The year was 1990 and counties across Wisconsin were faced with rapidly rising costs from the commercial marketplace to provide health benefits to employees.

A concerned group of Wisconsin county officials believed they could do better to meet the unique needs of local governments. Acting together, the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and county representatives created a study committee to explore options for relieving the rising cost of providing health benefits to employees.

January 1991 marked the first premium month of the newly formed WCA Group Health Trust and founding members included Adams, Bayfield, Burnett, Calumet, Columbia, Forest, Iowa, Juneau, Ozaukee, Richland, Sauk, Shawano and Washburn Counties.

Twenty-five years later, the WCA Group Health Trust serves 50,000 lives and has met the milestone of providing affordable health benefits for Wisconsin families. I was honored to join past and present board members and those involved with the WCA Group Health Trust to celebrate the 25-year anniversary of this Wisconsin success story.

Chair of the WCA Group Health Trust Board of Directors Myron Schuster, who has served on the board since its inception, had these words to say at the celebration, “The foundation of this company has always been participating Wisconsin counties, other units of government and school districts. With the Trust, those making decisions are the consumers and this direct involvement makes the company more responsive to local healthcare needs.”

The founding principals still remain at the core of the WCA Group Health Trust’s success, including:

- Offering financial security by participating in a larger group;
- Providing adaptability and flexibility by custom designing employee benefit programs to meet their individual needs;
- Providing options for cost savings, including managed care services, access to preferred provider organizations (PPOs) and other health care networks;
- Offering stability in health programs;
- Providing members with the availability of health care utilization data; and,
- Offering comprehensive wellness programs.

---

from the director

**WCA GHT Marks 25 Years**

—Mark D. O’Connell, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association

continues
WCA APPOINTS BOARD
Ashland County Board Chair and WCA President Thomas Kieweg appoints the WCA GHT Board of Directors that include: Forest County Einar Huertl (Chair); Calumet County William Bannibau (Secretary); Burnett County Myron Schuster; Columbia County Edward Harmon; Ozaukee County James Jetzk; Ozaukee County George Lampert; and Sauk County M. Dudley Newsom.

AEGIS CORP. HIRED
Aegis Corporation is hired to provide marketing and consulting services for the trust.

1ST MUNICIPALITY
In 2003, the City of Port Washington enrolls with the trust making it the first municipality member in the GHT.

WELLNESS PROGRAM
In 2005, the trust forms a wellness program for its members; by 2015 it becomes a model that others emulate in the industry.

1ST SCHOOL DISTRICT
The first school district member group enrolls in 2005.

LIVES: 10,000
Premium Milestone: $50 MILLION

1ST PBM CONTRACT
The first pharmacy benefits management contract is negotiated by the trust in January 2006.

INITIAL CAPITAL PAYBACK
In 2007, the trust completes payment of the startup premium investment back to the founding members of the trust.

WCA GHT BOARD GROWS
In January 2009, the trust adds a permanent school district and municipality seat to the board of directors to reflect the make-up of the trust membership.

LIVES: 20,000
Premium Milestone: $100 MILLION

ACCESS TO UNITED HEALTHCARE
The trust members gain access to the buying power of United Healthcare realizing great savings.

LIVES: 30,000
Premium Milestone: $200 MILLION

WELLNESS CHALLENGES
In 2011 and 2012, the trust starts two innovative wellness programs, the GHT Fitness Challenge and the Healthy Holiday Challenge.

LIVES: 40,000
Premium Milestone: $300 MILLION

ADDITION TO BOARD
In January 2015, the trust adds an additional school district board of directors seat.

LIVES: 50,000

STUDY COMMITTEE FORMED
WCA and county representatives create a study committee to explore options for relieving the rising cost of providing health benefits to employees.

WCA GHT FORMED
January 1991 is the first premium month of the trust. The founding member counties include: Adams, Bayfield, Burnett, Calumet, Columbia, Forest, Iowa, Juneau, Ozaukee, Richland, Sauk, Shawano and Washburn.

GIVING BACK
The trust creates the scholarship program to give back to the people and communities that have made the GHT a success.
“This 25-year milestone represents so much and at the core of it all is the successful partnership between the Trust and all of the members.”

Michael Lamont, Deputy Director of Programs & Services, Wisconsin Counties Association

WCA GHT Marks 25 Years (cont.)

“The Trust began with the mission of being a cost-effective resource for assisting Wisconsin counties and has grown to include cities and school districts in fulfilling their employee health benefit obligations in a fiscally responsible manner,” said WCA Group Health Trust Vice President Sales and Marketing Kim Hurtz. “Our commitment to working so closely with our members to ensure their specific needs are met has never wavered and we are so proud to be celebrating our 25-year anniversary.”

The WCA Group Health Trust partners with clients to create employee benefit solutions that meet the unique needs of each entity. The Trust provides medical benefit plans, self-funded health programs, prescription drug programs, dental plans, vision plans, wellness programs and network access to participating preferred provider organizations (PPOs).

Major milestones in the 25-year history of the WCA Group Health Trust are included on the timeline to the left and include:

- 2003: The City of Port Washington enrolls with the trust making it the first municipal member in the GHT.
- 2005: The first school district also enrolls.
- 2009: The WCA GHT adds a permanent school district and municipality seat to the Board of Directors to reflect the makeup of the trust membership.
- 2015: The WCA GHT adds an additional school district seat on the Board of Directors.

The newest member of the team, WCA’s Deputy Director of Programs & Services Michael Lamont has this to say, “This 25-year milestone represents so much and at the core of it all is the successful partnership between the Trust and all of the members. This employee benefit solution works so well because we work side by side with counties, cities and school districts to meet their unique needs.”

I was privileged to be a part of the formation of this company and am honored to help celebrate its 25th anniversary. I look forward to the next 25 years.