

# University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health: Innovative concept earns award from U.S. government

Posted on Wednesday, Jan 16, 2019

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**CONTACT: Toni Morrissey**

(608) 263-3223

(608) 576-6456

tmorrissey@uwhealth.org

Prototype app will be developed to help children with complex care needs

MADISON, WI – A team of researchers at the University of Wisconsin- School of Medicine and Public Health and the College of Engineering have won a share of a \$100,000 award to develop technology for families caring at home for children with complex medical needs.

The award comes from the Health Resources and Health Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Only seven winners were selected nationally.

Dr. Ryan Coller, assistant professor of pediatrics, and Dr. Nicole Werner, assistant professor of industrial engineering, are working on a mobile app to connect and support families caring for children who need enteral tubes (like tubes into the stomach or intestines to safely give medications, nutrition and hydration) in a home setting.

“Among children with complex medical needs, 30 percent of all emergency department visits and 17 percent of all hospitalizations were due to device complications at home. The majority were from enteral tubes, and we think a number of these might be prevented by better supporting families,” said Dr. Collier.

Collier said the Phase I prototype will be developed by partnering with families. That portion of the research will be guided by Barbara Katz, co-director of Family Voices of Wisconsin. Katz will lead family engagement during design sessions with socioeconomically diverse family caregivers who manage enteral tubes.

In Phase II, the prototype will be developed, and small-scale testing will be conducted through July 2019.

Three to five of the original seven awardees will be given a share of \$125,000 to advance to Phase III. During this phase, teams will test their interventions on a larger scale and one will be selected to receive a grand prize of \$150,000.