

LOCAL BOY MAKES HEALTH CARE LEADERS LIST

Thirty-six year old **Ben Koppelman** was just recognized as one of Modern Healthcare's "national leaders of the future." I called Ben to find the secret of leadership in health care. Raised in Mankato and Albert Lea, MN, Ben received a B.A. from Concordia College in Moorhead and found a job with Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), one of the really big systems in the country.

Guess where? In *Lake Wobegon* - half-way between **Garrison Keillor's** 1960s Stearns County home outside New Munich and Fishers Resort in on Middle Spunk Lake in Avon, which Garrison now owns and from which I once matriculated. Ben found a job running the Albany, MN, hospital (which didn't exist when Albany's only doc - **Florian Baumgartner** - took care of me and my family). Actually, it's run out of CHI's St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls, where **Charles Lindbergh** was raised by a father who spent a short time in Congress. But St. Gabriel's **Larry Schultz** gives Koppelman all the credit for turning Albany's red ink into black in a relatively short period of time.

For the last 30 months, Ben Koppelman has been running St. Joseph's Hospital in Park Rapids, MN, and just finished a \$29 million renovation to accommodate in-patient redesign and clinical accommodations for the Innovis doctors who serve the northwestern Minnesota lake country community. St. Joseph's has the good fortune to be a "critical access hospital," operating near its 25-bed capacity. Ben and his wife are also raising two daughters, seven and four, on a home and three acres outside town.