

# Dreyer CEO Potter retires after 28 years

By David Garbe  
STAFF WRITER

When John Potter was hired to be the chief executive of Dreyer Medical Clinic in 1979, the private group boasted 40 doctors operating out of a single building in West Aurora.

On Friday, Potter retired from his post at the head of an organization that has more than tripled its stable of doctors and grown to fill 12 offices across the Fox Valley.

In the medical business, where doctor-managed companies typically fire and hire new business administrators every few years, Potter's 28-year career at Dreyer stands out.

"He's grown up with us ... he just knows everything," said Dr. Jon Christofersen, the chairman of Dreyer's board. "He's always been a visionary. We've relied on him for strategic direction."

Two of the biggest factors in the clinic's strong growth—the early embrace of HMOs and the construction of satellite offices—were initiatives by Potter.

"He's personally been responsible, whether he takes credit for it or not, for a dozen sites of care," said Christofersen said.

One of Potter's earliest projects was the creation of Dreyer's first satellite office, which opened on Aurora's far East Side near the Fox Valley Mall in 1980. Since then, the clinic has followed the growing population as far north as St. Charles and as far south as Yorkville.

More are sites planned for the near future, Potter said, with Sugar Grove likely to be the first town to get a new Dreyer office.

In 1996, Potter also helped negotiate the incorporation of Dreyer into the multi-billion dollar conglomerate Advocate Health Care.

The deal re-structured Dreyer into two separate, for-profit corporations. The first handles the staff and physical properties under the leadership of Advocate executives. The second corporation represents and manages the 125 doctors who practice through Dreyer.

At the center of those two (sometimes competing) interests is Potter, who is responsible for the overall Dreyer organization.

"It's a balancing act," Potter said, but the arrangement with Advocate has improved Dreyer's financial resources while preserving the Aurora-based clinic's independence.

"I like it because it maintained physician direction," Potter said. "Physician leadership is extremely important."

Potter and other Dreyer executives said they are confident that he is leaving the clinic in good shape to continue under a new president, which the board hopes to select in the next month.

Potter said he's less optimistic about the near future for the medical industry as a whole, given the national problems of rising costs and shrinking coverage.

"The health care system is broken," said Potter, who began his career as an industrial engineer but got into the medical business because he wanted to feel good about his work.

"I don't feel good about the way people aren't able to see their basic health care needs covered. There are too many uninsured people," Potter said, and too many people that can't get care because their coverage—even under programs like Medicaid—does not give doctors enough incentive to accept it.

Sooner or later, Potter said, national politicians will have to overcome the influence of special interests like the insurance industry to substantially change the way health care is financed in America.

The ideal solution? A universal plan that would include every American and guarantee basic coverage, Potter suggested, with more elaborate care covered by as much private insurance as an individual or his employer chooses to pay for.

"It's going to require political leadership that we've never seen," Potter said. "I think it will be part of the next presidential race."



Dreyer CEO John Potter

**DOW**  
↑ 8.21  
13,676.32  
Up .06 percent

**NASDAQ**  
↑ 4.37  
2,618.29  
Up .17 percent

**S&P**  
↑ 2.84  
1,539  
Up .18 percent

**NYSE**  
↑ 21.45  
10,064.05  
Up .21 percent

## FARM FUTURES

**JULY CORN**  
-3¢ \$3.83 a bushel

**JULY SOYBEANS**  
-1¢ \$8.15 a bushel

**AUGUST LIVE CATTLE**  
-0.32¢ 91.12¢ a pound

**AUGUST FEEDER CATTLE**  
+0.77¢ \$1.1102 a pound

**JULY LEAN HOGS**  
▲ +0.22¢ 75.37¢ a pound

## METALS

**GOLD**  
▲ -.50 at \$670.70

**SILVER**  
▲ +.005 at \$13.686

## BusinessCalendar

### Thursday

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