

Network News

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Hudson Headwaters to Replace its Warrensburg Health Center Federal Grant to Provide \$5 Million Toward the Project

Hudson Headwaters will replace its Warrensburg Health Center with a two-story building nearly twice the size. The proposed facility will cost more than \$6 million to construct, with \$5 million coming from a federal grant, announced in May by Senator Charles Schumer.

“We are delighted to secure funds in what was an extremely competitive grant process,” said Hudson Headwaters’ Chief Executive Officer, John Rugge, M.D. “Of course we were able to make a strong case for upgrading the medical capacity in Warrensburg. In addition to local patients, thousands of people come to the Warrensburg Health Center from neighboring communities to find essential health care services, seven days and six evenings every week.”

“With the changes in how we deliver care, we are seeing that the current health center is increasingly hard pressed to keep up with the needs of the community,” Rugge said. “It’s also bursting at the seams.”

“This project is huge for Warrensburg,” said Town Supervisor Kevin Geraghty. “In addition to enhancing excellent health care services, the new health center will be a prominent addition to Main Street. It’s a real positive development for the community.”

“It’s gratifying to see how deeply Hudson Headwaters is committed to Warrensburg as the referral site for its northern health centers,” said Jean Cronin, who represents Warrensburg on the Hudson Headwaters Board. “Now we can count on the new health center continuing Hudson Headwaters’ 36-year presence in our community for the next 40 or 50 years.”

Rugge praised Senator Schumer for supporting the grant application every step of the way. Hudson Headwaters was one of the few health centers in New York to receive construction funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration within the federal Health and Human Services Agency.



Next Steps

“We have a lot of work ahead of us,” said George Purdue, Chief Administrative Officer for Hudson Headwaters. “We will now continue to sit down with the Town of Warrensburg to meet planning, design review and other requirements.” Purdue said that the site plan and design submitted to the federal government need to be refined and a precise budget put in place.

Purdue said that Hudson Headwaters expects to break ground as early as next spring. “We are looking to raise more than a million dollars to complete the project,” he said.



The Warrensburg A&P before it became a health center in 1976.

The new facility will be built in front of the existing health center, a structure that was originally an A&P grocery store before it was converted in 1976. Once construction is complete, the old facility will be torn down and the space

returned to a municipal parking lot supporting both the health center and downtown businesses. 

Survey Says...

To better understand what our patients think about their access to care and our responsiveness, Hudson Headwaters is surveying patients from a different health center each month.

“We’ve long had a patient feedback process,” said Dawn Loeffler, Performance Improvement Manager. “Now we’ve expanded the survey process and improved our information gathering techniques.”

Loeffler said that surveys ask patients how quickly they can get appointments for regular and urgent care, how long they have to wait (both in the waiting area and the exam room), how quickly we respond to phone calls, and whether a patient felt that his/her questions were answered. To ensure that the information is based on recent experience, the surveys are sent to patients who have used a particular health center in the prior month.


The surveys also seek information about the effectiveness of provider communications, Loeffler said. “We want to know if a patient feels that their provider explains things clearly, listens carefully, and offers instructions in a manner that is



easy to understand.” Patients are asked to comment on whether their provider knows important information about their medical history, whether they spend

enough time with them, whether their comments are treated respectfully and whether their provider follows up with test results in a timely fashion.

The surveys also ask questions about how patients feel about nursing and reception staff, including whether they were helpful and whether the patient felt treated with courtesy and respect.

“The responses from our patients help us to understand where we have an opportunity to improve,” Loeffler said. She added that the surveys are required by the National Committee on Quality Assurance, a health care organization that sets the criteria for recognition as a patient-centered medical home practice. 

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, KATE!

Hudson Headwaters recently received the following comment forwarded to our website. It is a post that was sent to the healthmonitor.com in response to “Physician Assistant: Tell Your Story.”



“My Physician Assistant’s name is Kate Sauer-Jones. She works at Hudson Headwaters Health Network in Warrensburg. Kate took over my account after a prominent physician left HHHN to venture on his own. I have found that, over time, Kate takes the time to truly listen to what I am saying. And makes calculated suggestions that I not only thoroughly understand, but agree with. She is receptive to any situation I bring to her.

It has been a difficult transition for me to go from blue collar working man to being disabled and having to rely on the help of others. I find Kate researches and re-contacts me to instruct me of her findings. And, yes, if she does not know the answer she tells me that and then searches out a doctor and comes back with the info. She is also very careful to explain all meds and even offer samples when available thereby alleviating the stress on my bank book.

Kate is easy to talk to and truly wants to help. I’ve never found her to be clinical or cold as some doctors can be. And being an older patient, she will put me at ease with her few simple questions and then, listen.

A good leader is a good follower, and I would have to say Kate is a great leader by example in her knowledge and skill level. She is a true asset to the HHHN organization. And I hope to have her as my P.A. for years to come. She is one smart cookie so to say. Thank you to P.A. Health Hero for giving me a voice to speak to and about my P.A. Kate Sauer-Jones.

–Sincerely and with gratitude, Larry Trupia, Lake George NY.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR STORY – If you have a story you want to share about one of our health care providers or nurses, please send it to Howard Nelson at hnelson@hhhn.org or mail it to him at Hudson Headwaters Health Foundation, 9 Carey Road, Queensbury, NY 12804.



RITE AID BECOMES OUR LATEST PHARMACY PARTNER

Over 65? Medical Screening Tests Can Help Keep You Healthy

At Federally Qualified Health Centers like Hudson Headwaters, about seven percent of patients are patients 65 and over. At Hudson Headwaters, however, the average is close to 20 percent, largely because the Adirondack North Country is a greying region, second only to Southern Florida in average age.

Medicare, the federal program that funds health care for people 65 and older, wants to make sure that its beneficiaries are getting the diagnostic tests they need. Below is a chart of the medical tests Medicare recommends.

Please speak to your provider if you need guidance about the diagnostic tests in this chart.

PREVENTIVE CARE CHECKLIST

(Quick Medicare Reference)

Medicare-Covered PREVENTIVE SERVICE	Medicare-Covered FREQUENCY
Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening	Once in a lifetime
Bone Mass Measurement	Every 24 months (or if medically necessary)
Cardiovascular Screenings	Every 5 years
Colorectal Cancer Screenings:	
Fecal Occult Blood Test	Every year
Flexible Sigmoidoscopy	Every 4 years if high risk
Colonoscopy	Every 10 years (or 2 if high risk)
Barium Enema	As an alternative to Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
Diabetes Screenings	Every year; 2 per year if pre-diabetic
Diabetes Self-Management Training	Ten hours first year; up to 2 hours in years after
Flu Shots	Every year
Glaucoma Tests	Every year if in a high risk group
Hepatitis B Shots	Scheduled dosages for risk groups
HIV Screening	Every year if at risk
Mammogram (screening)	Baseline aged 35-39; every year thereafter
Medical Nutrition Therapy Services	First year-3hrs one-on-one; 2 hrs/yr thereafter
Pap Test and Pelvic Exam	Every year if high risk; otherwise, every 2 years
"Welcome to Medicare" Physical	Once in a lifetime
Pneumococcal Shot	Once in a lifetime; more if high risk
Prostate Cancer Screenings	Every year
Tobacco Use Cessation Counseling	Two attempts (of 4 sessions) per year
Yearly "Wellness" Visit	Every year

Rite Aid has joined Hudson Headwaters' pharmacy partners program, more than doubling the number of stores that participate in the federal program with Hudson Headwaters.

"This is a major expansion of our efforts to bring prescription drug discounts to low-income families and to preserve vital health care services in our communities," said John Ruggie, M.D., CEO. "We are extremely pleased that Rite Aid has signed on. It will make a big difference to our patients."

Eleven area Rite Aid stores will now offer prescription discounts of up to 50% to patients who qualify for Hudson Headwaters' Sliding Fee Program. The discounts are part of a federal program that helps community health centers like Hudson Headwaters. "By participating in the program, our local pharmacies also help keep vital health care services available to everyone in our communities," Ruggie said.

The pharmacy program applies to most prescriptions written by Hudson Headwaters' physicians. When Hudson Headwaters' patients fill their prescription at a partner pharmacy, Hudson Headwaters receives a financial benefit indirectly from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. Hudson Headwaters uses the additional revenue to support its sliding fee program, pharmacy assistance program and health center operations.

Rite Aid is one of the nation's leading drugstore chains, operating approximately 4,700 stores in 31 states and the District of Columbia, with a strong presence on both the East and West coasts, and approximately 90,000 associates.

Rite Aid is the fifth area pharmacy company to partner with Hudson Headwaters, joining Price Chopper's HouseCalls' pharmacy locations in Glens Falls, Queensbury and Warrensburg, Adirondack Apothecary's stores in Schroon Lake and Moriah, Kinney Drugs in Queensbury and Stone's Pharmacy in Lake Luzerne. The Rite Aid pharmacy locations include Chestertown, Glens Falls (Broad Street and Ridge Street), Hudson Falls (Dix Avenue and Main Street), Lake George, North Creek, Queensbury, South Glens Falls, Ticonderoga and Warrensburg.

Contact information and store hours are available on our website: www.hhnh.org 



Hudson Headwaters' board members, Joe Kelly, Sharon Callahan and Barbara Sweet with Congressman Bill Owens.

Congressional Visit

Congressman William "Bill" Owens, whose district has been redrawn to include Warren County, stopped by West Mountain Primary Care in April to see the new health center built with federal stimulus funding. Owens, whose former law firm provides services to CVPH in Plattsburgh, is well versed in the complexities of health care.

Care for Kids Set for July 29

The eighth annual Care for Kids 5k Run and Fitness Walk is slated for Sunday, July 29th at 9 am. The entry fee is \$25 per participant if registered ahead of time, and \$30 the day of the event. Entry forms are available on the Hudson Headwaters website (hhhn.org). Proceeds from the event benefit the pediatric program, including pediatric behavioral health.



Annual Dinner Set for September 9

The seventh annual Community Champions dinner celebration has been scheduled for Sunday, September 9th at Jimbo's Club at Point O'Pines on Brant Lake. This year's honorees will be Carl Lamm of Chestertown, founder of the Helpers Fund, and Elise and Woody Widlund of North River. For more information, please contact Howard Nelson at hnelson@hhhn.org or 761-0300 ext. 31112.



Dr. Rowley Explains Lyme Disease to YNN

Need an expert on Lyme disease? When YNN Albany (Channel 9) did, they sent reporter Marcie Fraser to the Health Center on Broad Street in Glens Falls to interview Jennifer Rowley, M.D., one of Hudson Headwaters' infectious disease physicians. Rowley told Fraser that the science around diagnosing the disease is evolving. The best way to avoid the disease is to protect yourself from tick bites by wearing long sleeves and pants, and light colored clothing that allows you to check if they're on you. Dr. Rowley also recommended checking yourself or your children in the shower after a day outdoors.




Dr. Blood Blog

Patients of Dr. Suzanne Blood have missed her while she has been "on sabbatical" to New Zealand where she is providing geriatric care in a rehabilitation hospital. Dr. Blood, an outdoor enthusiast, has also been exploring the fabled New Zealand countryside. She and her husband, Bill, have posted their experiences and photographs on a blog. She invites patients and friends of Hudson Headwaters to tune in at <http://thebloodsblog.wordpress.com>.

Geriatric Set Embraces Online Access to Their Medical Info

Janet O'Neil, analyst for athena support, recently received a phone call from a 90 year-old female patient who was signing up for Hudson Headwaters' Patient Portal, which provides online access to personal medical information. "I'm going to have a youngster from across the street help me get started," the 90 year-old said. "He is a retired teacher." Sounds about right to the athena support group which oversees portal operations. An analysis of portal users found that the portal is popular with many in the geriatric set, with one in four of the 9,000 portal users being in the 65 and over group. For more information on how to sign up, call 824-8620, or visit Hudson Headwaters' website www.hhhn.org/patient-portal.

Hudson Headwaters Recognized for Tobacco Cessation Efforts

Hudson Headwaters' health centers have received plaques from the North Country Tobacco Cessation Center for implementing a policy that integrates evidence-based tobacco treatment into daily practice. 



ON THE *Personal Side*

John Rugge, M.D.

HUDSON HEADWATERS AND THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE

Most of us have experienced a “vicious cycle” of one kind or another – a situation in which the solution to one problem creates another. The new problem in turn makes it harder to solve the original one, and finding a way out (or back) becomes even more difficult. In health care, where the problems of cost and quality are complex, it’s especially important to make sure that solutions don’t create vicious cycles. As we doctors like to say, the cure shouldn’t be worse than the disease.

In some cases, actions taken to solve problems and fill needs will lead to a different (and rarer) outcome: the “virtuous cycle.” This is what happens when good actions and decisions reinforce each other to create more good actions and decisions. Hudson Headwaters has succeeded as a health care organization because the virtuous cycle is one of the cornerstones of how we operate. And the people in the communities we serve play a big part. Here’s how.

Our Adirondack-based health centers are located in communities that have no other source of local primary care. Hudson Headwaters takes the good action of filling a vital need – providing care that would otherwise not be available. The communities respond with their good action, helping to support us by contributing to the cost of health center utilities, snow removal and by providing a building (sometimes built by us and then donated to the town). Because we are a Federally Qualified Health Center, this local support is even more important. It enables us to maintain our federal grant, which helps pay for the cost of care we provide to people who have no insurance or little income.

Over the years, as our health centers have needed to be replaced or renovated, local people have gone above and beyond this support to help us raise money. This generosity has been mirrored by the people served at our Glens Falls area health centers. They donate to help us keep the health care safety net available for those who need it the most, but can afford it least.



There’s also the smart, committed leadership of our board of directors, all local volunteers from both our Adirondack-based and Glens Falls area communities.

Hudson Headwaters’ part of the equation has been to keep high-quality health care available in each of the communities we serve. Given the constant changes in health care, it has been an ongoing challenge to maintain and improve the quality of the care we provide.

NEW HEALTH CENTERS, NOT PROFITS

In the last few years, the virtuous cycle of community support and quality primary care services has helped produce new health centers in Fort Edward and Queensbury, built with millions of dollars of federal support. I cannot overstate how big an impact local generosity has made towards inspiring this support. (The federal government likes to help those who help themselves.) Just this month came the latest benefit from our virtuous cycle – \$5 million to replace the Warrensburg Health Center.

This is a remarkable award for a rural health center, and an acknowledgement that the Warrensburg facility serves a much larger area, providing urgent care services seven days a week and six evenings. Clearly, the federal government has looked at our 30-plus years of working together and decided that the team of Hudson Headwaters and the local communities are a good bet.

Yet it’s important to keep in mind that the \$5 million can only be used for construction, and it won’t even cover the entire tab. This widely beneficial \$5 million won’t pay a single salary, nor will it cover any part of the ongoing operations of the replacement health center once it’s built. As with West Mountain Primary Care, our newest health center that opened in January, Hudson Headwaters assumes the challenge of operating the right way, every day. We have been given a huge opportunity to do even more good, to keep putting our resources into quality care.

As a not-for-profit organization, our shareholders are our patients. Our dividends are to be found in the care we provide and the dedicated health care professionals who serve everyone without regard to insurance or income. Our bottom line is your health. ✚

New Video Will Feature Hudson Headwaters



Cyndi Nassivera, Vice President for Medical Support, is interviewed by the film crew.

Hudson Headwaters' relationship with athenahealth (the provider of our electronic medical record system) has been a successful marriage, even if the honeymoon period didn't arrive until everyone got comfortable with the new technology. Now the Boston-based health IT innovator wants to shine a spotlight on how we have incorporated their technology into our practice.

To that end, athena's Vice President for Content and Communications, Pierre Valette, brought a video crew from Boston to conduct interviews with our providers and administrators in April.

"There are a several things that make Hudson Headwaters exciting to us," Valette said. "Our vision is to make health care work as it should. Hudson Headwaters is doing things the right way, and we're proud to be helping."

The video will show how Hudson Headwaters' providers and staff are using athena technology. Once completed, it will be posted on athena's website. Valette said that the Hudson Headwaters' involvement in the patient-centered medical home pilot adds to the appeal of the story.

"When you look around the media about health care, you read about the overuse of procedures, fee for service gone wild, and other issues that add to the cost of care,"

Valette said. "People are very interested in how new models can work, but most of the stories are about things that go wrong or can't work. Stories about success for places like the Mayo Clinic or the Cleveland Clinic are interesting, but they're not models that can be replicated. We believe that the Hudson Headwaters experience is a model that can work in a lot of places.

"I've been to many of the thousands of practices that use athena, and Hudson Headwaters is special." 