

**LOCAL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY LEADERS CREATE
CHIPPEWA VALLEY HEALTH COOPERATIVE**

Cooperative To Drive Greater Access to Affordable Healthcare in Western Wisconsin

EAU CLAIRE, WI – March 5, 2024 – In response to dramatic recent shifts in the healthcare landscape in Western Wisconsin, seven prominent Chippewa Valley business and community leaders concerned about access to and the cost of healthcare across the region have joined together to serve on the formational board of Organizers for the newly established Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative, a Wisconsin Chapter 193 cooperative, which will seek a 501c3 tax-exempt determination from the IRS.

The Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative was formed just six weeks after HSHS announced it is exiting Western Wisconsin by April 21, 2024. The Organizers moved quickly, understanding how other regions across the country have struggled after losing large numbers of primary care providers, essential health services and access to hospital beds. This Formational Board's responsibilities are to develop bylaws and the corporate structure of the cooperative, as well as consider operational plans and strategic direction, so that the Cooperative may move forward quickly to fully assess and address emerging healthcare gaps in the region.

The Organizers are Patricia "Patti" Darley, Lori Geissler, Peter Hoefft, Mickey Judkins, Robert "Bob" Krause, Thomas Larson, and Eric Rygg. Each has volunteered their time and expertise to form and lead the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative.

Based on the incredible support that has come forward for a community healthcare facility since HSHS's announcement, the Cooperative is developing a mechanism to accept tax deductible contributions from the community, and people will be able to donate soon.

The Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative is supported by healthcare expert Mike Sanders, Managing Partner of 1100 Partners, and William "Bill" Oemichen, J.D., Professor of Practice-Law at University Wisconsin – Madison Division of Extension, who previously served as director of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' trauma hospital certification and emergency services programs, and is represented by Angela M. Rust of von Briesen & Roper, s.c.

"After substantial research and evaluation, we concluded that a Wisconsin 193 cooperative is the best corporate structure for developing new independent healthcare services and facilities in

the Chippewa Valley,” said Sanders. “A cooperative provides ample flexibility and ensures community involvement and benefit, as well as local board leadership so that decisions for the community are made here, not from headquarters outside the region.”

The cooperative’s Organizers will function as a formative board of the new Cooperative for a limited time while they establish the bylaws and member structure of the organization and consider future plans. Sanders anticipates that the members of the newly formed cooperative will elect a formal Board of Directors within the next six months, which is considered an accelerated pace. During that time substantial research, assessment, and planning will be ongoing, in addition to actions the Cooperative thinks are important to take in the short term.

“These seven business and community leaders who are now Organizers have moved quickly to establish the Cooperative because they are very concerned about and understand the tremendous impact that the HSHS closures will have on the entire Western Wisconsin region in terms of access to and cost of healthcare,” said Sanders. “Planning is in full swing, and all options are on the table at this point, including forming an independent community hospital, as well as other essential services and programs to address the significant needs and gaps already emerging just six weeks after the HSHS announcement.”

Speaking for the Organizers, Bob Krause said, “The HSHS exit could be devastating for our region if we allow it to be, and we’re moving fast so that our community does not have the same experience other regions have had with hospital closures. The Chippewa Valley needs and deserves access to affordable independent healthcare services, programs and facilities that are governed here for the community. We represent the people of the Chippewa Valley who have proved time and again that together we can keep our region moving forward in the face of adversity and are honored to incorporate the Cooperative to help ensure our community has the healthcare options it needs to thrive.”

1100 Partners was hired by OakLeaf Medical Network (OLMN), the largest network of independent physicians and clinics in Western Wisconsin, on February 9, 2024, as part of its response to the announcement by HSHS that Sacred Heart and St. Joseph’s hospitals and Prevea Clinics would exit Western Wisconsin by April 21, 2024. OLMN will support the Cooperative by funding consultant and legal support until the Cooperative can assume all costs.

“We knew since January 22nd that a community-led solution should be a critical part of the go-forward vision for healthcare and hospitals in the region,” said Kyle Dettbarn, MD, Chair of OakLeaf Medical Network. “We are already seeing big impacts in the community with the

accelerated closure that HSHS is progressing with and are extremely grateful that these seven influential community and business leaders have stepped forward so quickly and volunteered their valuable expertise and time to form the Cooperative. The independent physicians of OakLeaf Medical Network will do whatever we can to support the Cooperative.”

Who are the Organizers

Patricia “Patti” Darley, retired, from Xcel Energy's Customer Service Department and before that Cray, Inc.'s Technical Training Department. Patti is a long-time resident of Chippewa Falls, and is well known for her volunteer service in the community. She has been an elected or appointed member of the board of directors of HSHS St. Joseph's and Sacred Heart Hospitals, the Community Foundation of Chippewa County, and Give Chippewa County, as well as in many other volunteer organizations. She has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Marquette University.

Lori Geissler is Chief Transformation Office and Board of Director member at the 120-year-old Mason Companies, a family-owned multi-channel retailer headquartered in Chippewa Falls. She serves in leadership roles for Mason Family related organizations as a 5th generation family member. Lori is also an active board leader and volunteer at many community non-profits. She has served on the boards of Friends of St. Joseph’s Hospital, Chippewa Falls Chamber of Commerce, Parents for Learning, Boys and Girls Club, McDonnell Area Catholic Schools, and the Community Foundation of Chippewa Falls, among others. She earned her B.A. from Lawrence University and her MBA from St. Thomas University. A native of Chippewa Falls, she lives there with her husband and two daughters.

Peter Hoefft is CEO and Owner of Hoefft Builders Inc, a 40-year-old construction management firm he has led for the last 20 years. Raised in Eau Claire, Peter attended Regis High School, where he met his wife, Jill; they have twin boys. Peter has served on many community boards including Chippewa Valley Airport Commission (current), WNB Bank (current), Childrens Museum of Eau Claire, Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce, and the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Committee. He holds a B.S. in Construction Management from Colorado State University.

Mickey Judkins is the CEO of Details, Inc. and a recognized business and entrepreneurial consultant. She has served on many boards in the Chippewa Valley and Madison, including as

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President of the Eau Claire Economic Development Corporation, and as a director of the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce board. She also served on Business Forward's Local Leadership Council in Washington, D.C., working to bring the small business perspective to the President's policy making. She was active on the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Advisory Board for Chancellors Mash and Levin-Stankevich. In 2007, Governor Jim Doyle appointed Mickey Executive Director and Administrator of the Investment and Export Division of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. She graduated magna cum laude from UW-Eau Claire with a BA in Sociology. She lives in Eau Claire with her husband Jeff Rochon.

Robert "Bob" Krause is a retired technology company business owner, an active Partner in Musky Tank, LLC, and an investor in many start-up companies in Western Wisconsin. He has extensive boardroom experience having served on many non-profit and private boards of directors, including Sacred Heart Hospital, YMCA, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Eau Claire Inc., Chippewa Valley Angel Network, Regis High School Foundation, and the Medical College of Wisconsin (development), among many others. A Certified Public Accountant, Bob is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He resides in New Auburn, WI.

Thomas Larson is the President/Principal of Larson Management, Inc. and President of several affiliated companies. He has a long history of serving as an elected and valued member of numerous community-oriented committees and Boards of Directors, including the Eau Claire Foundation, Mayo Clinic Health Systems, Chippewa Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, The Eau Claire Economic Development Corporation, and Confluence Council Inc/Pablo Center, among many others. A native of Wisconsin, Larson attended Montana State University and the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire studying Engineering & Finance.

Eric Rygg President of 4th generation Silver Spring Foods and Huntsinger Farms, lives in Eau Claire with his wife and three children. Among his volunteer community service, Eric has served as Host and Executive Committee member for the 2021 Wisconsin Farm Days, and currently serves on Eau Claire Confluence Arts/Pablo Center, and the Culinary Advisor Committee for Chippewa Valley Technical College. He earned his BA from Middlebury College, and an MBA, Food Marketing from Saint Joseph's University – Erivan K. Haub School of Business.

About the Cooperative

The Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative was formed on February 29, 2024, to address the critical healthcare gaps in the region. The cooperative is a Wisconsin Chapter 193 cooperative, which expects to receive 501c3 tax-exempt determination from the IRS. More information at www.chippewavalleyhealthcooperative.com.

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