

Dear CRHC Members and Friends of the Center,

Over the past 16 years, the Colorado Rural Health Center (CRHC) has grown from a fledgling organization to one respected and known at the state and national levels. You may know CRHC for its fantastic programs like Critical Access Hospitals, Rural Health Clinics, Marva Jean Jackson Scholarships, or the Colorado Rural Outreach Program. No doubt, however, you also know CRHC for its tremendous staff and amazing leader, Denise Denton.

Mark Twain once said, “The miracle, or the power, that elevates the few is to be found in their perseverance under the promptings of a brave, determined spirit.” Those of us who know Denise, know that she is definitely a brave and determined spirit, a magnificent person and visionary leader. In fact, she is recognized as one of the nation’s leaders in rural healthcare and has built an organization that has become known for its responsiveness, innovation, accountability, and leadership. Denise’s passion and unwillingness to settle for second best have proven to be key ingredients in building a successful organization that will thrive for years to come. In addition, those of you who know Denise on a more personal level know of her terrific sense of humor, her unwieldy use of acronyms, her passion for adventure and her ability to see the “human side” of the issues.

It is for these reasons and countless others that we find saying “goodbye” to Denise bittersweet. After 16 years of service at CRHC, Denise has decided to move on to her next career at the end of November 2006. We will always be grateful to her for the organization that she has built and more importantly for the work that she has done and the lives that she has touched. While we will miss her, there is no doubt that she will continue to be that “brave and determined spirit” and is likely to be found in a rural community near you pursuing rural health greatness. Thank you, Denise, for the commitment, dedication and love that you have shown the Center and all of us. We wish you well!

The Board and the staff at the Colorado Rural Health Center are committed to continuing the work that Denise has so passionately dedicated her life to for the past 16 years. The Board is taking the opportunity to evaluate its strategic plan and to begin a recruitment process to find the Center’s next executive director.

To help the Board manage the change, we are very excited to announce the appointment of Lou Ann Wilroy as the acting director for the organization. For the past five years, Lou Ann has served as director of the Critical Access Hospital Program and other activities at the Center. Lou Ann has herself become widely recognized as an expert in the field and a person of great commitment, compassion, and dedication. She instills confidence in all of us as board members that the transition will be smooth and an opportunity for continued growth at the Center. We are lucky to have Lou Ann’s leadership!

We want to thank all of you for your support through this transition. We know that the Center will remain strong because of all of you. The Board will periodically provide updates regarding the Center and our progress towards hiring a new executive director. The board feels confident that we have a thorough process underway. We want to assure our members and the rural health community that the Board will move ahead expediently to find a highly qualified replacement for Denise. In the meantime, we welcome you to contact any of the board members with your ideas, comments or concerns. We hope that all of you will plan to join us at the annual CRHC membership/update meeting to be held at the Western Stock Show Complex on January 26, 2007. Thank you again for your continued support of the Colorado Rural Health Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy S. Evetts".

Randy Evetts, Board President