



Advancing a  
Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

For the period of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023



# Table of Contents

**3/ About AHW**

**5/ Message from the Director**

**6/ Year in Review**

**8/ Productive Collaboration**

**10/ Five-Year Plan Development**

**12/ Funding Pathways**

14/ Basic, Clinical, & Translational Research

20/ Education & Workforce Development

28/ Population & Community Health Studies

36/ Policy, Systems, & Culture Change

**42/ Landmark Investments**

**46/ Programming**

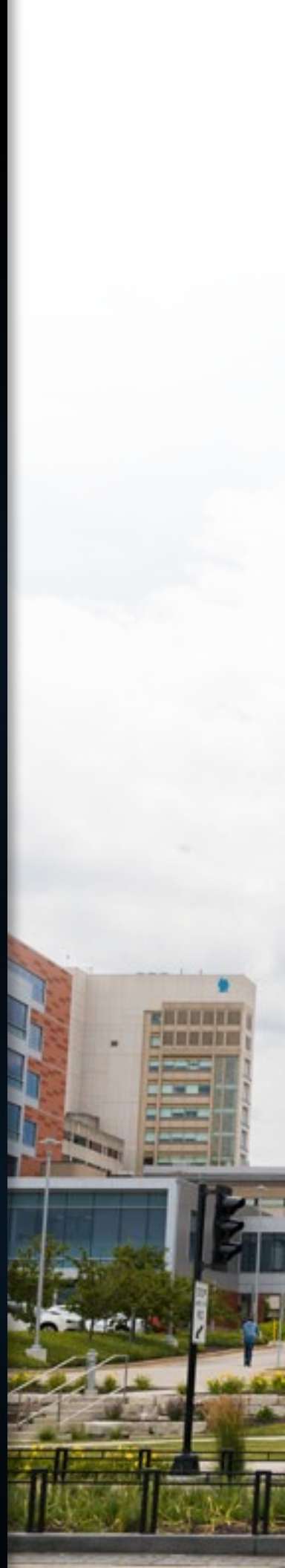
**48/ Public Stewardship**

48/ Consortium & Advisory Committee

50/ Fund Management & Financials

54/ How We Operate

**58/ Our Team**





# ABOUT AHW

***We provide funding and resources to researchers, organizations, and communities devoted to improving the health of the people of Wisconsin.***

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) is Wisconsin's largest health improvement philanthropy. We are investing in promising biomedical research, supporting community health initiatives, and building the health workforce needed in Wisconsin.

AHW is part of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), the third-largest private medical school in the nation. AHW is the only health philanthropy in the nation stewarding public funds while embedded in a private medical school.

In 1999, Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin converted from a nonprofit to a for-profit corporation. MCW received half of the funds resulting from the conversion, with the other half going to the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Leveraging the generous gift to serve as a resource for health improvement efforts across Wisconsin, AHW issued its first funding awards in 2004, building momentum and increasing its impact on the state's health ever since.

## OUR MISSION:

Working with our partners, AHW will serve as a catalyst for positive change in the health of Wisconsin communities.

## OUR VISION:

Advancing Wisconsin to be the healthiest state in the nation.



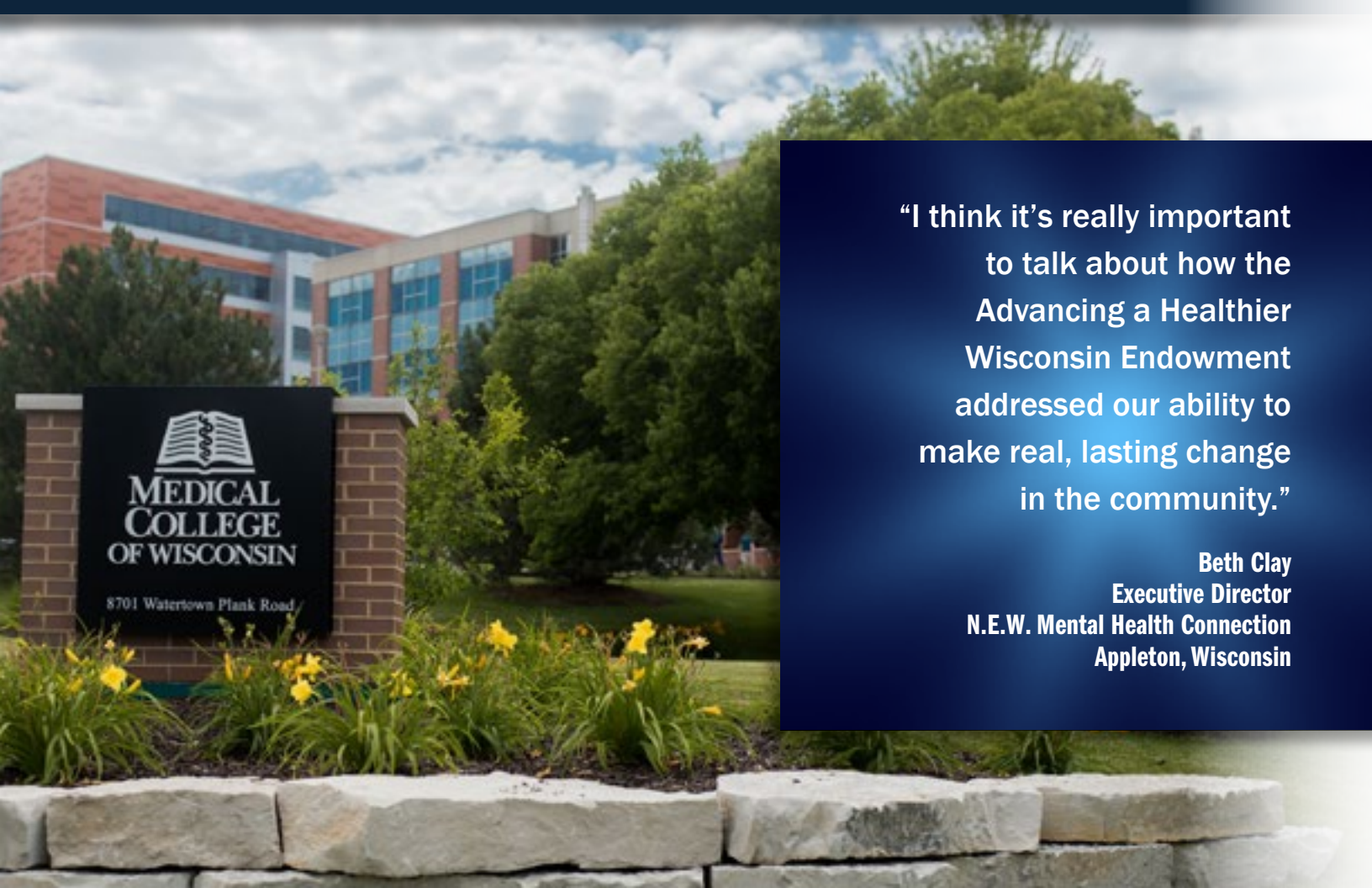




## DRIVERS TOW

### Public Health Improvement

- Deepen our understanding of the drivers of public health in Wisconsin
- Achieve measurable change in targeted public health markers
- Center innovative ideas for system-level change



“I think it’s really important to talk about how the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment addressed our ability to make real, lasting change in the community.”

Beth Clay  
Executive Director  
N.E.W. Mental Health Connection  
Appleton, Wisconsin

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Wisconsin neighbors and friends,

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) embraces every opportunity to share details of our investments and their outcomes with our partners, stakeholders, and oversight bodies, including through the publication of an annual report that provides a full accounting of the projects we've supported over the past fiscal year as stewards of the public funds entrusted to us to advance Wisconsin to be the healthiest state in the nation.



This report is organized to highlight the major focus areas receiving AHW financial support as identified in our 2019-2023 Five-Year Plan, with an upfront summary of our investment totals for the year. Remarkably, AHW funded 101 projects in fiscal year 2023—by far the largest number of grants we've issued in a single year since our founding. Prior to this year, we had averaged approximately 30 awards per year. This record-setting year in which we've directed more than \$26 million toward health improvement projects throughout Wisconsin not only reflects the diligence of the AHW team in planning, promoting, and fulfilling new funding opportunities, but also the rising awareness of and interest in the important work we do.

Notably, in our 20-year history, AHW has invested more than its original \$320 million gift—reaching a running investment total of more than \$338 million last year—all while the endowment's principle has grown significantly, a testament to the prudent management of the Medical College of Wisconsin's finance team.

Over and above grant funding, AHW develops and delivers resources that add value to the partners we serve, building capacity within Wisconsin's health ecosystem and extending the impact of our investments to maximize opportunities for people and communities throughout the state to thrive. The breadth and reach of these programs are also detailed in the following pages.

Fiscal year 2023 also saw AHW extend its influence in building new, targeted health improvement programs in Wisconsin, as our expertise and strong relationships were drawn upon to direct \$5.5 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to statewide projects focused on maternal and child health. AHW is also funding a two-year National Academy of Medicine fellowship to advance health policy, bringing national best practices to Wisconsin, while also sharing our experience with other states. We have also formed the first-ever AHW National Advisory Committee comprising eminent scholars, organizational leaders, and public health practitioners from across the nation to provide both formal and informal counsel on our strategic goals and major activities.

As this report is rolling off the printer in the waning days of 2023, we have already begun building upon the lessons it contains and laying the groundwork for our next five years, which we began planning for in earnest in 2022 with an extensive, 18-month input process in which we gathered consultation and feedback on our mission and vision from stakeholders across the state. With active participation from those who share our commitment to the health of ALL Wisconsinites, we face the future with unwavering resolve and confidence.

Optimistically,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Ehrenfeld".

Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, FASA, FAMIA

Senior Associate Dean and Director

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment

Professor, Anesthesiology

Medical College of Wisconsin





## Year in Review

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Creating and sustaining the conditions needed to achieve long-term health improvement in Wisconsin requires a statewide focus supported by effective, grassroots partnerships drawing inspiration from a shared vision. AHW started this journey in 2004, when we issued our first funding awards. Since that time, we have, as of June 2023, invested more than **\$338 million into 643 health-focused projects**. And we've gained momentum along the way, awarding by far **our greatest number of grants in a single year in fiscal year 2023: 101**.

This report covers portions of the fourth and fifth years of our 2019-2023 Five-Year Plan, a period in which AHW continued to focus on strategies centered around the four funding pathways outlined in the following pages. At the same time, we've begun laying the groundwork for a collaborative approach to health philanthropy that builds upon the lessons we've learned in our 20-year history to maximize the health of ALL Wisconsinites for the next five years and beyond in a new plan that will take effect in 2024.

Investment highlights from fiscal year 2023 include:

- Grants to support **18 learning events** throughout Wisconsin focused on **advancing the state's health workforce**
- Extended funding of **\$3,638,494** to support sustainability planning for behavioral health improvement projects in ten Wisconsin communities
- An investment of **\$2,014,999** to establish a **Physician Associate Master of Science Program at MCW** to increase the number and diversity of physician assistants in Wisconsin
- A **\$200,000** award to **First 5 Fox Valley** to evaluate the efficacy of an online early childhood resource navigation model within a rural healthcare system in providing the interventions necessary to reduce health disparities and overcome barriers of geography and limited resources
- An award of **\$49,659** to the **Wisconsin Hospital Association Foundation** to assess the driving forces behind and identify solutions to healthcare worker burnout



## Total New Investments

Fiscal Year 2023

- Basic, Clinical and Translational Research: **\$14,497,997**
- Education and Workforce Development: **\$4,250,999**
- Policy, Systems, and Culture Change: **\$1,086,113**
- Population and Community Health: **\$6,528,016**

In addition to this financial assistance, AHW helped its partners increase their effectiveness and reach with capacity building programs, including:

- Connecting AHW nonprofit partners to pro bono services through **Catchafire**, a national organization matching skills-based virtual volunteers with nonprofit entities, to strengthen their work and increase impact
- Driving successful outcomes for community-based organizations, community coalitions, and community-academic partnerships through engagements with respected organizations and individuals who provide content expertise and experience to support funded projects as part of AHW's **Technical Assistance Provider Program**
- Funding, organizing, hosting, and participating in **Grantee Learning Events** to support partnerships through information sharing and relationship building

## FISCAL YEAR 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

**\$26,363,125** in new funding  
**101 New Projects**

**166 Active Projects** representing  
**\$109,998,631** in funding  
**19 Projects** closed

# PRODUCTIVE COLLABORATION



The best way to address Wisconsin's health challenges is to pool resources and knowledge and to work together toward shared goals. That is why AHW seeks opportunities to learn from and share information with partners throughout the state and beyond whose work complements our own.

## AHW Partner Survey

To support continuous improvement of our funding model and partner support programs, AHW conducts annual surveys of grant recipients, seeking feedback on their experience working with us. This year, we received survey responses from 129 community partners and MCW researchers whose assessments underscored AHW's value to their work.

**92%**

of funded partners felt that the AHW funding model encouraged collaboration that advances project goals.

**94%**

of funded partners felt that AHW staff were professional and provided the support necessary for the success of their work.

**91%**

of funded partners felt supported by AHW to engage with their partner and carry out their work.

Source: AHW 2023 Partnership Survey



**“The grant team that we have the privilege of working with at AHW is phenomenal! They are professional, committed, and willing to dream with us as we innovate through our community project.”**

AHW Community Partner

**“I couldn’t speak more highly of my interactions with AHW staff. They are knowledgeable, supportive, friendly, and very competent. I am grateful to be able to lean on them regularly for assistance.”**

MCW Faculty Member

## National Advisory Committee

Seeking to tap the perspectives and expertise of the nation’s top thought leaders on community and public health, AHW formed a National Advisory Committee in 2023, drawing enthusiastic responses to its invitation to participate from 13 eminent scholars, organizational leaders, and public health practitioners from across the U.S.

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### Howard Bauchner, MD

Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health, Boston University Chobanian and Avedisian School of Medicine; Former Editor in Chief, JAMA

### Brian Miller, MD, MBA, MPH

Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

### Beth Resnick, MD

Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

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### Asaf Bitton, MD, MPH

Executive Director, Ariadne Labs, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Associate Professor of Medicine and Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

### Judy Monroe, MD

President and CEO, CDC Foundation

### Siobhan Wescott, MD, MPH

Dr. Susan and Suzette La Flesche Professor of American Indian Health; Director, American Indian Health Program, University of Nebraska

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### Kemi Doll, MD, MS

Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Washington School of Medicine; Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Health Systems and Population Health at the University of Washington School of Public Health

### Julie Morita, MD

Executive Vice President, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

### Sandra L. Wong, MD, MS

William N. and Bessie Allyn Professor of Surgery and Chair, Department of Surgery, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth College

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### Atul Grover, MD, PhD

Executive Director, Association of American Medical Colleges Research and Action Institute

### Elizabeth Ofili, MD

Professor, Department of Medicine; Director and Senior Associate Dean, Clinical Research Center and Clinical and Translational Research, Morehouse School of Medicine

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### Octavio Martinez Jr., MD, MPH, MBA, FAPA

Executive Director, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, University of Texas-Austin

### Dwayne Proctor, PhD

President and CEO, Missouri Foundation for Health

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The AHW National Advisory Committee serves as an advisory group to AHW’s leadership, providing both formal and informal counsel on strategic goals and major activities.



## FIVE-YEAR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

To inform the development of our 2024-2028 Five-Year Plan, AHW undertook a multi-pronged effort starting in 2022 and continuing into 2023 to gather input and feedback on our vision and role in advancing health statewide. The stakeholder feedback process created space and opportunity for AHW to listen to, collaborate with, and inform our stakeholders, while fostering the connections, trust, and confidence in key initiatives that require both collective resolve and collaborative action.

AHW's 2024-2028 Five-Year Plan reflects input received through hundreds of conversations with partners, stakeholders, staff, and our oversight

bodies about how we should position ourselves to best address Wisconsin's current, emerging, and unforeseen health challenges over the next five years.

Learn more about AHW's commitment to maximizing the health of ALL Wisconsinites and developing programs, partnerships, and knowledge-sharing opportunities aimed at achieving health equity, which the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention defines as "the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health," at [ahwendowment.org](https://ahwendowment.org).





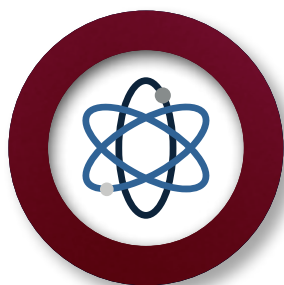
# **FIVE-YEAR PLAN**

## 2024 - 2028

# PATHWAYS FOR PARTNERS

AHW funding propels the most promising work and ideas forward along four pathways that lead to a healthier Wisconsin, supporting health innovators, collaborators, and problem-solvers across the state to develop and implement solutions to our most pressing health challenges.

In fiscal year 2023, AHW advanced and extended strategies codified in our 2019-2023 Five-Year Plan, investing in projects that will improve the health of Wisconsinites today, and for generations to come.



## Basic, Clinical, and Translational Research

*Driving research discoveries* by advancing the work of biomedical researchers to translate research from the lab bench to patient bedside to community and back, creating the new knowledge necessary to address Wisconsin's health needs.



## Education and Workforce Development

*Transforming the landscape of the health research, healthcare, and community and public health workforce* by supporting efforts that develop and grow a workforce that is poised to meet the diverse and evolving needs of Wisconsin residents now and for generations to come.



## Population and Community Health

*Moving findings to action* by facilitating the creation of actionable knowledge needed to inform effective programs, policies, and practices that can address the root causes of poor health outcomes in Wisconsin.



## Policy, Systems, and Culture Change

*Weaving good health for all into the fabric of communities* by enabling partners to challenge and change the complex policies and systems that will make good health practical and available to all across Wisconsin.





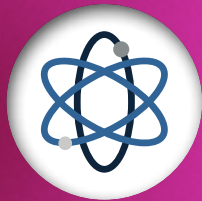
Longevity + Planning in Healthcare  
REF: 1003

TRILOGY CONVERSATION

YKBS (KIMBERLY HARRIS (SPIN))

PHASE 3 PLANS

SUSTAINABILITY OF CARE DELIVER



# BASIC, CLINICAL, AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

AHW's Basic, Clinical, and Translational Research pathway focuses on increasing discovery, accelerating the translation and dissemination of new knowledge, and developing effective and sustainable biomedical research.

## CLOSED PROJECTS

- Pancreas Cancer Research Program
- A Translational Study of Epigenetic and Neural Mechanisms of Risk Phenotypes for PTSD
- Neurovascular Mechanisms of Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Long COVID
- Innovative Approaches to Precision Medicine (IAPM) 2.0

Find descriptions of each closed project with a summary of outcomes at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](http://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects)

## NEW INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
<p>Innovative Approaches to Precision Medicine (IAPM) 2.0<sup>1</sup></p> <p>\$1,000,000 REAC-Initiated Investments</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/9/2023</p>	<p>Developing precision prevention and treatment for hypertension using multi-omics analysis</p>	<p>Mingyu Liang, MB, PhD, MCW Department of Physiology</p>
<p>Solving Protein Structures to Uncover Molecular Mechanisms of Cancer</p> <p>\$5,500,000 REAC-Initiated Investments</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2030</p>	<p>Equipping and staffing a state-of-the-art facility to solve the atomic-level structure of cancer-relevant proteins</p>	<p>Gustavo Leone, PhD, MCW Cancer Center</p>
<p>Commercialize QRF+ Predictive Mental Health Crisis Intervention Tool for Trauma and Substance Abuse</p> <p>\$199,580 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Creating effective mental health crisis intervention strategies for high-risk mental health patients</p>	<p>Zeno Franco, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine</p>
<p>Investigating Intervertebral Disc Endplate Degeneration for Non-Specific Low Back Pain</p> <p>\$199,529 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Exploring novel MRI techniques to identify the potential source of non-specific chronic lower back pain</p>	<p>L. Tugan Muftuler, PhD, MCW Department of Neurosurgery</p>
<p>Determining the Contribution of Fibrinolysis to Blood Loss in Severe Hemorrhage Using RNA Therapy</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Developing new strategies to reduce blood loss in trauma patients</p>	<p>Christian Kastrup, PhD, MCW Department of Surgery</p>



# \$14.5 MILLION FUNDED IN FY23

<p>Intensive Postpartum Antihypertensive Treatment to Improve Women's Cardiovascular Health</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Investigating whether intensive postpartum blood pressure control can reverse vascular dysfunction generated by a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy</p>	<p>Anna Palatnik, MD, MCW Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology</p>
<p>Robust Estimators for Missing Covariate Parameters for Right-Censored Data</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Providing guidance on alternative treatments for diffuse large B-cell lymphoma patients in partial remission</p>	<p>Soyoung Kim, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p>
<p>Development of a Compliant and Biomimetic Small Vascular Graft with Human Amnion Membrane</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Developing an artificial blood vessel as an alternative to vascular surgery</p>	<p>Bo Wang, PhD, MCW Department of Biomedical Engineering</p>
<p>Structural Discrimination and Health Outcomes in Milwaukee at the Community and Individual Level</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Assessing the relationship between structural racism and individual-level factors that influence physical and mental health in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Milwaukee</p>	<p>Terri deRoos-Cassini, PhD, MS, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Leveraging a New Translational Metabolomics Resource to Identify Cancer Pathways and Signatures</p> <p>\$5,500,000 REAC-Initiated Investments</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2030</p>	<p>Accelerating translation of discoveries to novel cancer diagnostics and therapeutics</p>	<p>Gustavo Leone, PhD, MCW Cancer Center</p>
<p>Novel Tail Domain MYH6 Gene Variants in Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS) and Cardiomyopathy</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Preventing and decreasing the impact of chronic health disease</p>	<p>Aoy Tomita Mitchell, PhD, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Virtual Reality Training Paradigm to Rehabilitate Hand Dexterity in Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Implementing a virtual reality training intervention to rehabilitate hand function after spine surgery for degenerative cervical myelopathy</p>	<p>Aditya Vedantam, MD, MCW Department of Neurosurgery</p>
<p>Neurovascular Mechanisms of Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Long COVID<sup>2</sup></p> <p>\$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 7/1/2022</p>	<p>Using advanced neuroimaging and blood biomarkers to determine neurovascular mechanisms underlying neuropsychiatric symptoms of Long COVID</p>	<p>Yang Wang, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Radiology</p>

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
<p>Targeting Inflammation in Heart Failure with Reduced Ejection Fraction with Probiotics</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Developing precision prevention and treatment for hypertension using multi-omics analysis</p>	<p>Michael Widlansky, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>Translational Dissection of Cav3.2iPA Molecule Engagement in Human iPSC-Derived Sensory Neurons</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Equipping and staffing a state-of-the-art facility to solve the atomic-level structure of cancer-relevant proteins</p>	<p>Hongwei Yu, MD, MCW Department of Anesthesiology</p>
<p>Engineering Platelets to Increase Coagulability and Effectiveness of Platelet Transfusions in Resuscitation in Bleeding Patients</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Creating effective mental health crisis intervention strategies for high-risk mental health patients</p>	<p>Mitchell Dyer, MD, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Chronic Sleep Restriction as a Cause of Age-Related Bone Disease</p> <p>\$49,999 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Exploring novel MRI techniques to identify the potential source of non-specific chronic lower back pain</p>	<p>Carol Everson, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>Circulating Agouti-Related Peptide and Metabolic Adaptation to Weight Loss</p> <p>\$48,889 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Developing new strategies to reduce blood loss in trauma patients</p>	<p>Lisa Morselli, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>Defining Intraoperative Turbulence Using a Deep Learning Approach</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Using data to inform interventions to improve intraoperative surgical treatment and improve surgical risk prediction</p>	<p>Anai Kothari, MD, MS, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 Infection (PASC) in Cancer</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Studying how post-acute sequelae of severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 interacts with cancer</p>	<p>Anai Kothari, MD, MS, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Drugs Targeting NAADP Action to Combat Neurodegeneration</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Evaluating the potential of novel small molecules for reversing cellular defects seen in Parkinson's disease</p>	<p>Jonathan Marchant, PhD, MA, MCW Department of Cell Biology, Neurobiology and Anatomy</p>



<p>Macrophage Mitochondrial ROS Disrupt Cholesterol Metabolism During Atherosclerosis</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Studying the role of macrophages in heart disease</p>	<p>Yiliang Chen, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>Study of Pre-Analytical Effects on Breast Cancer Biomarkers</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Achieving equitable care for breast cancer patients undergoing surgical excision at ambulatory, community, and rural sites</p>	<p>Julie Jorns, MD, MCW Department of Pathology</p>

<sup>1</sup> Innovative Approaches to Precision Medicine (IAPM) 2.0 received funding approval and was initiated, but project work was not completed. Approved funds in the amount of \$824,772 were returned to the Endowment.

<sup>2</sup> Neurovascular Mechanisms of Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Long COVID received funding approval, but project work was not initiated. Approved funds in the amount of \$200,000 were returned to the Endowment.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

### The Human Holobiont: Enhancing Health and Preventing Disease

**\$1,500,000 | Award Period: 7/1/2021 – 6/30/2026**

*Humans can't live healthy lives without microbes. Microscopic organisms (such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses) live on and in our bodies and throughout the world around us. Our bodies exist as holobionts, hosting trillions of microbes in extensive microbial ecosystems. Known as "the microbiome," these microbes colonize our skin and mucosal surfaces within our bodies (mainly in the intestines).*

Microbes co-exist peacefully with their host (e.g., the human body) and help us stay healthy. They serve crucial functions, such as supporting the immune system and helping digest food. However, some microbes are not beneficial, and may promote diseases and disorders, or limit the effectiveness of vaccines and other therapies.

In a five-year project funded by AHW, MCW principal investigator Nita Salzman, MD, PhD (Pediatrics), director of The Center for Microbiome Research, and co-investigator Calvin Williams, MD, PhD (Pediatrics), chief scientific officer of Children's Research Institute, are exploring the interactions between the microbiome and the human body that contribute to good health, and the interactions that lead to abnormal development and chronic disease.

Through this work, the investigators will develop data that support new disease prevention strategies and helps people live healthier lives.

One critical time for establishing good health begins at birth. From there on, a body learns how to interact with and survive in its environment. The developing immune system and the microbiome interact in the earliest years of life to establish a symbiotic and healthy co-existence. If there are disruptions to that process, such as premature birth or an early introduction of antibiotics, there can be severe health consequences impacting the rest of a person's life.

According to Dr. Williams, “In the last several years, we’re really just appreciating how potent that time is in shaping our capacity for staying healthy. We’re digging deeply into factors that control this essential window of opportunity for the immune system, to understand their role in shaping the environment that must be maintained for a healthy life.”

The microbiome is implicated in many significant health issues Wisconsin residents and people across the U.S. face, such as obesity and inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. Learning how the microbiome functions and co-exists with a person’s immune system is the first step to creating effective strategies to manage many chronic inflammatory disorders.

“Understanding the underpinnings of how bacteria communicate with the host immune system is critical. Without understanding it, we can’t intervene. You can usually treat established diseases, but it’s very hard to prevent them or address their root causes,” said Dr. Salzman.

With funding from AHW, frequent research collaborators Dr. Salzman and Dr. Williams seek to understand how microbiomes establish themselves during immune system development, and to document the role that process plays in a person’s health.

To do this, the investigators focus on how bacteria colonize the gastrointestinal (GI) tract early in life in ways that benefit a person’s long-term health. They are also investigating the impact of early life disruptions to a body’s co-existence with the microbiome, which can lead to later life health challenges such as inflammation and chronic disease.

Their discoveries could make it possible to manipulate the microbiome to enhance health, allowing future therapies to prevent and treat various conditions and diseases. “This is an exciting and new therapeutic frontier. We are uniquely poised to contribute to the health of Wisconsin residents through the successful completion of these studies.”

Their research for this project includes the following work:

- **Characterizing how immune systems develop and respond to GI tract bacteria that allow for stable co-existence with microbes**
- **Investigating how bacteria communicate with our**





## bodies and how our bodies sense and respond to bacteria in our GI tracts

- Exploring the impact of normal and abnormal early life bacteria colonization on lung and gut development

The project is in its second year, and the MCW investigators have already encountered surprises and discoveries in their initial data.

One of those discoveries came about through Dr. William's study of regulatory T cells—a type of white blood cell critical to regulating our immune systems. When examining the absence of a certain gene molecule from the regulatory T cell population in mice at three weeks of life, it was found that most T cells moving through the gut showed signs of activation. This means that they are responding to an antigen and are poised to generate an immune response. This discovery demonstrated how important this molecule is in early life and will be studied further in the project.

Another surprise came in Dr. Salzman's study of a microbial product, succinate, which is made by members of the microbiome, and which is also found in many foods we eat. As researchers observed, succinate activates a process in the gut that changes the development of cells that line the small intestine, enhancing the growth of specific cell types (notably Paneth cells, which produce small molecules that have antibiotic function). This process changes the whole microbiological landscape in the gut and will be the focus of future research in this project.

As the research in this project progresses, investigators look forward to better understanding how the human microbiome is shaped early in life, and what factors will serve as predictors of a healthy outcome.

"It might be too early for therapeutic interventions, but if we could make predictions and then come up with specific therapeutic solutions, that would really be a home run," said Dr. Williams.





## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

AHW's Education and Workforce Development pathway focuses on developing and growing a health workforce that is increasingly accessible, equipped, and representative of the diversity of the community it serves.

### CLOSED PROJECTS

- Medical Assistant Accelerated Pathway to Employment Training (MAAPET)
- Health & Harmony
- 2023 WAND Annual Conference: Moving Forward with Innovation
- Global Health Equity MS Program: Improving Health Equity in Wisconsin through a Global Health Lens
- The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare
- Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin's Neurotrauma Symposium: From Injury to Functionality
- Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) Great Plains Regional Meeting
- Spine Day 2022: Caring for the Aging Spine Patient
- The Milwaukee Aortic Symposium
- Religion and Spirituality in Medicine: Does It Have a Place?—The Hmong Experience
- 2023 Endocrine Surgery and Neuroendocrine Tumor Symposium

Find descriptions of each closed project with a summary of outcomes at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](https://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects)

### NEW INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
The Creative Care Institute for Dementia Care Specialists  \$200,000 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Training dementia care specialists across the state of Wisconsin in the evidence-based TimeSlips methodology	Leslie Ruffalo, MS, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  TimeSlips Creative Storytelling, Inc.
Wisconsin EMS Workforce Development: Addressing Occupational Trauma with Resiliency Training  \$200,000 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Providing resilience training for EMS workers to improve mental health, reduce turnover rate, and help workers improve health service delivery	Matthew Chinn, MD, MCW Department of Emergency Medicine  Center for Suicide Awareness

# \$4.3 MILLION FUNDED IN FY23

<p>Jackson County Pathways Community Hub</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Connecting residents of Jackson County to healthcare, social, and community-based services through community health workers</p>	<p>Leslie Ruffalo, MS, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine</p> <p>Great Rivers United Way</p>
<p>Practitioners of Color Training and Internship Program</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Expanding and diversifying the integrative health workforce, providing skills, training, and employment to practitioners of color</p>	<p>Deborah Costakos, MD, MS, MCW Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences</p> <p>CORE El Centro</p>
<p>Building a Healthcare Workforce through Access and Equity</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Increasing completion of healthcare education programs at Milwaukee Area Technical College while achieving greater diversity among graduates</p>	<p>C. Greer Jordan, PhD, MBA, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p> <p>MATC Foundation</p>
<p>Mental Health Workforce Development Pilot Project</p> <p>\$113,966 2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Improving service access and quality for adult and children survivors of intimate partner violence</p>	<p>Albina Zimany, MD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Jewish Family Services</p>
<p>Accelerated Pathways for Licensure of Transitioning Medics and Corpsmen</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Developing an accelerated pathway for medics, corpsmen, and medical technicians to obtain licensed employment in healthcare while pursuing education in their desired healthcare career</p>	<p>Christine Everett, PhD, MPH, PA-C, MCW Department of Medicine</p> <p>Heroes for Healthcare</p>
<p>Health and Harmony</p> <p>\$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/16/2023 – 6/15/2023</p>	<p>Engaging Wisconsin healthcare professionals on health equity topics with a focus on JEDI issues within our healthcare systems and state</p>	<p>Wisconsin Medical Society, Inc.</p>
<p>2023 WAND Annual Conference: Moving Forward with Innovation</p> <p>\$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/27/2023 – 6/26/2023</p>	<p>Providing up-to-date education and resources for nutrition and dietetic professionals</p>	<p>Wisconsin Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (WAND)</p>

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
2023 WPHA-WALHDAB Annual Public Health Conference \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 3/30/2023 - 7/29/2023	Strengthening foundations for thriving communities in Wisconsin	Wisconsin Public Health Association
Addressing Knowledge Gaps and Reducing Barriers in Substance Abuse Treatment for APRNs in Wisconsin \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 5/23/2023 - 2/22/2024	Providing advanced practice registered nurses knowledge and training to manage substance use disorders effectively	UW-Oshkosh College of Nursing
Community and Healthcare System Collaboration to Reduce Health Disparities \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 6/1/2023 - 9/30/2023	Reducing health disparities in Wisconsin and bringing health system and community program staff together to collaborate on the work of health disparity reduction	Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Equality
Reaching the Rural Population: Making a Difference Together \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 6/30/2023 - 10/29/2023	Improving behavioral health disparities faced by rural communities	Arbor Place, Inc.
Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin-1st Annual Advisory Committee Assembly \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 6/27/2023 - 10/26/2023	Fostering connection and collaboration among Wisconsin's pharmacy professionals	Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW)
Wisconsin Society of Anesthesiologists 2023 Annual Meeting \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 6/1/2023 - 10/31/2023	Providing updates and practical information on various developments within the field of anesthesia	Wisconsin Society of Anesthesiologists (WSA)
2023 Surgical Collaborative of Wisconsin Summer Meeting \$5,000 Community-Led Learning Event Support 6/21/2023 - 10/20/2023	Addressing the lag between the release of evidence-based surgery guidelines and best practices and real-world implementation into clinical surgery practice	The Surgical Collaborative of Wisconsin (SCW)- Managed by the Board of Regents of the UW Madison System
Moving to Healing: Developing a Trauma-Informed Care Training for a Hospital System \$199,999 2022 MCW-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024	Increasing the knowledge and skills of providers to care for patients with a history of trauma effectively	Courtney Barry, PsyD, MS, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine



<p>Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) Great Plains Regional Meeting</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>7/29/2022 – 11/30/2022</p>	<p>Providing learning, networking, and collaboration opportunities to students, residents, and faculty in the field of emergency medicine</p>	<p>Daniel Worman, MD, MCW Department of Emergency Medicine</p>
<p>The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>7/29/2022 – 11/30/2022</p>	<p>Analyzing the ethical and regulatory implications of artificial intelligence in healthcare</p>	<p>Fabrice Jotterand, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p>
<p>Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin's Neurotrauma Symposium: From Injury to Functionality</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>7/29/2022 – 11/30/2022</p>	<p>Providing education related to neurotrauma and multidisciplinary collaboration across the continuum</p>	<p>Shekar Kurpad, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Neurosurgery</p>
<p>Community Outreach as a Core Component of Professional Development in Medical Education</p> <p>\$199,877 2022 MCW-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Building capacity in early physicians to address Milwaukee's health inequities</p>	<p>Anne Castro, MD, MCW Department of Anesthesiology</p>
<p>10,000 Strong: MHFA Training for Health Workforce Across Wisconsin to Address Resiliency and Stigma</p> <p>\$197,400 2022 MCW-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Teaching health workers how to respond to mental health crises</p>	<p>Himanshu Agrawal, MD, DF-APA, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p>
<p>MCW Physician Associate Master of Science Program</p> <p>\$2,014,999 REAC-Initiated Investments</p> <p>10/1/2022 – 8/31/2024</p>	<p>Developing an innovative Physician Associate Master of Science Program that will increase the number and diversity of physician associates in Wisconsin</p>	<p>Christine Everett, PhD, MPH, PA-C, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>Spine Day 2022: Caring for the Aging Spine Patient</p> <p>\$2,159 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>10/4/2022 – 12/31/2022</p>	<p>Narrowing the knowledge/practice gap related to the evidence-based management of low back pain</p>	<p>Jeff King, DC, MS, MCW Department of Neurosurgery</p>
<p>Investigating the Feasibility of a Health Equity-Aligned Early Medical School Admissions Program</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Advancing the development of a diverse health workforce by exploring a health equity approach aligned early medical school admissions program</p>	<p>Malika Siker, MD, MCW Department of Radiation Oncology</p>

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
<p>A Pilot Trauma Resuscitation Intervention to Reduce Perceived Life Threat</p> <p>\$49,462 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Reducing the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder in patients through assurance of safety</p>	<p>Mary Schroeder, MD, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>MCW Micro-Credential Pilot: Health Equity</p> <p>\$199,654 2022 MCW-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Developing a micro-credential framework to increase knowledge and skills within the state's healthcare workforce</p>	<p>Joshua Noe, MD, MCW Department of Pediatrics</p>
<p>Transforming Healthcare through Relationship-Centered Communication Skills Training</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Introducing a program that will enhance the communication skills of practicing clinicians at MCW</p>	<p>MaryAnn Gilligan, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Medicine</p>
<p>2023 Endocrine Surgery and Neuroendocrine Tumor Symposium</p> <p>\$3,240 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/14/2023 - 6/30/2023</p>	<p>Providing engaging education and discussion surrounding the modern management of patients with thyroid and neuroendocrine tumors</p>	<p>Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>MCW Department of Surgery Leadership Development Program (CAPTAINS)</p> <p>\$3,731 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/14/2023 - 7/31/2023</p>	<p>Sharing essential professional development and leadership training for mid-career surgeons</p>	<p>Tracy S. Wang, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>The Milwaukee Aortic Symposium</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/20/2023 - 6/19/2023</p>	<p>Providing education on the latest developments in aortic dissection surgery, treatment, and care</p>	<p>Peter J. Rossi, MD, FACS, DFSVS, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>A Film-Based Curriculum to Teach Empathy and Cultural Competencies to Residents and Fellows</p> <p>\$41,512 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Using film to increase empathy by teaching about diverse patient populations</p>	<p>Mary Schroeder, MD, MCW Department of Surgery</p>
<p>Religion and Spirituality in Medicine: Does It Have a Place?—The Hmong Experience</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>2/20/2023 - 6/19/2023</p>	<p>Educating medical and pharmacy students about spiritual concerns in healthcare through an immersive workshop</p>	<p>Ashley M. Pavlic, MD, MA, MCW Department of Emergency Medicine</p>
<p>2023 Midwest TL1 Summit</p> <p>\$5,000 MCW-Led Learning Event Support</p> <p>5/15/2023 - 12/14/2023</p>	<p>Developing the next generation of leaders who will be working to improve Wisconsin's health</p>	<p>Danny Thomas, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Pediatrics</p>

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

### Genetic Counseling Master of Science Program

*\$1.3M | Award Period: 2/1/2019 – 1/31/2024*

**On Thursday, May 18, 2023, the Alumni Center auditorium at the MCW was buzzing with excitement during the Master of Science in Genetic Counseling (MSGC) Program's Research Colloquium. The new program's first graduating class gathered with their faculty, peers, and families to present their research and celebrate completing their degrees.**

Obtaining a master's degree is an important milestone for any healthcare professional. However, the celebrations of this graduating class represent much more: The event signified the successful launch and implementation of the MSGC Program. Funded by AHW, program development began in 2020, giving students (who started matriculating in 2021) the education needed to further health and genetic education in Wisconsin and beyond.

The inaugural graduating class of the Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program celebrated their achievements at their Research Colloquium on May 18, 2023.

In recent years, the demand for genetic counseling services has skyrocketed. Thanks to the increase in the availability and use of genetic tests, and the integration of genetics and genomics into mainstream medicine, genetic counselors are in demand more than ever.

The genetic counseling profession has grown by 100% since 2006 and offers a near-100% employment rate for recent graduates. Yet, there is a significant shortage of clinical genetic counselors, which is not expected to improve in the coming years. And while there are 54 master's level genetic counseling programs across the country, there are not enough to accept and educate all the interested and qualified applicants.

In efforts to address the national shortage of genetic counselors and prepare the next generation of genetic counselors in Wisconsin and across the U.S., MCW's Dr. John Meurer, professor and director of the Institute for Health and Equity, and Jennifer Geurts, MS, assistant professor and associate director of genetic counseling, sought funding from AHW to establish MCW's Master of Genetic Counseling Program in 2019. They were joined by Jennifer Foley, administrator for the Institute for Health & Equity, and Cynthia Mand, assistant dean of academic affairs administration.

According to Dr. Meurer, "The Medical College Wisconsin is a health science university with missions to advance the well-being and health of people in Wisconsin. We have strengths in genomic sciences and precision medicine. But in our clinical enterprise, we noticed a big gap in providing genetic counseling services. The reality is we didn't have enough professionals providing genetic counseling services... We were in a good place, being strong in education and having a resource like AHW startup funds to launch a program."

Developing an accredited master's program is no small feat, and creating the new MSGC Program at MCW was no exception. Preparation and planning for admissions, faculty and staff, on-campus facilities logistics, curriculum, and accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling required many months of diligent, strategic, and thoughtful effort by the programs' founders.



Geurts said, “To get this off the ground, we took two years to think critically about how to create a program that would be very innovative and best serve our community here in Wisconsin.”

Funding from AHW supported the program’s development and implementation, including:

- **Recruiting and hiring key program personnel, including conducting a national search for a program director, recruiting an education program coordinator, and hiring an assistant program director**
- **Creating a steering committee to develop program fundamentals and ensure appropriate evaluations and subcommittees including admissions, course curriculum, and academic progress committees**
- **Developing a continuous process of program evaluation**
- **Designing the curriculum, including creating clinical practicums and the didactic curriculum**
- **Applying for accreditation and completing accreditation requirements**

Reflecting on building the program from the ground up, Geurts said, “It’s been an incredible effort from so many different departments and offices here at the Medical College and again, our hospital partners, everyone’s been incredibly gracious... It always amazes me how with each project or new thing we’re trying to do, the people are wonderful... helping students navigate all the challenges in being a professional student in a challenging and dynamic world.”

Another essential aspect of constructing the MSGC Program was ensuring student body diversity, supporting a diverse and inclusive environment, and increasing diversity in the genetic counseling profession.

Program diversity is essential for the MSGC Program, as there is a growing need for diverse genetic counselors representing the ethnicities and genders of the patients they serve. Program leaders hope the program will interest diverse and qualified applicants across Wisconsin, from our cities to rural areas and communities.

Geurts says, “We talk about visible and invisible diversity to better serve our communities. We want to get young people in Milwaukee and our rural communities excited about genetic counseling.”

With the MSGC Program’s first graduates moving on to begin their professional careers as genetic counselors, program directors are thrilled with the exceptional work and impactful contributions the graduates have made as students and will continue to make in their careers.

“... I’ve recently been thinking about how we are measuring the success of this program, and I’m proud to say that with this first graduating class, we’ve done it. And we will continue to do it. The work is not over, but we have met our mission. I’m blown away,” said Geurts.

Several members of the 2023 graduating class represent underserved communities and populations and conducted population-specific research as part of their program work. They will soon be starting in roles that serve the communities they’re from.

Others look forward to using their education and skills to support Midwest communities needing expanded genetic counseling services.

As Amy White, assistant professor of laboratory medicine and pathology and laboratory genetic counselor



at Mayo Clinic, said in the keynote address she gave at the MSGC Research Colloquium, “You are aware of disparities in healthcare, including lack of access to or knowledge of genetic services, and you will be in positions to make an impact with your new ideas.”

This year’s graduates will be providing their knowledge, experience, and talents to patients at the following facilities:

- **Essentia Health in Duluth, Minn.**
- **Ascension Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Wis.**
- **Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.**
- **MCW Cancer Center in Milwaukee, Wis.**
- **MCW’s Genetics and Genomics Program at Children’s Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Wis.**
- **Versiti’s Diagnostic Laboratory and Comprehensive Center for Bleeding Disorders in Milwaukee, Wis.**
- **Vincent Hospital in Green Bay, Wis.**

As this year’s graduating class moves on to their new ventures, we look forward to learning about the important contributions they, and future graduates, will make in the field of genetic counseling.



# POPULATION & COMMUNITY HEALTH STUDIES

AHW's Population and Community Health Studies pathway focuses on establishing evidence and building resources that can inform programs, policies, and practices to advance health equity in Wisconsin.

## NEW INVESTMENTS

## CLOSED PROJECTS

- Effect of Mass Communication on Veteran Suicide Prevention: Help Seeking and Firearm Safety Behaviors
- Wisconsin Violence Prevention Project (WVPP)

Find a listing of each closed project with a summary of outcomes at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](http://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects)

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
Promoting Wisconsin Influenza Vaccine Equity through Pharmacy Engagement \$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies 7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Increasing low influenza vaccination rates among Wisconsin residents aged six months and older	Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation, Inc.
Metcalfe Park Arts and Health Initiative \$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies 7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Establishing a connection between arts and health in underserved communities	David Nelson, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  Metcalfe Park Community Bridges
Implementing a Health Outcomes Measurement System in Wisconsin's Free and Charitable Clinics \$199,836 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies 7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Designing and piloting an outcomes measurement system for free and charitable clinics	Staci Young, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinics
Advancing Behavioral Health Initiative Phase 3: Academic Partner Team \$438,653 2022 ABH Phase III 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024	Evaluating Advancing Behavioral Health initiatives, collaborating with community coalitions to sustain successful strategies, and sharing learnings	Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine



# \$6.5 MILLION FUNDED IN FY23

<p>Advancing Behavioral Health Initiative Phase 3: Supplemental Funding for Communications Consultant</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Sharing lessons learned and remaining structural barriers to behavioral health</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p>
<p>Better Together in La Crosse County</p> <p>\$299,841 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Maintaining a focus on mental health in youth programming in La Crosse County</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium</p>
<p>Sustaining a Behavioral Health System in Marathon County</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Extending school-based mental health services in Marathon County school districts</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Marathon County Health Department</p>
<p>Creating Mental Wellness through Systems Change</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Transforming community mental health through collaboration, education, and enhanced systems of care</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Foundations Health &amp; Wholeness</p>
<p>HCAT Behavioral Health Project</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Reducing excessive alcohol consumption through community engagement, awareness, and cultural immersion</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Waaswaaganing Institute of Indigenous Teaching and Learning</p>
<p>Improving Children's Mental Health through School and Community in Racine</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Improving the social emotional health of elementary school students in Racine</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Racine County Human Services</p>
<p>Mental Health Matters: Promoting Resilience for Chippewa Valley Youth</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Promoting youth resilience in the Chippewa Valley</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Eau Claire City-County Health Department</p>

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
<p>Milwaukee Coalition for Children's Mental Health</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Creating lasting solutions to improve children's mental health services and outcomes in Milwaukee and beyond</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Mental Health America of Wisconsin</p>
<p>Healthy Teen Minds</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Reducing the rate of depression among youth, ages 12 to 18, by implementing strategies that focus on upstream prevention</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Winnebago County Health Department</p>
<p>Advancing Access to Improved Mental Health in Rural Southwestern Wisconsin</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Sustaining and expanding activities to improve access to mental healthcare for adults in five southwestern Wisconsin counties</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program</p>
<p>Enhancing Behavioral Health in Northern Wisconsin through Innovative Collaboration and Outreach</p> <p>\$300,000 2022 ABH Phase III</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Reducing behavioral health crisis calls in Northern Wisconsin through a collaborative effort</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>NorthLakes Community Clinic</p>
<p>Relax and Breathe Easy: Quantifying the Health Value of Quality Urban Green Space</p> <p>\$198,145 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/23</p>	<p>Studying how the physical and biological characteristics of urban parks and green spaces influence indicators of physical and mental health</p>	<p>Kirsten Beyer, PhD, MPH, MS, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p> <p>Urban Ecology Center</p>
<p>Adult Vision Health Program</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/23</p>	<p>Improving vision health equity among underserved populations</p>	<p>Judy Kim, MD, MCW Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences</p> <p>Prevent Blindness Wisconsin</p>
<p>Assessing Suicide Risk and Preventing Suicide among Black Students in Milwaukee</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/23</p>	<p>Reducing suicidal behavior among Black youth in Milwaukee</p>	<p>Michelle Pickett, MD, MCW Department of Pediatrics</p> <p>Milwaukee Public Schools</p>
<p>Investigating a New Model of Psychiatric Crisis Care to Improve Mental Health Equity and Outcomes</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/23</p>	<p>Improving mental health crisis treatment and outcomes in Milwaukee County</p>	<p>Courtney Barry, PsyD, MS, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Aurora Health Care, Inc.</p>

<p>Frequency of Student Proximity to Adverse Incidents: Incidence, Impact and Intervention</p> <p>\$92,576 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/23</p>	<p>Providing prompt trauma support to Milwaukee Public School System students exposed to potentially traumatic events</p>	<p>David Cipriano, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Milwaukee Fire Department</p>
<p>Water Lead Testing Feasibility Project to Identify At-Risk Persons for Lead Poisoning and Referrals</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Developing partnerships to refer children and pregnant woman at risk of poisoning because of elevated lead levels in tap water to blood testing and abatement resources</p>	<p>Ronald Anguzu, MD, PhD, MPH, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p> <p>Community Water Services</p>
<p>Growing Rural Health Equity with the Help Me Grow Model</p> <p>\$200,000 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Evaluating methods to effectively identify early childhood development delays in rural communities</p>	<p>Jennifer Koop, PhD, MCW Department of Neurology</p> <p>First 5 Fox Valley</p>
<p>Implementation of Community-Led Diabetes Education in Hmong and Hispanic Populations in Central Wisconsin</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Reducing diabetes among Hmong and Hispanic communities in central Wisconsin</p>	<p>Corina Norrbom, MD, MCW Central Wisconsin Campus</p> <p>Hmong American Center</p>
<p>PsychChild</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Helping mental health clinicians better understand and leverage children's screentime activities as powerful components of the treatment experience</p>	<p>Matthew Jandrisevits, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>Agnesian HealthCare St. Agnes Hospital Foundation</p>
<p>Peace at Home Hotline</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Offering alternatives to violence for those who cause harm in their intimate-partner and family relationships</p>	<p>Laura Cassidy, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p> <p>Alma Center, Inc.</p>
<p>Advancing Alcohol and Violence Research: Developing New Partnerships and Sharing Learnings</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Driving community action to prevent alcohol-related violence through partnerships and data sharing</p>	<p>Constance Kostelac, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity</p> <p>Marquette University</p>
<p>Leveraging Patient and Family Perspectives to Improve Systems of Care for Traumatic Brain Injury</p> <p>\$200,000 2023 MCW-Led Population and Community Health Studies</p> <p>7/1/2022 - 6/30/2024</p>	<p>Improving traumatic brain injury outcomes by supporting patients soon and long after injury</p>	<p>Lindsay Nelson, PhD, MCW Department of Neurosurgery</p>



PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS
Building the Black American Neurodegenerative Discovery- Together Initiative to Improve Healthy Minds  \$200,000 2023 MCW-Led Population and Community Health Studies  7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024	Tackling inequities in aging Black American healthcare, health behavior, and Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research	Laura Umfleet, PsyD, MCW Department of Neurology
A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Post-Discharge Team to Improve Care of Gun Violence Survivors  \$200,000 2022 MCW-Led Population and Community Health Studies  7/1/2022 – 6/30/2024	Addressing the physical, mental, and social needs of gunshot wound patients in order to decrease emergency room utilization and hospital readmissions	Mary Schroeder, MD, MCW Department of Surgery
Reducing Opioid Overdose through Coordinated, Multisectoral Response  \$199,001 2022 MCW-Led Population and Community Health Studies  7/1/2022– 6/30/2024	Examining the effectiveness of Milwaukee's overdose prevention and response programs	Julia Dickson-Gomez, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity
Impact of Alcohol Policies on Health in Rural Northern Wisconsin  \$49,964 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant  1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	Analyzing alcohol policy approaches in rural northern Wisconsin communities to reduce the negative impacts of excessive alcohol use	Felice Borisy-Rudin, JD, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity
Inpatient Stroke Database for Evaluation of Equity in Process and Outcome (ISDEEPO)  \$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant  1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023	Leveraging the CTSI Clinical Research Data Warehouse to examine equity in processes and outcomes in hyperacute and inpatient stroke care	Marek Cierny, MD, MCW Department of Neurology
Assessing Breast Cancer Risk Prior to Gender-Affirming Chest Masculinization Surgery  \$50,000 2023 MCW-Led Seed Grant  1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023	Calculating personalized breast cancer risk in transgender and nonbinary persons prior to gender-affirming chest masculinization surgery	Chandler Cortina, MD, MS, FSSO, FACS, MCW Department of Surgery



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

### Clinical and Community Solutions to Lead-Free Children

*\$400,000 | Award Period: 10/1/2020 – 9/30/2023*

**Children with high levels of lead in their bloodstream are at greater risk for learning and developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, and growth delays. For a city grappling with peeling lead paint in low-income neighborhood homes, the problem has been magnified for decades by lack of a coordinated response.**

In October 2020, AHW awarded \$400,000 to an MCW-led project—Clinical and Community Solutions to Lead-Free Children—to help change the dynamic in Milwaukee.

Tens of thousands of older Milwaukee homes are believed to contain lead paint, and many built before 1951 are believed to also receive water from street mains through lead pipes known as laterals, which can flake lead into drinking water. Each year, roughly 25,000 Milwaukee children are tested for lead and an average 3,000 are found to have elevated lead levels. But it is widely acknowledged that lead testing and interventions are grossly inadequate, underfunded, and lacking in coordination between the city, medical clinics that treat children with lead poisoning, and nonprofits working toward solutions and better education. Parents ultimately face the consequences because their children struggle to learn and behave at school, due to lead poisoning.

The three-year AHW project, now in its second year, aims to not only help the city identify more children with elevated blood lead levels, but also better coordinate responses to positive lead tests, enhance parent education, and strategize how to decrease ongoing lead exposure to prevent lead poisoning.


The project is working to streamline processes linking medical clinics, the Milwaukee Health Department, and community resources, while engaging and educating parents in distressed neighborhoods. The AHW project has brought together more than 50 partners to work alongside the health department on this long-vexing public health issue.

MCW principal investigator David Nelson, professor of Family and Community Medicine, said the collaboration was “long overdue.” The goal is for all children in Milwaukee to be lead-free—especially those whose families cannot afford to replace old windows and remove lead from other surfaces, or who rent from lax landlords.

“We want to see children living in safe and affordable environments,” Nelson said. “It’s a complex issue with multiple moving pieces. When we work together, we can affect change. Everyone does a little bit, and we find ways to connect without pointing fingers.”

AHW funding covers staff time at partner organizations to “dig deeper and make connections” toward a less siloed approach to lead poisoning prevention, said Carissa Hoium, environmental health program leader for the Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin.

“This team served as a door holder for organizations to come together,” added Langston Verdin, director of health strategy for the Milwaukee Health Department. “The funding makes it possible to support staffs working together.”



AHW funding also provided an opportunity to assess and establish a baseline of “where we are as a community” in building awareness around the issue among parents of children most vulnerable to lead poisoning, said Ofelia Mondragon, healthy homes lead abatement manager for the Social Development Commission.

Underpinning the collaborative work is advocacy for policy changes and greater funding for lead abatement and education, as well as protections for lead abatement workers on the home improvement side, Mondragon said. “We need a sense of urgency to empower different perspectives—parents, educators, workers, and community organizations.”

The project’s “heart and soul” is families, said Richard Diaz, co-founder, and chair of the Coalition on Lead Emergency (COLE), a collective of nonprofits, environmentalists, educators, doctors, community members, and civic activists. COLE works with families of children with lead poisoning to share their stories as part of advocacy for better protections.

Diaz cited a recent victory in tandem with the Milwaukee Health Department: a policy change to hold landlords more accountable, and to prevent them from retaliating against families that report lead in rentals. Another successful policy change triggers earlier responses for lead abatement by lowering the blood lead level required for abatement, Diaz said.

“We’re not going to be done with this work in three years, when the project funding ends,” Nelson said. “But this is where collectively, 50 partners locally and nationally interested in this work—including funders—are coming together.”

Said Diaz: “It really is an access to capital issue.”





Lead : - ☐

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# POLICY, SYSTEMS, & CULTURE CHANGE

AHW's Policy, Systems, and Culture Change pathway focuses on social, economic, health, and healthcare policies and systems that create lasting, population-level health improvements across Wisconsin.

## CLOSED PROJECTS

- Wisconsin Medical Dental Integration Project (WIMDIP)
- Healthcare Collaborative Against Sex Trafficking (HCAST)

Find a listing of each closed project with a summary of outcomes at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](http://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects)

## NEW INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
System Change for Health Integration in the Delivery of Diabetes Prevention  \$199,539 2022 Community-Led Systems Changes for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Creating an efficient and sustainable ecosystem to address prediabetes and prevent diabetes in Wisconsin	David Nelson, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee
Reestablishing and Reviving Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Food Systems to Heal Tribal Communities  \$200,000 2022 Community-Led Systems Changes for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Reestablishing and reviving Great Lakes intertribal food systems to heal tribal communities	Matthew Dellinger, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity  Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
Leveraging Trusted Relationships Between Community and Farmers to Increase Healthy Food Access  \$199,998 2022 Community-Led Systems Changes for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Increasing healthy food access in low-income communities of color in Brown and Manitowoc Counties	Leslie Ruffalo, MS, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine  Wello
Integration of Hepatitis C Diagnosis and Treatment into a Mobile Harm Reduction Unit  \$164,002 2022 Community-Led Systems Changes for Improved Health  7/1/2022 - 12/31/2023	Developing a novel platform for hepatitis C testing and treatment services within mobile harm reduction units	Carol Galletly, PhD, JD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine  State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services - Division of Public Health

# \$1.1 MILLION FUNDED IN FY23

<p>Building Equitable Access to Wholesale Markets for Hmong Farmers in NE Wisconsin</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Addressing gaps that prevent Hmong farmers from participating in wholesale markets in Northeast Wisconsin</p>	<p>Leslie Ruffalo, MS, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine</p> <p>Wello</p>
<p>Marathon County Minimum Legal Drinking Age Compliance Checks</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Addressing the misuse of alcohol in Marathon County, specifically underage drinking, through minimum legal drinking age compliance checks</p>	<p>Felice Borisy-Rudin, JD, PhD, MCW Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology</p> <p>Marathon County Health Department</p>
<p>A Veggie Chop Shop to Support Milwaukee's Most Vulnerable</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Creating a sustainable system of food recovery that decreases food insecurity among families in low-income neighborhoods, reduces food waste, and creates pathways for nutrition promotion for individuals of all ages</p>	<p>Leslie Ruffalo, MS, PhD, MCW Department of Family Medicine</p> <p>Tikkun Ha-Ir</p>
<p>Health and Well-Being Environmental Assessment for Lasting Healthcare Workforce Resiliency in Wisconsin</p> <p>\$49,659 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Growing and retaining Wisconsin's healthcare workforce by addressing worker burnout and well-being</p>	<p>Alicia Pilarski, DO, MCW Department of Emergency Medicine</p> <p>WHA Foundation, Inc.</p>
<p>Eliminating Low-Value Care in Wisconsin to Improve Quality, Safety, Health Equity, and Cost Efficiency</p> <p>\$43,915 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Reducing unnecessary and potentially harmful care in Wisconsin</p>	<p>Anai Kothari, MD, MS, MCW Department of Surgery</p> <p>Wisconsin Health Information Organization, Inc.</p>
<p>Creating a Municipal Inventory for Alcohol Policy in Calumet County</p> <p>\$29,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Identifying gaps and building action plans to address excessive alcohol consumption among youth in Calumet County</p>	<p>Felice Borisy-Rudin, JD, PhD, MCW Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology</p> <p>Community Action for Healthy Living, Inc.</p>
<p>CA:tCH-Expanding Shared Data Systems for Coordinated Community Crisis Response</p> <p>\$50,000 2023 Community-Led Seed Grant</p> <p>1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023</p>	<p>Coordinating crisis care by allowing individuals to share personal safety plans that can be used during a crisis to improve behavioral health outcomes</p>	<p>Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine</p> <p>NorthLakes Community Clinic</p>



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

### AHW Community Health Grant Helps Reduce Autism Diagnoses Bottleneck

\$504,117 | Award Period: 7/21/2021 – 6/30/2024

**In 2020, one in 36 Wisconsin eight-year-olds were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A developmental disability caused by various factors, ASD can cause affected children to learn, communicate, behave, and engage with others differently. When ASD is diagnosed early in children, families can connect with healthcare professionals and services to help children live to their full potential.**

In Wisconsin, and especially in our most underserved communities, families often face long waits before one of the few trained professionals, or “ASD experts,” able to provide an ASD diagnosis can work with their children. This bottleneck, formed by many patients and a few providers qualified to diagnose ASD, can delay diagnoses, leading to ongoing challenges.

With funding from AHW, the project, Battling the Bottleneck: Increasing Capacity for ASD Diagnosis within Primary Healthcare Across Wisconsin, aims to address systemic barriers to the diagnosis of ASD and increase capacity for ASD diagnosis statewide. The three-year, \$504,117 project is a partnership between MCW, Marquette University, Mental Health America of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health, Next Step Clinic, MCW Child Psychiatry Consultation Program, and Vanderbilt University.

Various barriers and limitations contribute to Wisconsin’s ASD bottleneck. For starters, ASD screening is the first step, and several healthcare and educational providers are trained to screen for ASD in our area. However, children who screen as having a medium or high likelihood for ASD need to go on to a full assessment or diagnosis for autism. Few medical providers have the training and capabilities to do so or to know where to send children to receive this assessment in a timely manner.

Beyond the minimal number of qualified professionals who can diagnose ASD, the bottleneck for evaluating Wisconsin’s children was exacerbated by overall challenges faced by healthcare professionals in recent years. With the COVID-19 pandemic and limited in-person care, disruptions to the healthcare workforce, and difficulty in finding available and nearby professionals, patients of healthcare providers across disciplines have struggled with timely scheduling.

In addition to the scarcity of experts qualified to conduct ASD diagnoses, children in underserved communities face further challenges in accessing ASD services. Children of minority races or ethnicities or who live in underserved rural, urban, and tribal areas are diagnosed with ASD even less frequently. When children of color are screened or receive assessments, it is often two to three years after their White counterparts.

Researchers for the AHW-funded project propose that one effective solution to providing faster and more efficient ASD diagnosis and quicker access to support and resources for families is to equip more healthcare professionals with the training necessary to diagnose ASD. Otherwise-credentialed MD professionals (pediatricians, family medicine physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, Master’s-level psychologists, and clinical social workers working with MDs in clinics) could conduct diagnoses for at least a subset of children with proper training and education.

According to MCW Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Kathleen Koth, DO, DFAACAP,



“One of the issues in our system (and in all systems) is once a primary care provider identifies somebody having what they suspect is autism, they refer out to another provider for testing, and those wait lists are incredibly long. And while yes, some kids need that, a good number of kids don’t need that level of testing. A primary medical provider is well positioned to make the diagnosis and probably already have it in their head... So, by doing this, we’re trying to give primary care providers a tool kit to make the diagnosis.”

Marquette University Psychology Professor and Next Step Clinic Co-Director Amy Van Hecke, PhD, added, “These professionals have the ability, especially for what we call the ‘frank’ children that have very clear characteristics of autism at an early age. They just need the training to diagnose them. With training, they can take a substantial portion of this group we used to send to the specialty clinics, take them out of the equation, and get them on the road to services that much faster... We’re trying to chip away at that specialty clinic bottleneck.”

In the summer of 2022, the researchers began providing diagnosis training to qualified clinicians using the Screening Tool for Autism in Toddlers and Young Children (STAT), based on the methods of the Tennessee STAT training model introduced by project partner Vanderbilt University.

Thanks to the broad geographic reach made possible virtually, researchers were able to include trainees from across the state. The training was provided in tandem with a parallel group of family navigators, individuals who help families through complex care systems and assist with issues impacting health outside the health system.

In monthly cohort meetings, participants discuss their progress and the obstacles they encounter, raise and answer questions, and troubleshoot together. It’s been a pleasant surprise for researchers to observe that cohort participants engage with each other outside of the meetings, building relationships, supporting each other, sharing resources, and advocating for better services for families.

Next Step Clinic Executive Co-Director Leah Jepson, MSW, said, “They’ve become great resources to one another. They each have their own history in working with families in different areas, and many have been doing a lot of this for years. They troubleshoot together and email each other throughout the month. The relationships being built, and resources being shared are added bonuses in this process.”

This year’s intense winter respiratory illness season, which put a considerable strain on the healthcare system, created a ripple effect that challenged the availability of clinicians and professionals participating in the project. Dr. Koth stated, “Primary care providers and pediatricians were just under so much pressure to see so many kids so quickly. It was a very bad RSV, flu, and COVID season, which decreased the numbers who could participate with the demand for primary care even higher.”

The project team plans to begin this year’s training and cohorts earlier to offset the potential for another challenging winter respiratory illness season. Hopefully, this will help the researchers to avoid the participation challenges created by the onset of the illness season with the clinician’s schedules.

Looking ahead to this year’s training, Dr. Van Hecke is excited about the interest and enthusiasm about the project and the participation from underserved communities the researchers hope to support.

“This year, we already have one cohort full and one almost full,” related Dr. Van Hecke. “Our first cohort is filled with participants from the Gerald Ignace Indian Health Center in Milwaukee, who responded to our request for participants and want to expand their work with these children.”

She added, “We also hope to work with tribal nations around the state by listening and learning what their needs are around autism and seeing what we can offer that might help meet any of those needs. Our second cohort is almost full, with a large group of participants from the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center. In our area, there are very few Spanish-speaking or bilingual autism diagnosticians, so we are absolutely thrilled about their participation as well.”

Though there is still work to be done to reduce the bottleneck of families and children needing ASD diagnosis, services, and research, the project researchers are making significant strides toward their goal. Dr. Koth said, “The providers we’ve trained are starting to use the tool in their clinics in Urban Milwaukee. Our participants were hungry for this resource; it’s supported people who would not have otherwise been able to go through the diagnosis process. Even if it’s a small number of participants, they’re reaching a bigger number of kids. That’s already a success.”





# AHW LANDMARK INVESTMENTS



Throughout fiscal year 2023, **AHW funding totaling more than \$109 million supported 166 active** projects devoted to biomedical research and programs devoted to public and community health improvement, health equity, and health workforce development initiatives. These projects include multi-year initiatives—AHW Landmark projects—undertaken both with MCW and throughout an extensive, statewide partner network whose representatives are focused on some of Wisconsin’s toughest health challenges.

## COMMUNITY AND CANCER SCIENCE NETWORK

The **Community and Cancer Science Network (CCSN)** is a broad collaborative, solely funded by AHW, committed to reduce breast and lung cancer disparities in Wisconsin through engaging a network of community and academic partners through a process to transform partnerships. These transformed partnerships are grounded in the principles of deep equity, systems thinking, and the integration of biology to policy perspectives. They are focused on creating equitable, scalable, and effective solutions to eliminate cancer disparities and achieve health equity in Wisconsin.

The CCSN's work is guided by the Integration Hub, which serves as a coordinating body for three complex initiatives:

- **Research and Community Scholars Curriculum** creates a space for fair and trusting relationships to develop between community members in Metro-Milwaukee and cancer researchers from MCW. Research and community scholars participate together in a nine-month curriculum focused on cancer disparities, factors influencing disparities, communicating with diverse audiences, understanding different perspectives, and building equitable partnerships.
- **Collaborative Work Groups** bring a broad spectrum of perspectives together to focus on understanding and addressing breast and lung cancer in a new way. These work group teams will design, build, test, implement, evaluate, and disseminate innovative approaches to address breast and/or lung cancer disparities.
- **Mammographic Quality** brings together regional teams to examine whether mammography imaging, interpretation, and follow-up quality are influencing breast cancer disparities in Wisconsin and developing local and regional collaborative teams to determine and sustain quality metrics.

In its fourth year of the project timeline, the CCSN reports considerable growth in the areas of administration, dissemination, and evaluation. The network has expanded its focus beyond breast and lung cancer to introduce efforts to combat prostate cancer disparities in Black men and cancer disparities in the transgender/non-binary populations.

**“Whether it is in the growth of the network or the recognition of the progressive and unique approach, we are confident that CCSN has a positive impact on both community-based organizations and academic medicine.”**

**MELINDA STOLLEY, PHD**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CANCER CONTROL AND PREVENTION**  
**MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN**

Find more information about the Community Cancer Science Network at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](http://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects).

## ADVANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

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In fiscal year 2023, AHW's 10 **Advancing Behavioral Health (ABH)** coalition partners renewed their commitment to improving mental and behavioral health within their communities by identifying and implementing strategies to ensure that their AHW-funded work, which began in 2016, will be sustained beyond the original eight-year grant period. In the third phase of this groundbreaking, statewide initiative, AHW awarded a **total of \$3.6 million to the 10 ABH community partners and the project's MCW academic team** to determine how best to leverage the networks, lessons, and resources developed during in the first two phases of their programs to continue to support and achieve improved behavioral health outcomes in their service areas.

AHW's support for its ABH partners extends well beyond project funding, to include capacity building and educational opportunities as well as technical and operational assistance tools and resources. ABH partners welcomed a return to in-person learning community events in fiscal year 2023, with the following gatherings taking place during this reporting period:

- **September 2022 (Virtual):** Themes and lessons shared between learning community members, including a case study on the implementation of a new 988 call center
- **December 2022 (Medical College of Wisconsin, Wauwatosa):** Expert speakers on countering racism and presentations on trends in philanthropic support for public health projects and Wisconsin's political landscape
- **March 2023 (Wausau):** Community partner presentation on a school-based mental health program's project development, implementation, learnings, and results, followed by discussions related to effective community-based system change
- **June 2023 (Virtual):** Reflections by community partners on their eight-year journey, along with a discussion of a tool to aid critical decision making and planning for showcasing project strategies and outcomes

"The way the project was set up in three phases over eight years has allowed us the time and the space to do our work and do it well in the community."

**JESSICA BOKHOVEN**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATOR**  
**MARATHON COUNTY**

To highlight the truly unique philanthropic approach of the ABH Initiative and the success of its participating communities in achieving real and lasting improvements in behavioral health programming and outcomes, AHW produced a series of videos that can be viewed at [info.ahwendowment.org/abh](http://info.ahwendowment.org/abh)





## HOW AHW IS INCREASING MCW'S BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CAPACITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

Behind every healthcare breakthrough are years of painstaking and expensive biomedical research. While billions of dollars are available for promising health-focused scientific research, such as that being conducted at MCW, the process for attracting National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants and other financial support is highly competitive.

With the **\$5 million**, multi-year **Improving Heart Health, Supporting Healthy Minds, and Dismantling Cancer** grant, AHW is providing the tools, resources, and collaborations necessary to allow MCW researchers to perform and present their work according to the most rigorous funding requirements, thereby increasing the flow of federal research investment into the state and advancing the knowledge necessary to improve the health of Wisconsinites.

"The AHW funding was really essential to my grant proposal."

**MICHELE BATTLE, PHD**  
**CELL BIOLOGY, NEUROBIOLOGY & ANATOMY**

Find more information about the Improving Heart Health, Supporting Healthy Minds, and Dismantling Cancer project at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](https://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects).



# PROGRAMMING

In addition to grant funding, AHW develops and delivers resources that add value to our partners, building capacity within Wisconsin's health ecosystem and extending the impact of our investments to maximize opportunities for people and communities throughout the state to thrive.

We provide technical assistance to grant recipients to increase their efficiency and effectiveness, and we fund, organize, host, or otherwise participate in learning events designed to share expertise and experience among health-focused stakeholders across Wisconsin.

“Through AHW’s Technical Assistance Provider Program, we have worked with some incredible consultants that have helped us create strategic plans and do other things that have helped make our work more sustainable.”

**HOLLIE WHITE**  
**PROJECT COORDINATOR**  
**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES GROUP**

## **SUPPORTING FUNDED PROJECT SUCCESS: AHW TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER PROGRAM**

The AHW Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Program connects eligible AHW-funded projects to respected, experienced consulting organizations and individuals upon request, bringing the content expertise and experience of these consultants to the work of each project.

Through the program, projects work with TAPs dedicated to their funded project's specific needs, helping projects strategize solutions, overcome barriers, and maximize the success of their coalitions and collaborations as they drive toward successful outcomes for the health and people of communities across Wisconsin.

## **GROWING HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNER CAPACITY: CATCHAFIRE**

In 2021, AHW expanded our capacity-building offerings by joining forces with other Milwaukee-based funders and grant-makers to form the Greater Milwaukee Partnership Catchafire Program. This program aims to connect nonprofits with skills-based, virtual volunteers who provide high-quality pro bono services across areas such as program management, finance and operations, marketing and communications, human resources, technology, fundraising, and more.

In January 2022, we expanded the reach of this resource by partnering with the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health to support nonprofit and public health partners across the state, including all local health departments.

### **Catchafire Impact**

- **175** AHW-funded organizational licenses statewide
- **\$321,198** savings to AHW-supported organizations in FY23
- **\$677,464** savings to AHW-supported organizations to date



## A NEW VOICE JOINS COFFEE CONVERSATIONS: RAYNA ANDREWS NAMED HOST OF HEALTH- FOCUSED PROGRAM



Public Health Advocate and author Rayna Andrews joined the production of Coffee Conversations with Scientists in January 2023 as the host of the monthly video livestream produced in partnership by MCW and AHW.

AHW launched Conversations with Scientists as a free, public in-person learning featuring MCW expert speakers in 2016. Following a temporary pause due to COVID-19, AHW and MCW brought the popular series back as a new virtual experience in April 2021. The virtual format of the conversations allows for direct audience participation through on-screen question submission, and the archiving of episodes allows for a much wider audience reach.

Coffee Conversations with Scientists features the perspectives of trusted MCW specialists on timely health topics. Promoted across all MCW and AHW channels, each episode draws a sizeable live online audience, with archived episodes garnering thousands of additional views.



# PUBLIC STEWARDSHIP

Since 2004, AHW has been provided the extraordinary opportunity and responsibility to steward a generous financial gift on behalf of the people of Wisconsin. Today, we continue to advance our mission and purpose through effective oversight and management.

## OVERSIGHT

AHW is an entity within MCW's School of Medicine. AHW's operations are led by an MCW faculty member, who also serves as a senior associate dean in the MCW School of Medicine and reports to the dean of the School of Medicine. The director provides oversight and day-to-day direction for AHW staff. Governance and oversight of AHW is provided by three entities: The MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health, the AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee, and the MCW Board of Trustees.



**Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH**  
Senior Associate Dean and Director  
Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment  
Professor, Anesthesiology  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Elizabeth Giese, RN, MSPH**  
Health Officer/Director, Eau  
Claire City/County Health  
Department



**Stephanie Harrison, MA**  
Chief Executive Officer, Wisconsin  
Primary Health Care Association



**Joseph E. Kerschner, MD**  
Provost and Executive Vice President,  
Dean, School of Medicine,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Ian B.K. Martin, MD, MBA**  
Professor and System Chair,  
Department of Emergency Medicine,  
MCW  
Emergency Medicine Physician-in-  
Chief, Froedtert & Medical College  
of Wisconsin Health Network



**John R. Raymond, Sr., MD**  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Rebecca Rice, MA  
(Chair)**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
NorthLakes Community Clinic



**Tony Shields, MSM**  
President & CEO, Wisconsin  
Philanthropy Network



**Joy R. Tapper, MPA**  
Executive Director, Milwaukee  
Health Care Partnership

The MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium) formed in 2002 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to fulfill the obligations of the Public and Community Health Oversight and Advisory Committee as described in the March 2000 Order of the Insurance Commissioner of the State of Wisconsin. The Consortium provides oversight for AHW's investments in support of community and public health partnerships and projects and serves in an advisory capacity for investments in research and education. The Consortium conducts itself in accordance with its bylaws and Wisconsin Open Meetings and Public Records laws.



The AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC) provides oversight for AHW investments and support of MCW-led biomedical and population health research, as well as programs to enhance medical education opportunities for the healthcare and public health workforce.

## AHW Research & Education Advisory Committee



**Ivor Benjamin, MD**

Director, Cardiovascular Center;  
Professor of Medicine, Physiology,  
Pharmacology, Toxicology, Cell  
Biology, Surgery  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH  
(Chair)**

Senior Associate Dean and Director,  
Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment  
Professor, Anesthesiology,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Shelisa Dalton, MBA**

Chief Financial Officer,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**José Franco, MD**

Senior Associate Dean for  
Education  
School of Medicine,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Cecilia Hillard, PhD**

Associate Dean for Research  
Professor of Pharmacology and  
Toxicology  
Director, Neuroscience Research  
Center,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Joseph E. Kerschner, MD**

Provost and Executive Vice  
President, Dean, School of  
Medicine,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**John Mantsch, PhD**

Chair and Florence Williams  
Professor of Pharmacology and  
Toxicology,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Ann B. Nattinger, MD, MPH,  
MACP**

Senior Associate Dean for Research,  
School of Medicine  
Associate Provost for Research  
Professor of Medicine, Lady  
Riders Professor of Breast Cancer  
Research,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



**Amy Prunuske, PhD**

Associate Professor, Department of  
Medical School Regional Campuses,  
Medical College of Wisconsin



# FUND MANAGEMENT

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin funds are invested with the Medical College of Wisconsin Endowment Funds using a diversified asset allocation strategy that includes money market funds held by external investment managers, marketable debt and equity securities, bond and equity mutual funds, commingled bond and equity funds, other equity securities, and accrued interest and dividends thereon and are reported at fair value. The investment goal for the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin funds, as approved by the Medical College of Wisconsin Board of Trustees, is to preserve the purchasing power of its investment, while providing a level of investment return and liquidity that funds its purposes within a reasonable and prudent level of risk. The Medical College of Wisconsin has a long-term investment objective for the endowment assets to earn on average a real (inflation adjusted) annual rate of return and to provide a return for appropriation of not less than the total annual spendable income rate under the endowment fund spending policy.

All Endowment Funds, including the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin funds, are invested in a unitized pool. Pooling of funds allows an individual participating fund to benefit from diversification

and economies of scale in the investment process. Income is also unitized and allocated based on relative value on the first of the month. Realized capital gains are reinvested in the pool. The separate identity of each fund participating in the Endowment Fund pool is fully preserved, and each fund's share in the income and gains and losses of the pool is assured.

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin funds are segregated within the Endowment Fund. With respect to the 35% allocation of the funds for the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program and the 65% allocation of the funds for the Research and Education Program, separate accounts for the endowed funds and the spendable income funds available for current and future program distribution are maintained.

Distributions are based on the MCW Endowment Fund Spending Policy. Investment earnings that are not distributed are restricted under the terms of the Grant Agreement.

## FUND MANAGEMENT

A financial audit of The Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc. Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Program was conducted by an external audit firm for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2023, and 2022.

The following pages reflect the financial position for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2023, and 2022 and the activities and changes in net assets for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023.

## ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN ENDOWMENT

### Statements of Financial Position

June 30, 2023, and 2022

(in thousands)

	2023	2022
<b>Assets</b>		
Investments, at fair value:		
Spendable income funds	\$ 64,618	\$ 66,118
Endowed funds	417,834	392,594
Total investments, at fair value	482,452	458,712
Total assets	\$ 482,452	\$ 458,712
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Liabilities		
Due to The Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc.	\$ 405	\$ 450
Total liabilities	405	450
Net assets with donor restrictions	\$ 482,047	\$ 458,262
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 482,452	\$ 458,712

## ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN ENDOWMENT

### Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023

(in thousands)

	HWPP*	REP**	TOTAL
<b>Changes in net assets without donor restrictions:</b>			
Net assets with donor restrictions released from restrictions	\$ 8,250	\$ 18,635	\$ 26,885
Program Expenditures			
Faculty salaries	1,130	4,260	5,390
Staff salaries	797	5,808	6,605
Fringe benefits	398	2,229	2,627
Services, supplies, and other	644	6,338	6,982
Payments to community partners	5,281	-	5,281
Total expenditures	\$ 8,250	\$ 18,635	\$ 26,885
Increase (decrease) in net assets without donor restrictions	-	-	-
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	\$ 8,250	\$ 18,635	\$ 26,885
<b>Changes in net assets with donor restrictions:</b>			
Contributions	-	-	-
Investment return	\$ 18,295	\$ 32,375	\$ 50,670
Net assets released from restrictions	(8,250)	(18,635)	(26,885)
Decrease in net assets with donor restrictions	10,045	13,740	23,785
Net assets with donor restrictions at beginning of year	\$ 164,583	\$ 293,679	\$ 458,262
Net assets with donor restrictions at end of year	\$ 174,628	\$ 307,419	\$ 482,047

\*Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program

\*\*Research and Education Program

**ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN**  
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023  
(in thousands)

The MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health authorized the following changes in outstanding commitments for the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin program. These outstanding commitments will be funded on a reimbursement basis and recognized as expenditures after the amounts have been expended by MCW and the community partners.

	<b>LIFE-TO-DATE AUTHORIZED FUNDING<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>LIFE-TO-DATE EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS</b>
Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program	\$ 99,763	\$ 79,835	\$ 14,170
Research and Education Program	242,603	178,092	46,591
Support Services Provided by AHW Staff	38,819	26,995	7,561
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 381,185</b>	<b>\$ 284,922</b>	<b>\$ 68,322</b>

<sup>1</sup> Reflects grants awarded net of grant reductions made due to the economic recession that began in December 2007



# HOW WE OPERATE

Funding proposals received through both the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium) and AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC) follow standard request for application (RFA) and review processes. However, the process varies for each funding mechanism, right-sizing applicant requirements to align with the amount of funds being requested.

## MCW-LED PROJECT (REP) APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The AHW Research and Education Program (REP) funds are distributed through the following processes:

- **REAC-Initiated Investment** – REAC-initiated proposals are received upon invitation. AHW’s scientific consultants and AHW staff work with applicants to ensure the proposal’s alignment with AHW’s mission and vision through a multi-level process that includes the submission of a letter of intent and full proposal. All submissions are screened by AHW staff to determine that all eligibility, content, and submission requirements are fulfilled, then are reviewed by the REAC for scientific merit and alignment with the AHW Five-Year Plan. REAC-approved awards are advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination. All full proposals are also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.
- **2022 MCW-Led Collaborative Research for Improved Health and 2022 MCW-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health** – Proposals received through this competitive funding opportunity also followed a two-stage submission process, with each stage being reviewed by AHW staff for technical requirements and merit review panels consisting of expertise relevant to the proposed research and funding pathway for the proposal’s potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with the RFA. REAC-approved awards are advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination. The proposals are then reviewed by the REAC for scientific merit and alignment with the AHW Five-Year Plan. REAC-approved awards are advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination. All full proposals are also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.
- **2022 MCW-Led Seed Grant** – Proposals received through this competitive funding opportunity followed a one-stage submission process involving review by AHW staff for technical requirements, including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions. Peer reviews were conducted by a review body consisting of other applicants who applied to this funding opportunity for all applications that passed technical review. Following peer review, the REAC reviewed the recommendations from the peer reviewers and approved a slate of proposals to be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval. All full proposals were also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.
- **MCW-Led Learning Event Support** – AHW’s MCW-Led Learning Event Support awards are distributed in adherence with the resource allocation and review process approved by the REAC. These smaller, rolling funding awards follow a review process that includes submission of a written application that undergoes AHW staff review and supplanting review prior to funding determination by AHW leadership.





## COMMUNITY-LED PROJECT (HWPP) APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

- **2022 Community-Led Workforce Development for Improved Health and 2022 Community-Led Population and Community Health Studies and 2022 Community-Led Systems Changes for Improved Health** –Proposals received through these competitive funding opportunities followed a two-stage submission process, with each stage being reviewed by AHW staff for technical requirements, followed by merit reviews conducted by panels consisting of community and MCW reviewers. Proposals and merit review results were then advanced to the Consortium on Public and Community Health, which approved a final slate to advance to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination. All full proposals were also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.
- **2022 Community-Led Seed Grant** – Proposals received through this competitive funding opportunity followed a one-stage submission process involving review by AHW staff for technical requirements, including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions. Peer reviews were conducted by a review body consisting of other applicants who applied to this funding opportunity for all applications that passed technical review. Following peer review, the Consortium on Public and Community Health reviewed the recommendations from the peer reviewers and approved a slate of proposals to be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval. All full proposals were also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting
- **Community-Led Learning Event Support** – AHW’s Community-Led Learning Event Support awards are distributed in adherence with the resource allocation and review process approved by the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health. These smaller, rolling funding awards follow a review process that includes submission of a written application that undergoes AHW staff review and supplanting review prior to funding determination by AHW leadership. requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.





- **2022 ABH Phase III** – Proposals received through this closed funding opportunity followed a one-stage submission process involving review by AHW staff for technical requirements, including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions. Peer reviews were conducted by a review body consisting of other applicants who applied to this funding opportunity for all applications that passed technical review. Following peer review, the Consortium on Public and Community Health reviewed the recommendations from the peer reviewers and approved a slate of proposals to be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval. All full proposals were also reviewed under AHW’s supplanting requirements through the MCW controller’s office prior to award commencement.

## AHW SUPPLANTING POLICY

As determined by the Order of the Insurance Commissioner of the State of Wisconsin, AHW funds may not be used to supplant funds or resources available from other sources. As such, AHW, via the MCW controller’s office, conducts a review of all AHW funding awards for determination of non-supplanting in accordance with procedures approved by the Order.

## EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FUNDED

Throughout the year, AHW evaluates the progress and outcomes of funded projects using regular progress and final reports as well as financial status reports and/or presentations, site visits, meetings, or subrecipient audits. Multi-year awards are reviewed for progress annually by the appropriate AHW oversight body. Project updates and outcomes are posted on our funded project listing at [ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects](http://ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects).



# OUR TEAM

## LEADERSHIP



**Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH**  
Senior Associate Dean and  
Director  
Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment  
Professor, Anesthesiology  
Medical College of Wisconsin

**Ugwuji N. Maduekwe, MD, MMSc,  
MPH**

Deputy Director,  
Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin  
Endowment  
Associate Professor, Surgery  
Medical College of Wisconsin



## STAFF



**Lupita Ayala**  
Administrative Assistant



**Kate Beadle**  
Grant Compliance  
Coordinator



**Christina Ellis, MS**  
Program Director – Strategic  
Investments



**Julia Enright**  
Grant Compliance  
Coordinator



**Amanda Fraser**  
Program Manager III



**Amy Homel, MS**  
AHW Administrator



**Kristl Klewein**  
Administrative Associate



**Amber Jacoby**  
Program Coordinator



**Autum Kowalczyk, MBA**  
Compliance Business  
Manager



**Kelly Lietz, MA**  
Communications Director



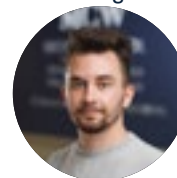
**Benjamin Martinez, MNM**  
Program Manager



**Mark McNally, PhD**  
AHW Scientific Consultant for  
Basic Science



**Liliana Pezzin, PhD, JD**  
AHW Scientific  
Consultant – Clinical/  
Population Science



**Michael Plewa**  
Digital Media  
Specialist



**Chris Renaud**  
Communications  
Consultant



**Kanoe Riedel, MA**  
Communications  
Consultant



**Nate Simon, MNA**  
Philanthropy  
Fellow



**Abby Sokol-Roberts**  
Salesforce  
Administrator



**Amy Sordahl**  
Program  
Coordinator



**Madison Van Allen**  
Data Analyst



**Tracy Wilson, MPH**  
Program Manager

## AHW INTERNSHIPS

AHW's unique position at the intersection of academic medicine and public health creates exciting opportunities for young learners to broaden their perspectives about the careers available to them. By inviting interns from area schools as well as from within MCW, we extend our mission of advancing health in Wisconsin by exposing the next generation of health workers to the many avenues available to them for community-focused service.

AHW started its internship program in 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, offering our inaugural interns fully remote work options. Building upon three years of successful internship rotations coordinated with individual schools, AHW expanded its internship program in 2023 by becoming a Milwaukee Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) partner.

Whether they stay on with AHW, as some learners have done, or continue their career paths elsewhere, we are proud to be part of our interns' journeys of personal and professional discovery.

### SEPTEMBER 2022 - MAY 2023 AHW INTERNS



**Madison Ebert**  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee



**Mariana Vergara**  
Marquette University



**Vanessa Reynoso**  
University of Wisconsin-  
Parkside



**Sai Dongur**  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

### MAY 2023 - JULY 2023 AHW INTERNS (MAHEC CHIP PARTNERSHIP)

"My experience with AHW has been one-of-a-kind and will always be memorable. I absolutely enjoyed weekly team meetings, where we discussed our projects! I found the team very helpful—everyone has amazing personalities and great knowledge, making AHW a great organization!"

**VANESSA REYNOSO**  
AHW 2023 INTERN



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Medical College of Wisconsin  
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