

UW-Madison: Wisconsin Partnership Program announces \$4 million in awards to health equity initiatives

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) has announced its 2021 Community Impact Grant awards. Grants of \$1 million each, over five years, support community-academic partnerships and their initiatives to improve health and advance health equity by addressing the social determinants that influence health and well-being as well as the systems, structures and policies that shape these determinants and hold health inequities in place.

This year's awards support initiatives across a wide range of issues, communities and geographic areas including promoting food sovereignty in the Oneida Nation; improving access to housing for criminal justice-impacted women; improving dementia healthcare for Latinos and improving access to healthcare in rural Wisconsin for people with substance use disorders.

"The Wisconsin Partnership Program continues to support initiatives that are addressing issues key to societal well-being," said Dr. Amy Kind, director of the Center for Health Disparities Research, professor of medicine at SMPH, and chair of the Partnership's Oversight and Advisory Committee. "This year we are especially pleased to support a wide array of initiatives whose work is reaching diverse communities across Wisconsin."

The grants were awarded by the WPP Oversight and Advisory Committee, following a multi-stage competitive application and review process. This year's awards were made to the following organizations:

- **FREE Campaign for the initiative *Health Equity for Criminal Justice Impacted Women through Access to Housing*** to improve health outcomes for formerly incarcerated women and their families by increasing access to safe, stable and supportive housing and resources to support successful reentry and recovery. The team will employ various approaches including transitional and reentry housing coordination in Milwaukee, Madison and the Chippewa Valley to achieve its goals. The FREE Campaign is an initiative within EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing), led by criminal justice-impacted women, Lori DiPrete Brown, UW-Madison School of Human Ecology serves as the academic partner.
- **Oneida Nation for the initiative *Food Sovereignty in the Oneida Nation: A Comprehensive Approach to Health*** to develop a model of programming that promotes food sovereignty and cultural identity among Indigenous communities as a comprehensive approach to reducing health disparities and improving health and healthcare. Dr. Bret Benally Thompson, assistant clinical professor, department of medicine and faculty advisor for the Native American Center for Health Professions, serves at the academic partner.
- **United Community Center for the initiative *Latino Dementia Health Regional Consortium*** to develop a regional model of dementia healthcare and caregiver support to improve Alzheimer's disease detection, diagnosis and support for Latinos in the southeast region of the state, including Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha. Dr. Melinda Kavanaugh, UW Milwaukee Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, is the academic partner.
- **Wisconsin Hospital Association for the initiative *Wisconsin Rural Health & Substance Use Clinical Support (RHeSUS) Program*** to improve access to treatment and care for people struggling with substance use disorders in rural Wisconsin. This initiative supports a new collaboration between Wisconsin Voices for Recovery, academic partner Dr. Randall Brown, professor of family medicine, and the Wisconsin Hospital Association, which will leverage its network of health systems to facilitate this work.

"These newly funded initiatives have the potential to catalyze change, move health forward, and meaningfully address health inequities," said Kind.

The [Wisconsin Partnership Program](#) is a permanent endowment at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), committed to improving

health and advancing health equity through investments in community partnerships, education and research. It was established in 2004 through an unprecedented gift as part of the conversion of Blue Cross and Blue Shield United of Wisconsin to a stock insurance corporation. To date, the Wisconsin Partnership Program has awarded more than 560 grants for \$265 million to advance biomedical and population health research, promote healthcare and public health workforce development, and support community partnerships to improve health and advance health equity.