

First Lady Walker: Addresses the impact of childhood trauma at Washington D.C. forum

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WASHINGTON – First Lady Tonette Walker today spoke at the Kaiser Permanente Institute for Health Policy Forum about how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can impact a child’s well-being throughout their lives and how schools can support these children by practicing Trauma-Informed Care (TIC). The forum is entitled: Addressing Trauma in School-Aged Children and it brings together experts, policymakers, academics, and organizational leaders.

“We need to help children who have experienced toxic stress in their lives overcome their past by building resiliency and increasing their social support network,” said Mrs. Walker. “By coming together to discuss the importance of Trauma-Informed Care, we are moving in the right direction to make Wisconsin and our entire country trauma-informed.”

46 million children in the United States have been affected by trauma in the form of violence, crime, and maltreatment. Research shows a correlation between the number of ACEs a child experiences and negative outcomes later on in life including juvenile offending, higher rates of depression, and chronic health problems.

Kaiser Permanente’s Institute for Health Policy works to identify important national health policy issues by drawing on experts from various fields. Mrs. Walker was joined on stage by Ellen Pais, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Education Partnership; Kiersten Stewart with Futures Without Violence; Sharon Hoover from the University of Maryland School of Medicine; and Sandra Wilkniss with the

National Governors Association.

Mrs. Walker has been a trailblazer in incorporating Trauma-Informed Care throughout Wisconsin and the nation. She worked in collaboration with Fostering Futures to successfully implement TIC across multiple Wisconsin agencies, county human service systems, and tribal nations. She worked on the federal level to help draft House Resolution 443 and Senate Resolution 346, which both aim to increase the promotion and implementation of TIC. As a result of her efforts, May was recognized as Trauma-Informed Care Month.