to his arrival in Madison, Dr. Crouse served as the Director of the Minnesota Rural Health School and

Recruiting medical providers for MBMC

by Larry Arnold

In describing her role in physician recruitment at Mile Bluff Medical Center, Vice President Ellen Hardy said: "I think the best way to describe what I do in the recruiting process is that I serve as the 'point person.'"

In discussing recruiting, she said: "Our staff physicians play the leading role when a doctor is recruited to practice here."

When identifying physicians who might be interested in joining

for a visit. Ellen plays hostess for the visiting physician and significant other. They are given a tour of the facilities and a group of doctors takes them out to dinner. "I like to have them meet as many people from the community as possible," Ellen noted.

The visit often includes introducing the prospective staff member to a local realtor, who provides information about the community in general, as well as about housing.

"Should they sign a contract, I become the liaison between the new physician and Mile Bluff. There are a lot of details involved, such as introducing them to our marketing department, checking their licenses and credentials, as well as malpractice insurance," she said.

Acknowledging that physician recruitment has been an important part of Mile Bluff's success, Ellen was asked what were some of the things that made this medical center attractive to prospective staff members. "The ones that come to mind are: 1. It is an independent practice. 2. There is a very strong primary care base. 3. We have physicians on our staff who are willing to act as mentors for young physicians. 4. In recruiting surgeons it is very important to have a large family practice base. 5. We have a big market. 6. Our facility is great. 7. We have the latest and best technology. 8. We have a great group of doctors on our staff. 9. The location provides easy access to major medical centers and cities. 10. Recreational opportunities for hunting and fishing as well as biking are important to many prospective physicians."

Ellen noted that a new orthopedic surgeon will join the staff in July and that Mile Bluff is presently recruiting for two emergency room physicians who will be full-time medical staff members.



Ellen Hardy

the staff, leads come from a wide variety of sources. "I get potential leads from doctors, from recruiting firms, from the Wisconsin Department of Rural Health, and sometimes from medical students who study here," Ellen said.

When she gets a lead, it becomes her task to gather information about the prospective doctor to determine if the candidate would be a good fit for the Mile Bluff Medical staff. "I talk to them to find out what they are looking for and if they appear to be a good match, I take their resumes to a committee of our doctors," she said.

If the committee is favorably impressed, she makes arrangements

associate professor and head of the Department of Family Medicine in Duluth from 1996 to 2001. Dr. Crouse also was in private practice in Spooner, Wis. He received his medical degree from the Mayo Medi-

cal School in Rochester, Minn., and completed a residency in family medicine in Duluth, Minn.