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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **NorthernBridges Successful in Family Care Expansion**

It has been a busy summer for NorthernBridges. The new managed care organization (MCO) recently completed the opening of its eighth “hub” office, which delivers Family Care to 11 counties in northwest Wisconsin. Family Care was created by the state to help low-income elderly and adults with disabilities stay in their homes, which most prefer, and out of more expensive nursing homes. It replaces Medicaid waiver programs administered by each county and plagued by long waiting lists of people needing services.

“There has been so much hard work done by so many people over the last four years to bring us to this point,” said NorthernBridges CEO John T. McMahon. “Beginning in October, 2005, with 11 counties and private organizations studying long-term care reform options, to opening our doors on May 1, 2009. Then, as we completed the enrollment of members from the counties on August 1 and started to finally enroll members from the waiting lists, it felt like the last successful step in a long journey.”

The building of NorthernBridges was no small task. Consider the to-do list:

- Hire, train, and house 150 employees in less than a year.
- Build the business and information technology systems to support an entirely unique business model.
- Transfer over 1600 waiver participants from 11 counties.
- Assemble a network of over 1200 providers to serve them.
- Do it all in an accelerated time frame never done before by any other MCO.

“Other MCOs have launched from counties that had Family Care pilot programs,” explained McMahon, “but we did not have that advantage. Plus, we had to do it in a time frame not attempted before, while assuring continuity of care and member safety. I think what our employees have accomplished here is very remarkable. Their commitment and dedication to providing members the best life possible is the reason we have been so successful.”

NorthernBridges is headquartered in Hayward with hub offices in Rice Lake, Superior, Centuria, Spooner, Park Falls, Ashland, Ladysmith, and Hayward. Nurses, social

workers, and other staff who directly serve members are housed in hub office locations. To supply the wide range of other services needed for members, NorthernBridges contracts with local service providers and businesses.

To become a NorthernBridges member, people must first contact their county Aging and Disability Resource Center or ADRC to find out if they are eligible. To find out more about NorthernBridges, they can go to the web at [www.northernbridges.com](http://www.northernbridges.com).