

# UW Madison: Wisconsin partnership program awards \$4 million to target health gaps

Posted on Wednesday, Dec 6, 2017

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Contact: Anne Pankratz

apankratz2@wisc.edu; 608.216.5637

(Madison, Wis.) The Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) has awarded \$4 million to four innovative community-based health projects aimed at promoting health equity in Wisconsin. The new projects were selected for their potential to create conditions, systems and policy changes that could lead to equitable and sustainable improvements in health.

The new awards reflect the Partnership Program's recognition that many factors influence health and well-being. The projects were awarded \$1 million each through the Partnership Program's Community Impact Grant program. The Impact Grants provide up to \$1 million over five years to support large-scale, evidence-based, community-academic partnerships aimed at achieving sustainable policy, systems and/or environmental changes to improve health equity in Wisconsin. The following four projects were funded:

Connecting Clinics, Campuses and Communities to Advance Health Equity

Research shows that health outcomes—including chronic conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and heart disease as well as depression and anxiety—are significantly influenced by underlying factors such as family circumstances, neighborhoods, housing, education, workplaces and more. This 2017

Impact Grant award supports an innovative partnership between Marshfield Clinic, Family Health Center of Marshfield, Inc. and UW-Eau Claire to expand care to address these underlying factors that influence health. Students and community volunteers from Eau Claire, Marshfield, Stevens Point and Wausau will be trained to work to connect clinic patients with unmet social needs, to community services such as food, energy, housing and transportation. The team will also develop a new model of leadership in each community served that will empower people directly affected by health disparities and social inequities, as well as local community organizations and stakeholders, as partners in the development of the program. The project's ultimate goal is to develop innovative ways for clinics and campuses to work within communities to improve health equity.

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### Creating Conditions to Improve Housing and Health

Many factors influence health and well-being, including access to safe and stable housing. The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute in Milwaukee, Wis. and its academic partners at the University of Wisconsin recognize this direct link. Their project, Creating Conditions to Improve Housing for Wisconsin Families, will inform housing policies related to health, quality, stability or affordability to alleviate Wisconsin's housing crisis and its effects on public health. The project activities—including building a community-driven advisory council, conducting a health impact assessment and recruiting and training tenant leadership teams—will create conditions for local, state and/or federal policymakers to improve current housing policies to help increase affordability, quality and stability, ultimately improving health and well-being for low-income Wisconsinites and their families.

### Improving Opioid Treatment and Recovery in Rural Wisconsin

The Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP), an anti-poverty agency that works with the five-county region of Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette and Richland counties, is using its award to fight Wisconsin's rural opioid crisis. The project will create the Southwestern Wisconsin Recovery Pathways program to pilot a model of coordinated access to medical, physical, emotional, social and economic wraparound services for people in recovery from opioid addiction, ultimately to improve their chances of sustained recovery. At the center of the program, sober-living housing will support recovery by providing an environment removed from negative influences and triggers, and that provides consistent monitoring, peer

support and professional counseling, as well as medication. Additional services will support reintegration into the community. The program will pilot this model in Richland and Iowa counties, with the goal of establishing a sustainable and replicable model of rural community-based opioid use treatment and recovery.

### Reducing Tobacco Use in High Risk Families

Tobacco use during pregnancy remains one of Wisconsin's leading causes of poor birth outcomes, and in some communities, up to one in three women smoke during pregnancy. Through First Breath Families, a partnership project between the UW-Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention and the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation (WWHF), the WWHF will significantly expand its efforts to bring tobacco cessation services to high-risk individuals, families and communities across Wisconsin and will seek policy change that will provide sustainable funding for these services. Specifically, the team will collaborate with local agencies that serve pregnant and postpartum women and their families, provide statewide access to local WWHF Quit Coaches, and develop participant-informed and developed services. By reaching, serving and engaging with high-risk populations, the project aims to reduce health inequities and improve health for women, infants, children and families in Wisconsin.

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### About the Wisconsin Partnership Program

The Wisconsin Partnership Program represents a far-reaching commitment by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health to improve the health of Wisconsin residents through investments in research, education and community partnerships. Through its support of evidence-based efforts to establish sustainable and equitable policy, systems and environmental (PSE) solutions, the Wisconsin Partnership Program is working to ensure that opportunities to live a longer, healthier life are shared by all Wisconsinites. Established in 2004, the Wisconsin Partnership Program has awarded 450 research, education and community grants totaling more than \$200 million aimed at improving the health of Wisconsin residents.