

Rolla hospital official named North Dakota's outstanding rural health professional

By Michael Savaloja
Of The Star

In many ways, receiving personal recognition for accomplishing years of prominent professional achievements is an honor to all of those who work behind the scenes to make the acclamation possible.

That is how Kimber Wraalstad, chief executive officer of Rolla's Presentation Medical Center, best describes her latest accomplishment.

On March 21, Wraalstad received the 2007 Outstanding Rural Health Professional Award during the annual Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health in Mandan.

The award is presented to a health care professional located in rural North Dakota who has demonstrated leadership in the delivery of rural health services.

Wraalstad said receiving the award was not only an honor, but also a humbling experience.

"It's nice to receive an award, but it's very difficult to accept one for just doing your job," Wraalstad said. "If anything, awards like this are a reflection of the people you work with. I have the opportunity to work with an awful lot of good people."

Wraalstad has been the chief executive officer at Presentation Medical Center for nearly 13 years. Since May of 1994, her strong and competent leadership has helped create an organization that understands challenges and recognizes new opportunities.

Wraalstad has made a tremendous contribution to rural health and to the lives of people living in the geographic area. She has been active in placing automated external defibrillators in six communities in the surrounding areas and obtaining funding for EMS and professional education for providers in the area.

Over the past couple of years, Wraalstad has helped draft numerous grants that have totaled approximately \$150,000 for Presentation Medical Center.

She said along with multiple CAH (Critical Access Hospital), Network and EMS flex grants, the hospital received grants in 2005 and 2006 from Blue Cross Blue Shield, which allowed the hospital to incorporate its lab information system.

Prior to her service in Rolla, Wraalstad served as the administrator for Merrill Pioneer Community Hospital in Rock Rapids, Iowa, and Assistant Vice President at Sarah



Kimber Wraalstad, left, and Peggy McDougall at the annual Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health.

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**Kimber Wraalstad,
CEO of Presentation
Medical Center**

Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon, Illinois.

Wraalstad received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of North Dakota and Master of Health Administration from St. Louis University.

She has been actively involved in the North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, Health Services, Inc., Northland Healthcare Alliance and the North Dakota Healthcare Executives Forum.

Wraalstad is also board certified in Healthcare Management and is a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has been and continues to be an energetic spokesperson and advocate for Presentation Medical Center and quality health care.

Wraalstad said she would not be able to perform her job as well as she does, however, without all of the dedicated employees at Presentation Medical Center.

From the hospital board and the medical staff, all the way to the hospital's housekeeping and laundry personnel, Wraalstad said her award represents everyone that is involved in providing quality medical care to Rolla and its surrounding communities.

"I hope this award is more of a reflection of the people here at Presentation Medical Center, who work day in and day out to provide care to our community," Wraalstad said. "I'm blessed to be able to work with some very caring, committed people, from the board to the medical staff to all the employees here."

The Rural Health Awards were established in 1993 to acknowledge the contributions of North Dakotans who improve rural health care, and are part of the Dakota Conference on Rural and Public Health.

The Dakota Conference is sponsored by Altru Health System of Grand Forks; North Dakota Public Health Association; UND College of Nursing; and the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences' Center for Rural Health, Department of Community Medicine and Department of Family Medicine. The Dakota Conference is coordinated by Bismarck State College and facilitated by the Center for Rural Health at the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences.