

**Published - Thursday, May 26, 2005**

## **Winona Health honored with Minnesota Quality Award**

*By Brady Averill | Winona Daily News*

Winona Health was named a 2004 Minnesota Quality Award recipient Tuesday.

The nonprofit, community-owned health care provider participated in a Minnesota Council for Quality program this year to improve its performance and service. Organizations that participate in the council's program are evaluated by a team of volunteers and then are given feedback in areas such as leadership, strategic planning and customer and market focus. The feedback shows a company areas of improvement.

The award is given at four different levels — commitment, advancement, achievement and excellence, with excellence being the highest. Winona Health received the advancement award. It was the organization's first time participating in the program.

"We'll continue," said Winona Health President Rachelle Schultz.

In the fall, the organization will apply for the program again this summer, Schultz said. Winona Health will compete on the national level for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

The Minnesota Council for Quality program is the state version of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality program.

While Schultz said Winona Health received complimentary feedback, she said the organization also has its work cut out. For example, Winona Health must improve the way it evaluates itself in the community, Schultz said.

She said the organization might do less comprehensive surveys, but survey more often.

One of the reasons Winona Health got involved in the program is to serve the community's needs, Schultz said. Those include being fiscally responsible, demonstrating quality healthcare and treating people well, she said.

"I think every member or stakeholder involved in our organization believes in organizational improvement," said Brian Lassiter, Minnesota Council for Quality president.