

# Healthy Farmer

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<http://www.agriwellness.org>

## Sowing the Seeds of Hope Helplines

Iowa Concern Hotline:  
1-800-447-1985

Kansas Rural Family  
Helpline: 1-866-327-6578

Minnesota Crisis Connec-  
tion: 1-866-379-6363

Nebraska Rural Response  
Hotline: 1-800-464-0258

North Dakota 2-1-1:  
1-800-472-2911

South Dakota Rural  
Helpline: 1-800-664-1349

Wisconsin Farm Center:  
1-800-942-2474

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## *Featured Program:* Shawano County, Wisconsin Rural Health Initiative

Farmers work extra long days so it can be difficult for them to come into a medical clinic to receive care for an injury or health concern. On top of that, many farmers do not have health insurance or are underinsured. For instance, in Wisconsin, 1/3 of farmers have no insurance and 17% have only catastrophic coverage (Wisconsin Farm Bureau, Aug. 2006). This means that many Wisconsin farmers may continue to work with injuries in a profession that is already one of the most dangerous in the country.



In northeast Wisconsin, Shawano County community leaders recognized that there was a tremendous need for farmer-friendly healthcare in their area, where there are over 1,000 principal farm operators (2002 Census of Agriculture). The Fox Valley Community Health Action Team (CHAT) organized a grassroots planning team of more than 30 residents, including farmers. The team met between 2003 and 2004 and the Shawano County Rural Health Initiative is the outgrowth of those meetings.

The project now includes a variety of stakeholders such as farmers, ThedaCare and other healthcare systems, public health, school health, agribusinesses, foundations and academia.

The primary premise of the program is to make "house calls" to families at the farm. Farmers are accustomed to receiving other services at the farm, so this type of outreach is familiar to them. Another factor that adds to the success of the program is that the rural health coordinator is introduced to the farmer by a trusted provider, such as a milk hauler or veterinarian.

Rhonda Strebel, the Initiative's rural health coordinator, and her assistant visit more than 300 farms a year, bringing their services free of charge to the county's farmers and their families. Their services include health risk assessments, health information and referrals. In addition to farm visits, the staff also provides telephone and email consultation, educational programs such as healthy cooking classes and wellness meetings, education about the use of personal protective equipment, and outreach in community events and state and national organizations.

The Initiative is guided by a rural health Board of Directors as well as Advisory Boards for Coaching, Marketing and Fundraising.

For more information about the Shawano County Rural Health Initiative, please visit: <http://shawanoruralhealth.org/> or call 715-524-1488.

*The mission:*  
**The Shawano  
County Rural  
Health Initiative is  
a bridge to  
improve and  
sustain the health  
and safety of the  
farming  
community.**

## **Mark Your Calendar!**

for the *4th* biannual

**The Clock is Ticking for Rural America Conference  
August 3-5, 2009**

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

visit [www.agriwellness.org](http://www.agriwellness.org)  
for more information