



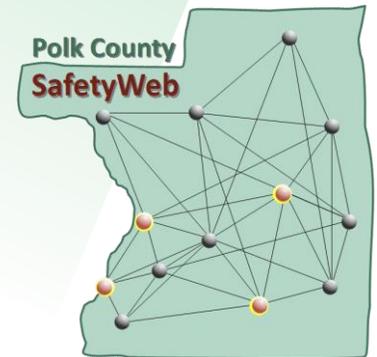
**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ABC for Rural Health Awarded Federal Rural Health Network Grant

Balsam Lake, WI – [ABC for Rural Health, Inc.](#) and a group of community partners and other experts secured a 3 year, \$854,017 federal Rural Health Network grant to support the ***SafetyWeb Health Benefits Counseling Network***. The project will expand an existing collaboration to implement a health benefits counseling network that integrates new technology solutions to measurably improve access to health coverage and services for patients in Polk County Wisconsin.

The project lead, ABC for Rural Health, is a leader in delivering effective health benefits counseling that promotes access to health care coverage programs for patients. By enhancing a local network of providers with new technology and training strategies that include web based electronic “coverage plan” strategy, the project partners will significantly enhance community capacity and competence to proactively assist patients evaluate and secure medically necessary coverage and medical treatment and services.

Project Director, Mike Rust commented, “Patients face bureaucratic hoops and hurdles that include coverage limitations, terminations and benefit denials by private and public insurance plans such as BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid.” Rust continued, “While the Affordable Care Act will help cover more people the dizzying health care financing landscape remains an intimidating challenge for patients and providers alike. Eligibility is not enrollment; enrollment is not coverage; coverage is not access; access is not payment. Navigating changing eligibility guidelines for hosts of programs is beyond the reach of most individuals. Our new collaboration takes on these issues head on.”

The partners, ABC for Rural Health, the Polk County Health Department, and three Medical Centers in this Western Wisconsin county (Amery Regional Medical Center, Osceola Medical Center, and St. Croix Regional Medical Center), will expand longstanding collaborations to refine, and improve Health Benefits Counseling services for patients. By tapping into new training and technology solutions from [ABC for Health, Inc.](#) and [My Coverage Plan, Inc.](#), this partnership will implement cutting edge benefits counseling and electronic “coverage plan” strategies to pro-actively help patients navigate the full spectrum of health care coverage options.

ABC for Rural Health located in Polk County, Wisconsin is a subsidiary of ABC for Health, Inc. a non-profit, public interest law firm. ABC for Rural Health will implement new strategies to expand access to health care and coverage for area patients seeking help in grant award # 1D06RH26830-01-00.

Approximately 94% of the funding for the project, \$854,017 comes from the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#), the primary federal agency in the Department of Health and Human Services charged with improving access to health care services for the uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. The remaining 6% (\$54,196) is funds from non-federal sources.

