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***Sen. Jeff Smith writes about the unique partnership between the Mayo Clinic and UW-Eau Claire that could make it “the center for rural healthcare in Wisconsin.”***

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MADISON, WI - Dr. Tim Nelson of Mayo Clinic walked the halls of the Wisconsin State Capitol along with UW-Eau Claire Chancellor Jim Schmidt. They visited 11 offices in a marathon day of lobbying for UWEC’s new science and health sciences building project in the current budget.

We all know how important health care access is to keep people healthy. Rural communities in Wisconsin are especially difficult to serve. Critical care hospitals in small cities throughout Wisconsin struggle to keep doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Clinics can be a long drive for many and out of reach for others. And that’s if economic circumstances allow for families in rural areas to afford a healthcare plan.

While Medicaid expansion has been the biggest focus of the budget process so far, it wasn’t what Dr. Nelson and Chancellor Schmidt were talking to legislators about. In Dr. Nelson’s words, Mayo Clinic wants to “make Eau Claire the center for rural healthcare in Wisconsin.” You see, Dr. Nelson and Chancellor Schmidt are collaborating on a project that could make Wisconsin a leader for rural healthcare research.

## Sen. Smith: “Health, Science and Wisconsin”

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31  
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