3RNet: A Brief History

Fred Moskol, the mastermind of 3RNet, was a pharmacist by training and the first Director of the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health. In his role as director, Fred focused on physician recruitment and, with others, created the New Physicians for Wisconsin recruitment program, which encouraged family medicine physicians from the Midwest to practice in Wisconsin's rural communities.

Access to healthcare was a nationwide problem and especially severe in rural areas. Fred envisioned a national organization to address this need – one that focused not just on recruitment, but on community development and the selection of providers who would become invested in the communities and provide ongoing services. From 1975 to 1995, Fred championed the cause and began building support across the country. Fred emphasized community development. This meant knowing the people in the community, identifying key individuals, and developing informed cadres that could talk to prospective physicians about healthcare and economic development.

In 1995, after 20 years of advocating for a network supporting rural recruitment, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health voted to approve a national recruitment program. 3RNet began operating that year with twelve members. By 2013, the organization had grown to fifty-three members and was recognized as a national voice on rural recruitment and retention issues. When incorporated in 1999, Fred Moskol served as the Executive Director and Nikki Kennedy was hired as the Administrator.

In 2002, the Board of Directors formulated 3RNet’s mission:

3RNet works to improve rural and underserved communities’ access to quality healthcare through the recruitment and retention of physicians and other healthcare professionals, development of community based recruitment and retention activities, and national advocacy relative to rural and underserved healthcare workforce issues.

A significant method for actualizing the mission was the ongoing development of 3RNet’s website, which serves as a clearinghouse for its members. Each member maintains state and regional pages within the 3RNet website, providing information about communities, available opportunities, and loan repayment programs. Members and healthcare facilities can post opportunities directly to the website and members can access a candidate database.
Timeline

1975-1995  - Fred Moskol became first director of Wisconsin Office of Rural Health
1995      - NOSORH voted to approve national recruitment organization
           - First 3RNet website created
1999      - 3RNet incorporated
2002      - 3RNet Recruitment & Retention Manual created
           - Mission statement crafted
2003      - First annual evaluation survey implemented
2004      - 33 Organizational Members & Membership dues initiated
2005      - Fred Moskol retired & Tim Skinner hired as Executive Director
2007      - Cherokee Nation & Northern Mariana Islands became members (51 Members)
2008      - Memorandum of Understanding created by Board of Directors
2009      - Mentoring Program initiated by Membership Committee
2010      - Board retreat held in Chaska, MN
           - Vision Statement created
           - Collaborative recruitment & retention trainings with National Health Service Corps
2011      - Website Peer Review Program initiated by Membership Committee
           - Tom Tucker became Co-Director
           - Dues increased for the first time
2012      - Department of Veterans Affairs became member
           - Tim Skinner retired & Mike Shimmens hired as new Executive Director
           - New website launched
           - Tom Tucker retired
2013      - Indian Health Service became member
           - Mobile application deployed
           - New annual evaluation survey developed
           - Michelle Varcho hired as Director of Operations
2014      - Nikki Kennedy & Jerry Kafer retire
           - Mark Barclay hired as Director of Member Services
           - Kristine Morin hired as Director of Communications & Marketing