

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Jeff Mayers
President, WisPolitics.com/WisBusiness.com
mayers@wispolitics.com, 608-212-9422

Adam Lapekes
Senior Product Marketing Specialist
alapekes@neugenhealth.com, 608-661-6721

**Healthcare Industry Experts at Eau Claire’s Forum to Highlight Broadband,
Telemedicine**

According to the State Public Service Commission, inadequate Internet access is a problem for approximately 20% Wisconsinites. As technology and online capabilities advance, high-speed Internet has become a necessity for most Americans. Whether it’s searching online for a phone number, ordering groceries or even accessing healthcare services, the Internet and online apps have become a part of one’s daily life.

Within the healthcare industry, telemedicine, the ability to see a health care professional online, has emerged as an important tool in helping bridge access issues for rural Wisconsinites. Telemedicine increases state and nationwide healthcare access while reducing emergency room visits for all patients and needless travel by elderly and sick people.

In March 2019, Governor Tony Evers proposed a high-speed internet goal of 25 megabits per second download and 3 MB per second upload for all Wisconsin homes and businesses by 2025—investing more than \$70 million to this goal. But current gaps in broadband coverage can hinder the use of telemedicine by hospitals and health systems.

A September 26th luncheon in Eau Claire, “Enhancing Telemedicine through Better Broadband” will discuss issues patients and health care professionals face in regard to telemedicine as well the direct healthcare benefits of solving broadband issues within Wisconsin. Industry experts from UW-Eau Claire, the State Assembly, Mayo Clinic Health System, WIN Technology and the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce will share their insights and solutions surrounding telemedicine and better serving Wisconsin’s rural communities.

The luncheon is organized by WisPolitics.com and sponsored by Heath Tradition, the Mayo Clinic Health System’s Health Insurance partner, and will take place at Holiday Inn South from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The luncheon is free, but attendees must pre-register by go www.HealthTradition.com/EC092619.

Panel Members Include:

Pamela Guthman is the rural health nursing leader at UW-Eau Claire. She is a clinical assistant professor for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Guthman received her bachelor's degree in nursing from UW-Eau Claire and a doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota. She previously was CEO for the Indianhead Community Action Agency and has spent more than 35 years tending to rural residents. She also serves on the Wisconsin Center for Nursing's board.

Rep. Romaine Quinn, R-Barron, was one of the creators of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative in the State Assembly and has been a lead on legislation expanding broadband access to rural areas across the state. He was first elected to the state Assembly in 2014. Romaine was born and raised in Rice Lake and elected mayor of Rice Lake at the age of 19. The chair of the Assembly Committee on Science and Technology, Romaine attended UW-Barron County in Rice Lake and earned a B.A. in political science and public leadership from UW-Green Bay.

Dr. Dave Blair, MD is board certified in Family Medicine as well as Clinical Informatics and has served as the Mayo Clinic Health System's Northwest Wisconsin Regional Medical Information Officer for over 5 years. In this capacity he works directly with colleagues in the Mayo Clinic Health System as well as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester in advancing and applying advanced technologies in the delivery of care. Prior to coming to the MCHS in 2005, he had served as a Family Physician in the U.S. Army for 11 years. During his time in the military he worked with the Army's Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center on a number of projects extending technologies into remote locations throughout the world.

Scott Hoffmann is CEO of WIN Technology and a member of the executive committee of the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce. Since 1997, Wisconsin Independent Network has served the upper Midwest with cutting-edge technology solutions. With a footprint of more than 9,200 miles, WIN's fiber network is one of the region's largest. The Eau Claire company boasts the largest independent network in Wisconsin and has expanded into Minnesota, Upper Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa.

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About WisPolitics.com

WisPolitics.com is a nonpartisan news service based in Madison. Launched in 2000, WisPolitics.com also runs WisBusiness.com and stages newsmaker and issue events around Wisconsin and in Washington, D.C.

About Health Tradition

Originally created in 1986 by Mayo Clinic and based in Wisconsin, Health Tradition offers health insurance plans for large and small employer groups as well as retirees. An independent HMO



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that utilizes innovative solutions to manage costs, Health Tradition is one of the fastest-growing health plans in Wisconsin, recognized for high-quality patient care and personalized customer service. Health Tradition is expanding to serve both western and eastern Wisconsin in a total of 52 counties throughout the state. To learn more, visit www.HealthTradition.com or contact your health care benefits professional.