

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A
CERTIFIED RURAL HEALTH CLINIC:

A CASE STUDY OF TABLE GROVE, ILLINOIS

An Abstract of

A Thesis Presented to the
Department of Geography
Western Illinois University

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Margo D. Eckerly

December 2000

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this applied thesis is to offer an example of the planning process that rural communities may consider when starting a certified Rural Health Clinic. The project offers a critical review of the planning efforts of one rural community, Table Grove, Illinois.

In order to document a true and accurate record of the planning process, personal interviews were conducted with members of the Table Grove Development Group, the hospital management, the physician assistant, and various members of government agencies. Through these interviews, an account of the planning process was recorded and various community surveys were reviewed.

The study revealed an impressive grass-roots campaign, initiated by the small town of Table Grove, to develop a Rural Health Clinic. Then, several years later, when low patient utilization figures were realized, questions arose as to why the clinic was being underutilized. A market analysis of the study area was performed, exposing nearby competition as a potential for some of the patient losses. Alternative marketing efforts were also used to try and increase utilization of the clinic.

In order to obtain a better understanding of Rural Health Clinics, the first two chapters cover their history and background. The following chapters focus specifically on the town of Table Grove and exactly what was involved in the planning and development of their clinic. Finally, this thesis looks at problems faced by community planners and the RHC management in their efforts to keep the Table Grove Rural Health Clinic a viable enterprise.