

United Health Foundation and Medical College of Wisconsin: To launch coordinated care program for new and expectant mothers

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MILWAUKEE (Feb. 27, 2017) – United Health Foundation and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) will create a program to improve women’s health and birth outcomes, and reduce health disparities.

The Periscope (PERInatal Specialty COnsult Psychiatry Extension) Project aims to provide real-time care coordination, behavioral health services and support for new and expectant mothers across southeast Wisconsin. Primary-care providers will have access to care- coordination services including:

- immediate, real-time, peer-to-peer access to consultation by a perinatal psychiatrist;
- a Periscope Project coordinator to help identify community resources, and;
- digital resources via MCW’s website featuring a care provider toolkit composed of medical management resources including assessment tools, treatment algorithms, treatment information and continuing medical education (CME) modules.

The project is funded by a \$1.2 million grant by United Health Foundation, and is part of the foundation's city-based approach to provide resources to organizations that connect communities to care, support whole-person health and build healthier communities.

"The Periscope Project addresses the lack of perinatal psychiatric care providers by increasing the reach and efficiency of these specialized health providers," said Dr. Christina Wichman, associate professor of Psychiatry, and Obstetrics and Gynecology at MCW. "Together, we are building the capacity of primary-care providers to effectively manage and coordinate care for their perinatal patients with psychiatric and behavioral health conditions."

"We are partnering with the Medical College of Wisconsin to help ensure that primary care providers have the tools they need to enhance new and expectant mothers' health and well-being," said Dr. Donna Davidoff, chief medical officer, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Wisconsin. "The Periscope Project will help more mothers and babies live healthier lives and improve access to coordinated, comprehensive care."

The Periscope Project is led by a multi-disciplinary team including a perinatal psychiatrist and program staff from the MCW's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, and a researcher and health economist from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee College of Nursing. Secondary partnerships include Milwaukee Health Care Partnership and its member health systems, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

"These partnerships are critical to the project's success," said Jennifer Doering, associate professor and executive committee chair, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee College of Nursing. "This multi-institution and multi-discipline approach is rooted with a deep commitment to advancing and integrating cost-effective best practices for the care and treatment of perinatal women in Milwaukee, with a targeted approach to reaching the most vulnerable patients."

According to the 2016 America's Health Rankings Health of Women and Children Report, more than 14 percent of women ages 18 to 44 in Wisconsin use alcohol during pregnancy, signaling a need for increased substance-abuse consultation and access to care during these critical months. The Periscope Project will ensure new and expectant mothers have access to these services, in addition to specialty perinatal psychiatric care.

The United Health Foundation grant will be awarded over three years, with an additional \$200,000 from the State of Wisconsin through the Title V Maternal Health Block Grant.