

Teamwork is an essential part of being an employee at Rochelle Community Hospital. Its strategic plan relies on teamwork and utilizing the skills and creativity of managers to promote improved health services for patients, said hospital CEO Karen Tracy in a recent community newsletter.

"Our employees are our greatest assets," said Tracy, who had been part of Rochelle's administrative team for 20 years before rising to CEO in 2023. "We have had a philosophy for a long time that we hire for fit. It's important for us to have all staff working together for a common goal—to promote health and wellness in our community."

As staffing shortages have affected all hospitals, Rochelle Community Hospital has implemented several strategies to increase its rural healthcare workforce. They include:

- Internships
- Job shadowing
- Promoting internal health careers
- Leadership development institutes
- Staff development institutes
- School tours
- Ongoing college affiliations
- Department panel presentations at schools
- Partnering with local high schools and colleges to promote career pathways
- Creating an endowment fund from its foundation to advance healthcare careers
- Providing training and conference opportunities through IHA and the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network

An image from the hospital depicts these strategies as part of a tree with its roots connected to the hospital and core hospital values of commitment and leadership, excellence, ownership and innovation, communication, and professionalism and teamwork.

As CEO, Tracy noted her goals include more face time in the departments and in front of staff, employee forums with senior leaders spending time in different departments and continued recruitment of primary care physicians for its clinic.



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