



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Medical College of Wisconsin Applauds Mental Health Investments**

**Milwaukee, Feb. 12, 2020** – The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) applauds Governor Evers’ announcement to include more than \$150 million investments into mental health services for Wisconsinites. In particular, the proposal expands mental healthcare telehealth accessibility, addresses substance use disorders and the opioid crisis, and expands the Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program (WI CPCP) to cover the entire state of Wisconsin. COVID-19 has accelerated Wisconsin’s mental health crisis, and addressing mental health issues going forward will be more important than ever before.

“Governor Evers’ plan to expand the Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program statewide will save lives,” said Jon Lehrmann, MD, MCW’s Chairman and Charles E. Kubly Professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine. “A statewide CPCP will make ‘just in time’ child psychiatrist and psychologist expertise available to all Wisconsin children through their pediatric medical providers. With the extreme shortage of child psychiatrists today, this solution is a critical and urgently needed step toward supporting and improving the mental health of Wisconsin’s youth.”

MCW, in partnership with Children’s Wisconsin, has been operating the WI CPCP through an annual contract with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services since 2015. The program provides primary care providers with free-of-charge pediatric mental health consultations for their child and adolescent patients. The WI CPCP provides immediate access to mental health for many patients who would otherwise be unable to see a child psychiatrist in a reasonable amount of time. The program also provides long-term educational resources to providers on mental health prevention and treatment. The education allows providers to gain additional skill, confidence and independence in working with child and adolescent patients with mental health concerns. Finally, the CPCP provides referral support to assist in the identification of local mental health professionals and community resources that may be available.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a recent Kaiser study ranked Wisconsin 49th of 50 states, meeting just under 21% of the state’s mental health needs, and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services found that 68 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties have inadequate psychiatrists to meet communities’ needs. These data points do a good job highlighting Wisconsin’s mental health shortages, but they do not fully capture the truly staggering and often tragic impact on human life: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds, people ages 15-24 have the highest rate in Wisconsin of hospitalizations and emergency room admissions for self-

inflicted injuries and individuals with severe mental illnesses are more than 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime versus the general population.

The WI CPCP was closely modeled after the Charles E. Kubly Child Psychiatry Access Project, which began in 2013 due to a generous gift from Michael and Billie Kubly. This privately funded program allowed pediatricians from two Milwaukee area clinics to have access to a child psychiatrist for general case consultation, as well as a case manager for community mental health resource information and educational resources for the providers enrolled in the program. The CPCP was enacted into law within the 2013-2015 legislative session as 2013 Wisconsin Act 127, and was authored by Senator Alberta Darling and Representative Jim Steineke.

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### **About the Medical College of Wisconsin**

With a history dating back to 1893, The Medical College of Wisconsin is dedicated to leadership and excellence in education, patient care, research and community engagement. More than 1,400 students are enrolled in MCW's medical school and graduate school programs in Milwaukee, Green Bay and Central Wisconsin. MCW's School of Pharmacy opened in 2017. A major national research center, MCW is the largest research institution in the Milwaukee metro area and second largest in Wisconsin. In the last 10 years, faculty received more than \$1.5 billion in external support for research, teaching, training and related purposes. This total includes highly competitive research and training awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Annually, MCW faculty direct or collaborate on more than 3,100 research studies, including clinical trials. Additionally, more than 1,600 physicians provide care in virtually every specialty of medicine for more than 2.8 million patients annually.