



Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

For the period of July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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About AHW

Propelling the most promising work and ideas for a healthier Wisconsin today and for generations to come.

The Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) is a statewide health philanthropy established by the Medical College of Wisconsin through a generous gift from Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin to serve as a resource for health improvement efforts across Wisconsin.

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.





“The arrival of the virus has impacted our operations and our partners and has also presented an opportunity to forge a new path.”

Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld - AHW Director



A Message from the Director

Dear residents of Wisconsin,

On behalf of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium), I am pleased to present the 2020 Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW) Annual Report.

This report reflects my first year as director and our first full year under the 2019-2023 Five-Year Plan, “Changemaking for a Healthier Wisconsin.” In our last report, we introduced our four new funding pathways designed to tackle the most pressing health issues through investments in basic, clinical, and translational research, education and workforce development, population and community health studies, and policy, systems, and culture change. This year, we are happy to share the progress made in each pathway.

Also included in the following pages is our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The arrival of the virus has impacted our operations and our partners and has also presented an opportunity to forge a new path. We have shifted many of our events online to remain a true partner to those working to improve health at all levels throughout the state. On page eight, you’ll see the investments we made to prevent the spread, minimize transmission, and reduce risk associated with COVID-19. This \$4.8 million in rapid-response funding, released in April, has supported efforts across the state to address critical and urgent needs during this pandemic, including outreach to at-risk and underserved populations, expanded access to resources and care, and the use of innovative technologies and treatments.

Despite the challenges, it’s been a year full of exciting progress. As chair of the AHW Research Education Advisory Committee and board member of the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health, I know first-hand the commitment to stewardship that is a hallmark of AHW. Throughout the report, you’ll find our deep commitment to serve the residents of Wisconsin reflected.

We still have much work ahead of us, but I’m confident that if we work together, we can continue to improve lives today and build a healthier future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

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

AHW completed its first full year under the 2019-2023 Five-Year Plan during this reporting period. We continue to operate as a changemaker across the state, positively impacting the health of Wisconsin residents through high-impact, strategic investments. We contribute to improving health by creating conditions that help our partners find solutions that show promise, allow for movement of networks and ideas into action, and connect knowledge, people, and ideas.

Highlights of this fiscal year include:

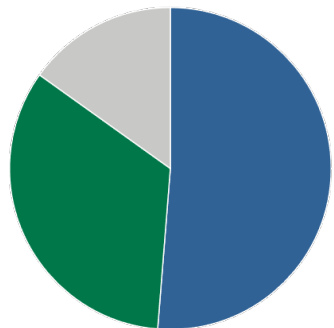
- The award of **40 new projects** across four pathways, investing **\$4.2 million** in Basic, Clinical, & Translational Research, **\$1.3 million** in Education & Workforce Development, **\$1.6 million** in Policy & Systems Change, and continued funding in our Population and Community Health Studies Pathway
- The release of **\$4.8 million** in rapid-response funding to support partners statewide in responding to COVID-19 in Wisconsin
- The continuation of the Advancing Behavioral Health Initiative, a **\$20.0 million commitment** in **10 community-led coalitions** that are impacting the pressing mental and behavioral health needs of communities across Wisconsin
- The advancement of the Community Cancer Science Network, which began as the AHW Cross-Cutting Initiative, as it entered year two of a five-year, **\$1.6 million award** to create and sustain an integrated hub to coordinate across community, research, and academics to impact cancer disparities in Wisconsin

We also continued our capacity building through:

- A new three-part workshop titled **Creating Change for Good**, designed to help organizations understand systems change and develop strategies that address the root causes of complex health issues
- The continuation our **Changemakers in Science Research Symposium** highlighting AHW-funded biomedical research projects
- Ongoing learning community meetings that bring different project teams together to share ideas and discuss lessons learned
- A **\$9,500 investment** in technical service providers that work with funded and prospective projects to maximize success, covering issues such as evaluation, marketing and communications, partnership development, program development, and sustainability. For projects active in fiscal year 2020, nearly **58% utilized technical assistance** during their award period

July 1, 2019 -
June 30, 2020:

\$11.9 million
to 40 projects
5 RFAs released
across our pathways



Total Investments

Fiscal Year 2020

\$11.9 million invested in **40 projects**

- Research = **\$6.1 million**
- Community = **\$4.0 million**
- Education = **\$1.8 million**

Funding fast, critical response to COVID-19 throughout Wisconsin

Coronavirus Response

In April, AHW issued urgent-response funding to help 17 projects take immediate actions to protect health and prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. These awards of \$4.8 million were designed to support health care and community agencies in the fight to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus COVID-19 across Wisconsin.

Funded projects were selected through a competitive application and review process, and include efforts led by community agencies and MCW experts to support outreach and communication to high-need populations in both rural and urban areas of Wisconsin, expand access to resources and care, and use innovative technologies and potential treatments to stop the spread.

Projects include 11 statewide efforts supporting needs in communities across Wisconsin, as well as dedicated projects in Milwaukee, central Wisconsin, and northern Wisconsin.

\$4.8 million to 17 projects to support Wisconsin’s response to COVID-19

COVID-19 Response Projects

MILWAUKEE	<p>Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Elderly African-Americans in Milwaukee (\$508,388)</p> <p>Supporting the MCW Center for Advancing Population Science in establishing a program to educate and test elderly African-American residents living in senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes, or homeless shelters in Milwaukee.</p>
STATEWIDE	<p>COVID-19 Emergency Management Assistance for Wisconsin Tribes (\$500,000)</p> <p>Supporting the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council in coordinating with the federally recognized tribes in Wisconsin to prevent COVID-19 and protect vulnerable populations and workers providing essential community services.</p>
MILWAUKEE	<p>STOP COVID-19: Co-designing Culturally Relevant Risk-Reduction Communication for Vulnerable Communities in Milwaukee (\$500,000)</p> <p>Supporting the City of Milwaukee Health Department in rapidly improving communication of prevention guidelines to communities of color in Milwaukee County and piloting online training for community health workers and public health outreach personnel to respond to the mental health and wellbeing needs among these communities.</p>
STATEWIDE	<p>Mobilizing Social Media Influencers for COVID-19 Prevention, Care, and Coping (\$498,931)</p> <p>Supporting the MCW Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine in implementing a strategic social media outreach effort to increase COVID-19 prevention, stigma-reduction, and coping steps.</p>
STATEWIDE	<p>The Effectiveness of Personal Protective Equipment Across Wisconsin Nursing Homes (\$489,059)</p> <p>Supporting the MCW Department of Medicine’s Division of Infectious Diseases in providing health care workers in Wisconsin nursing homes with custom-made face masks and determining their impact in preventing the spread of COVID-19.</p>
STATEWIDE	<p>Convalescent Plasma for Treatment of Patients with COVID-19 (\$382,664)</p> <p>Supporting the Medical College of Wisconsin and Versiti Wisconsin, Inc., in a joint effort to identify, obtain, and provide convalescent plasma from recovered patients with COVID-19 to patients with active disease and, as a prevention effort, to front-line health care workers.</p>
STATEWIDE	<p>Powered by 211: A Multi-faceted Approach to Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin (\$366,524)</p> <p>Supporting 211 Wisconsin, Inc., in scaling capabilities and strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and wellbeing of residents across Wisconsin.</p>

STATEWIDE

Education and Empowerment for Wisconsin Migrant Seasonal Agriculture Workers (\$322,420)

Supporting Family Health La Clinica, in partnership with the Wisconsin Farmworkers' Coalition, in protecting the health of migrant and seasonal workers, their employers, and communities in Wisconsin through the development of education, resources, and guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MILWAUKEE

3-D Printed Protective Gear (\$313,792)

Supporting Concordia University of Wisconsin in scaling up the ability to produce personal protective equipment for medical professionals and law enforcement first responders in the Milwaukee area.

STATEWIDE

Implementing Telehealth Solutions in Wisconsin's Free & Charitable Clinics (\$246,406)

Supporting the Wisconsin Association of Free & Charitable Clinics in implementing a telehealth infrastructure across Wisconsin's safety-net provider clinics to enable the continuation of services to vulnerable populations and prevent patients from accessing emergency departments for routine care.

MILWAUKEE

Epidemiologic Intelligence to Support Decision-Making in Milwaukee (\$145,168)

Supporting the MCW Institute for Health & Equity in developing dynamic and responsive epidemiological data projections for Milwaukee County to enable health experts and local leaders to respond in real time to the COVID-19 pandemic.

STATEWIDE

Presence of SARS-CoV-2 in Stool of COVID-19 Cases (\$144,171)

Supporting the MCW Department of Medicine in assessing whether COVID-19 patients could be transmitting disease via their stool to better understand and prevent the spread of the virus.

STATEWIDE

Using Behavioral Nudges to Improve Preventive Health Behaviors that Limit COVID-19 Spread (\$144,086)

Supporting the MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine and Center for Advancing Population Science in promoting key behaviors such as proper hand hygiene to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to patients at high risk for serious illness.

NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Rural Health Education & Community COVID-19 Response (\$108,628)

Supporting NorthLakes Community Clinic in reaching residents of northern Wisconsin with education, information, and outreach services to promote prevention guidelines and support the health needs of local residents.

STATEWIDE

Reducing the Transmission & Impact of COVID-19 on Wisconsin's Transgender Community (\$97,594)

Supporting the MCW Division of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine in providing a range of culturally competent services and information to assist and empower individuals who are transgender in preventing COVID-19 and coping with its associated circumstances.

STATEWIDE

Educating the Hmong Community About COVID-19 (\$33,290)

Supporting the Hmong American Friendship Association in producing and disseminating a series of culturally responsive educational videos for Hmong residents across Wisconsin to provide critical information that can prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

CENTRAL WISCONSIN

Locally Manufactured PPE & Other Medical Equipment (\$11,439)

Supporting CREATE Portage County in scaling up the ability to use 3-D printing to produce personal protective equipment for health care professionals and first responders in central Wisconsin.



Protecting the Vulnerable: Bringing PPE to Wisconsin Nursing Homes

Providing more than 39,000 face shields and 32,000 goggles to 340 facilities statewide

It was late February when positive cases of the coronavirus were first reported at Life Care Center, a nursing home in Kirkland, Wash. In the days that followed, news headlines highlighted the rapid increase in individuals who became infected — and the resulting deaths.

The outbreak was a significant point in United States’ entrance into the fight against COVID-19, and gave Americans a real-time look at something that epidemiologists like the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Dr. Silvia Munoz-Price already knew: That facilities such as nursing homes are extremely vulnerable to the spread of infections.

“The experience of the Life Care Center provided evidence that a single case of COVID-19 in a long-term care facility may result in overwhelming spread of the disease among residents, health care workers, visitors, and other caregivers,” said Munoz-Price.

As enterprise epidemiologist for Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin, an infectious disease physician, and professor of medicine, Munoz-Price has long been interested in infection control at vulnerable facilities like nursing homes. Her work has included partnership in a post-acute care coalition and a collaboration with the State Division of Public Health on efforts to prevent multidrug resistant organisms across nursing homes in Wisconsin.

In responding to a virus new to our population, experts like Munoz-Price recognized that nursing homes faced a special challenge. When operating with scarce resources while caring for a population at highest risk for negative outcomes if infected, what could protect residents and workers alike?

An important answer was to equip facilities with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). But in the face of a national shortage, access was limited and what was available was unaffordable for most. Without PPE, workers and residents would be at increased risk of exposure and infection. Through a \$489,059 AHW grant, a collaborative research team led by Munoz-Price coordinated a response, working with nursing home organizations across the state to provide facilities with critically needed personal protective equipment (PPE) while also evaluating the impact in reducing the incidence and spread of COVID-19. The project is one of 17 grants awarded in early April 2020 through AHW’s Urgent Response to COVID-19 funding opportunity.

“We want to protect the workers from getting exposed to the virus from patients or other workers,” Munoz-Price explained. “But we also want to protect the patients from getting exposed from workers who may be carrying the virus without knowing. And we want to prevent workers from taking the virus from one patient to another.”

As of June 2020, the project had delivered more than 39,000 face shields and 32,000 goggles to more than 340 facilities statewide.

“We’re very fortunate that we were able to find local, [Wisconsin-based] partners like Olympus Group and HUSCO to produce this PPE,” said Munoz-Price. “Thus, we don’t have to depend on the national supply of PPE during a major shortage.”

Following the delivery of PPE to facilities, Munoz-Price and the research team began conducting regular follow-up, ultimately aiming to evaluate the impact of PPE in preventing the incidence and spread of COVID-19 among residents and workers.

In aligning with AHW’s mission to partner academic insight with community expertise and need, Munoz-Price is pushing forward to protect the most vulnerable of Wisconsin residents while advancing understanding and knowledge of how to respond to COVID-19.

“We want to see what can be learned,” Munoz-Price added. “And we want to protect elderly people and health care workers in our communities.”

Project Title:	The Effectiveness of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Across Wisconsin Nursing Homes
Award:	\$489,059
Award Date:	April 2020
Principal Investigator:	Silvia Munoz-Price, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine
Co-Investigators:	Liliana Pezzin, JD, PhD, MCW Institute for Health and Equity; Edmund Duthie, MD, MCW Department of Medicine
Collaborators:	Diane Ehn, MS, Froedtert Health
Project Description:	Delivering and measuring the effectiveness of personal protective equipment (PPE) in nursing homes across Wisconsin



An MCW research team and medical students sort shipments of personal protective equipment for assembly and delivery to nursing homes across Wisconsin.



Safety First: Protecting Wisconsin’s Migrant Seasonal Agriculture Workers from COVID-19

Working with employers to provide education and testing for approximately 1,500 workers at farms, food processing plants, housing sites, and other agricultural worksites across the state

Each year, an estimated 6,000 migrant seasonal agriculture workers begin arriving in Wisconsin. Their arrival is a sign of spring, signaling that the growing season is about to begin and that the more than \$100 billion agriculture industry in Wisconsin is about to kick into high gear.

But this year, as the industry faces continued economic woes, it is also confronting a new challenge: how to protect the workers, and the communities they call home, from COVID-19.

It’s an immense undertaking – one that needed to reach every corner and nearly every county of the state. With the support of a \$322,420 AHW urgent response grant, the Wautoma-based Family Health La Clinica, Wisconsin’s leading community health center supporting migrant workers, has mounted a collaborative response.

“Our overall goal is to ensure the health and safety of workers, employers, and their communities,” said Laura Waldvogel, Family Health La Clinica CEO and chair of the collaborative response group. “We’re doing that through collaboration with a statewide, multisector group of individuals, education of employers and workers, and by providing screening and testing.”

The planning began in urgency in March, with representatives from Family Health La Clinica, employers, public health, government, and public safety joining farmworker and migrant advocacy groups in a unique collaboration. The initial planning group developed through the Wisconsin Farmworker’s Coalition, and has added members as the project has progressed.

“While on some issues there’s tension between the groups, we are all unified in our intent to do the right thing for the workers, for the employers, and for the communities,” said Waldvogel.

For the workers – deemed “essential” for their role in our state’s and nation’s food supply – complying with recommended social distancing or “safer at home” recommendations may be difficult. They often live in employer-provided group housing, take group transportation to job sites, and work side-by-side with their peers during long workdays.

The workers were in need of culturally appropriate health guidance to protect themselves while employers needed support navigating the ever-evolving health and safety guidance and implement appropriate safety precautions.

The coalition’s initial work focused on developing the information materials for workers and employers, conducting outreach to employers, and establishing guidance for workplace and housing health and safety assessments. As workers began arriving at their worksites, education and screening for exposure was provided, before they are scheduled to begin their jobs.

Leveraging federal funding through the State of Wisconsin, Family Health La Clinica was able to add COVID-19 testing to the menu of services they can provide to employers.

“When a state and a private funding entity support efforts like this to keep workers safe and keep communities safe, you see results,” said Waldvogel. “And we all benefit.”

In the first three months of the project, Family Health La Clinica staff and partners conducted 11 workplace assessments, visited over 30 employers, and provided education and testing for approximately 1,500 workers at farms, food processing plants, housing sites, and other agricultural worksites across the state. Testing at sites with large numbers of workers was made possible through a partnership with the State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin National Guard.

Alongside the critical health information and services provided, important discoveries were also made that guided their approach into the future.

Through the early testing provided, Family Health La Clinica found that, as of June 2020, less than 1 percent of the current workers tested have come to Wisconsin exposed to COVID-19, which helped shape safety guidance needed for the workers, helping them learn how to stay healthy and safe when they arrive in Wisconsin communities where cases of COVID-19 were spreading.

Project Title:	Education and Empowerment for Wisconsin Migrant Seasonal Agriculture Workers
Award:	\$322,420
Award Date:	April 2020
Primary Community Partner:	Family Health La Clinica
Additional Community Partners:	UMOS, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Seneca Foods Corporation, Lakeside Foods Corporation, Wisconsin Farmworker’s Coalition
Project Description:	Preventing and minimizing COVID-19 among migrant and seasonal agricultural workers and their employers in Wisconsin

The coalition also began work to map and track the statewide reach of migrant seasonal agriculture workers.

“We’ve been able to begin mapping the locations that our migrant seasonal agriculture workers are throughout the state, something that has never been done before,” explained Waldvogel, noting the future impact this will have on continued outreach and support for workers and employers around COVID-19, and the provision of other health services annually.

Along with continuing their focus on migrant seasonal agriculture workers through the fall harvest and into winter, the coalition also began looking at how

they could support similar industries, such as Wisconsin’s dairy workers.

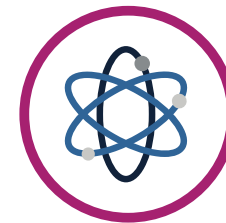
“We want to remove any barriers so that there’s no wrong door, and that people have what they need to stay healthy,” said Waldvogel.



PATHWAYS FOR PARTNERS

In fiscal year 2020, AHW continued to issue awards across four funding pathways. Through each, we focus on advancing three health priorities – heart health, healthy minds, and cancer – while also responding to other needs identified by community partners and researchers.

Our funding pathways span innovation and discovery from the cellular level to having societal impact and allow us to maximize the impact of our funding dollars:



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, health care, and community 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.



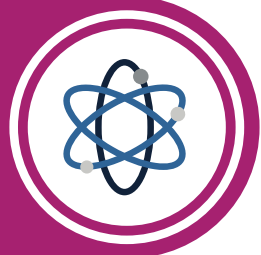
Population and Community Health

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 complex policies and systems to make good health practical and available to everyone in Wisconsin.



Basic, Clinical, and Translational Research

FOCUS ON

propelling promising work and ideas across biomedical research to increase discovery, accelerate the translation and dissemination of new knowledge, and develop effective and sustainable research partnerships.

PARTNERING FOR CHANGE

with basic science, clinical, population science and translational researchers at the Medical College of Wisconsin to advance the research and clinical care necessary to improve health in Wisconsin communities.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

- in Wisconsin's biomedical research landscape by:
- Investing grant dollars in innovative research and strategic collaborations that contribute to greater understanding of, and an increased capacity to address, the biological and genetic factors that influence health
 - Connecting basic, clinical, and translational investigators through programming to educate around Wisconsin's health needs and facilitate the sharing of ideas and resources
 - Influencing progress through both funding awards and programming initiatives that enhance the networks, skills and abilities of those involved in health research in Wisconsin.

PRODUCING OUTCOMES FOR A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

by developing innovative research and discovery, translating and disseminating new knowledge, and promoting effective partnerships

\$4.2 MILLION FUNDED IN FY20

INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	INVESTIGATORS
Collaborative Research into the Etiology and Treatment of Pediatric and Congenital Heart Disease \$3,000,000 7/1/2019 – 6/30/2024	Developing a research program focused on pediatric and congenital heart disease to develop new treatment strategies and to train the next generation of cardiovascular scientists	Joy Lincoln, PhD, FAHA, MCW Department of Pediatrics, Division of Cardiology
OTO Clinomics: A Precision Health and Outcomes Program in Otolaryngology \$1,200,000 1/1/2020 – 12/31/2024	Establishing a new program to bring personalized medicine to the field of otolaryngology, establishing a system-wide platform for collecting and analyzing demographic and outcomes data, as well as focused investigations into key disorders with high prevalence in Wisconsin to improve health care delivery in the state	David R. Friedland, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences

*Find a listing of each project's additional partners on AHW's website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Avoiding Health Disparities When Collecting Patient Data for Clinical Care and Pragmatic Research
- Dissecting Protein Quality Control Pathways in ALS
- Effect of Fructose-induced Changes in Renal Microvascular Function & Blood Pressure
- Engineering Inflammation-free CAR Therapy
- Illness Perceptions in Congestive Heart Failure
- Immune Cross-talk in Pregnancy and Preterm Birth
- MCW Tissue Bank
- Obesity Driven Dysregulation of the Endocannabinoid System in Chronic Pain
- Optimal Conditioning Regimen Intensity for Competing Risks Data in Myelodysplastic Syndromes

*Find a listing of each completed project with a summary of outcomes on AHW's website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects



2019 Changemakers in Science Research Symposium

On October 31, 2019, AHW hosted our third annual event bringing together MCW experts to share the knowledge and work being developed through investigator-initiated, collaborative research projects funded through AHW.





PATHWAY PROFILE

As a statewide philanthropy housed within the third largest private medical school in the nation, AHW's investment into cutting-edge and early-stage biomedical research reflects the crucial role that discovery and new knowledge play in finding solutions to the health challenges facing Wisconsin.

AHW's Basic, Clinical & Translational Research Pathway funds projects that span the T0-T5 spectrum, meaning they can range anywhere from gene discovery to impacting the social determinants of health.

"This is where so much of our MCW expertise lays," said Kristen Gardner-Volle, program manager overseeing the pathway. "We believe advancing new discovery and creating new knowledge is critical to impacting health in our state, and leads to better clinical care, new treatments, and real population-level results."

"What makes this pathway so unique is the focus on collaboration," said Gardner-Volle. "Funding opportunities are designed to bring researchers together, often across disciplines, to explore new areas of research or take current projects in a new direction that would not otherwise be possible."

Gardner-Volle works closely with applicants throughout the process to help them connect with AHW's mission and effectively communicate the importance of their research. After receiving funding, project members attend regular AHW learning community meetings designed to spur additional collaboration by bringing together researchers from various disciplines.

Projects must meet a very clear objective: Improve the health of the residents of Wisconsin.

"This is the heart of who we are as a funder," said Erin Fabian, program director for the endowment. "We were created through a generous gift when Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin converted from a not-for-profit to a for-profit, and the money we award belongs to, and should benefit, everyone in the state."

Fabian noted that projects have an immediate impact on human health, or advance a scientific field in a way that results in a long-term impact.

"This pathway is so crucial to our mission of making Wisconsin the healthiest state in the country. If we don't support researchers, our advancements in health will only go so far," said Fabian.

PROJECT PROFILE

AHW early-stage research funding is creating new knowledge on chronic pain that may benefit the lives of Wisconsin children today and for generations to come

Chronic pain is a health challenge often talked about for the severe impact it has on daily life for adults who suffer. But left out of the conversation is another critical patient population: Children.

According to Keri Hainsworth, PhD, associate professor of anesthesiology at the Medical College of Wisconsin and research director of the Jane B. Pettit Pain Management Center at Children's Wisconsin, one in four children has chronic pain.

Through a **\$200,000 AHW Basic, Clinical, and Translational Research award**, this two-year study aimed to better understand the body's endocannabinoid system, an internal system linked to everything from metabolism, inflammation, sleep and – importantly – pain processing. Through the grant, Hainsworth brought together MCW experts in pediatric pain, neuroscience, pharmacology, exercise science, and statistics to focus on this population of children who have chronic pain and obesity.

The goal was to build on studies in adults that have shown that the endocannabinoid system can be activated to suppress pain through exercise. So Hainsworth and her colleagues began evaluating how Iyengar yoga – a style of yoga often used in rehabilitation – impacts both the endocannabinoids circulating in the blood and the pain threshold of more than **155 adolescents** before and after holding a yoga pose for one minute at a time, for a total of three minutes.

"We're looking to see if the yoga pose will increase their levels of circulating endocannabinoids, but we're also looking for objective evidence that something's going on in their bodies," said Hainsworth. "If those endocannabinoids really are increased in their system, we should see that their pain threshold goes up."

The ultimate goal is to improve the health of children now and as they move into adulthood.

"They have a lifetime of disability ahead of them if nobody intervenes," said Hainsworth. "We don't want kids to suffer their whole lives. We want their lives to get better."

Project Title:	Obesity-Driven Dysregulation of the Endocannabinoid System in Chronic Pain
Award:	\$200,000
Award Date:	January 2018
Principal Investigator:	Keri Hainsworth, PhD, MCW Department of Anesthesiology
Co-Investigators:	Cecilia J. Hillard, PhD, MCW Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology Steven J. Weisman, MD, MCW Department of Anesthesiology Hershel Raff, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology
Collaborators:	Pippa M. Simpson, PhD, MCW Department of Pediatrics, Division of Quantitative Health Sciences Stacy Stolzman, PhD, Exercise Physiology, Concordia University
Project Description:	Understanding the contribution of endocannabinoid system dysregulation in pain processing in adolescents with obesity.



Keri Hainsworth, PhD



Education and Workforce Development

FOCUS ON

propelling promising work and ideas to develop and grow a health workforce that is increasingly accessible, equipped, and representative of the diversity of the community being served.

PARTNERING FOR CHANGE

with today's leaders, early career professionals, and the next generation of leaders across biomedical research, academic medicine, and community and public health.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

in the health research, health care, and community and public health workforce by:

- Investing grant dollars in viable solutions that support the development of educational programs, enhance cross-disciplinary networks, and boost existing or new workforce development efforts
- Connecting individuals, agencies, and programs across disciplines through programming that supports the sharing of ideas and knowledge
- Influencing action through both funding and programming that supports sustainable workforce solutions to better meet Wisconsin's evolving health needs

PRODUCING OUTCOMES FOR A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

by strengthening community and academic capacity, cultivating leadership in public health and research, promoting effective partnerships, and supporting the development of effective programs, policies, and practices.

\$1.3 MILLION FUNDED IN FY20

INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	INVESTIGATORS / PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
2020 Annual Public Health Conference \$5,000 2/24/2020 – 8/31/2020	Exploring new topics or skills that challenge current thinking and practice, collaborate in new ways to break down silos in the public health system, and initiate plans to affect policy change to improve health.	Wisconsin Public Health Association
2020 PATCH Symposium: Best Practices in Adolescent Health Care \$5,000 12/26/2019 – 5/12/2021	Bringing together a multidisciplinary audience of Wisconsin health care professionals to learn, share, and grow as adolescent health champions and advocates.	Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health / PATCH Program
AUTO-TBI: Autonomic Function After Concussion (aka Mild Traumatic Brain Injury) \$6,166 5/27/2020 – 8/11/2020	Providing an 11-week student research experience.	Lindsay Nelson, PhD, ABPP, MCW Department of Neurosurgery

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	INVESTIGATORS / PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
AWAARE: Arming Wisconsin Against Antibiotic Resistance \$5,000 11/21/2019 – 3/23/2020	Educating Wisconsin facilities on how to detect infection and control its spread across patients.	MCW Department of Medicine - Division of Infectious Diseases
Building Precision Medicine Capacity for Innovative Patient Care \$518,120 2/1/2020 – 1/31/2024	Developing precision medicine education for physicians to prevent and treat disease by accounting for individual variation in genes, environment, and lifestyle.	John Meurer, MD, MCW Institute for Health & Equity
Creative Care Institute \$5,000 2/12/2020 – 8/3/2020	Engaging informal and professional caregivers, with an emphasis on expanding diversity, for older adults in long-term care to learn evidence-based communication and community building techniques.	TimeSlips Creative Storytelling, Inc.
Doctorate in Public Health Program: Building Leadership Capacity \$702,478 2/1/2020 – 6/30/2024	Developing a doctorate in Public Health program that will provide advanced public health practice training to prepare individuals in Wisconsin for senior level leadership positions.	John Meurer, MD, MCW Institute for Health & Equity
Effect of PPE on Incidence of COVID-19 in a Ventilator Capable Nursing Home \$6,166 5/27/2020 – 8/26/2020	Providing an 10-week student research experience to investigate one Wisconsin nursing home's experience with COVID-19.	L. Silvia Munoz-Price, MD, PhD, MCW Department of Medicine
General Internal Medicine Lakefront Refresher \$5,000 11/6/2019 – 8/27/2020	Providing the most up-to-date information in the field of General Internal Medicine to practicing physicians and advanced practice providers.	MCW Department of Medicine - Division of General Internal Medicine
Healthiest State Agenda Setting Convening \$2,500 9/3/2019 – 11/25/2019	Building relationships between public health leaders to support future action, reinforce shared understanding of the role of power in shaping conditions of health, review and refine health equity priorities and identify actions, and explore options for collective action.	Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH), UW Population Health Institute
Identification of the Regeneration Competent Cardiomyocyte in Mouse and Man \$6,166 5/27/2020 – 8/11/2020	Providing an 11-week student research experience to inform strategies to promote regeneration of the cardiac muscle.	Michaela Patterson, PhD, MCW Cell Biology, Neurobiology, and Anatomy Program
Student leadership Development Initiative \$5,000 2/12/2020 – 12/31/2021	Helping students recognize and develop effective leadership styles as future physician leaders.	MCW Institute for Health & Equity - Division of Community Health
Targeting JAK2- STAT5 Signaling in Apalutamide- Resistant Prostate Cancer \$6,166 5/27/2020 – 8/26/2020	Providing an 8-week student research experience to investigate prostate cancer growth in Apalutamide-resistant setting.	Marja Nevalainen, PhD, MCW Pathology Program
Wisconsin Community Health Worker Network Kick-off Summit \$5,000 10/1/2019 – 1/23/2020	Bringing together Wisconsin community health workers (CHWs) to learn about and participate in the reestablishment and structure of the WI CHW Network and provide skill-building opportunities around care-coordination, sustainability, and advocacy.	UniteMKE Pathways Community Hub

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	INVESTIGATORS / PRIMARY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
Wisconsin Enrollment Conference \$4,692 9/23/2019 – 11/26/2019	Supporting enrollment assisters and stakeholders to better navigate the highly complex and disparate rules and processes of Medicaid, Marketplace, and Affordable Care Act (ACA) programs by sharing the latest regulatory and policy changes.	Covering Wisconsin, UW-Madison
Wisconsin Physical/Occupational Therapist Symposium on Pediatric Chronic Pain and Obesity. Treating Children and Teens with Obesity: What do Physical/Occupational Therapists Need to Know? \$4,981 2/24/2020 – 6/23/2021	Providing continuing education to practicing PTs/OTs in Wisconsin to better address the connection between physical pain and obesity among pediatric patients in effective and supportive manners to improve health and wellness.	MCW Department of Anesthesiology
Wisconsin Recovery Housing Huddle Up \$4,175 12/30/2019 – 3/23/2020	Providing an opportunity for individuals who refer, support and work with persons affected by substance use disorders to learn about the ethical, operational, and programmatic best practices in recovery residences.	WisHope

* Find a listing of each project’s additional partners on AHW’s website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects

COMPLETED
PROJECTS

- AWAARE: Arming Wisconsin Against Antibiotic Resistance
- Healthiest State Agenda Setting Convening
- Wisconsin Community Health Worker Network Kick-off Summit
- Wisconsin Enrollment Conference
- Wisconsin Recovery Housing Huddle Up

*Find a listing of each completed project with a summary of outcomes on AHW’s website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects



PATHWAY PROFILE

In Wisconsin and across the country, there is a shortage of health workers. Rapidly advancing technology and changing health needs also mean new training will be needed to meet the demand across medicine, public health, and health education.

Since 2004, AHW has taken this challenge head-on by investing in projects that have created new educational programs and workforce pipelines. Today, AHW has carved out a dedicated pathway aimed at equipping partners to develop innovative solutions to health workforce needs.

“The Education and Workforce Development Pathway is designed to build and support the boots on the ground—those working to improve health through public health, government, or nonprofits as well as those training to become practitioners,” said Tracy Wilson, program manager overseeing the pathway. “We want to invest in resources and programs that will help those doing the work today, and for years to come.”

The emphasis is on building capacity, making the workforce more accessible, more equipped, and more representative of the communities they serve. Wilson noted that although most projects focus on one of these goals, they often touch on all.

“The pathway takes a holistic approach to workforce development,” said Christina Ellis, AHW program director overseeing AHW’s community-led projects. “We have supported innovative curriculum development for formal degree programs alongside programming and events, strategies to increase diversity in medicine and public health, and projects that encourage interest at the middle and high school levels.”

In the past fiscal year, AHW awarded **\$1.3 million** in funding to both community-led and MCW-led projects aimed at addressing Wisconsin’s evolving health workforce challenges. The funding has launched new projects that will develop and prepare our health workforce, while creating student research opportunities, and events to build the capacity of today’s workforce.

Through open calls for applications, the pathway invites projects to put forward new and promising ideas. Projects must demonstrate a clear benefit to the people of Wisconsin and address current or future health needs of the state.

“These opportunities bridge where we can partner with MCW and the community to advance the workforce in so many ways,” said Erin Fabian, AHW program director overseeing AHW’s research-led projects. “The impact of our funding is being seen across the state.”

Furthering the AHW Impact: Educating the Health Workforce of the Future

Since 2004, our investments have led to the creation of the innovative curriculums, degree programs, student research experiences, pipeline, and pathway programs, including more than \$16.8 million to support the development of nine degree programs at MCW that are building the health workforce for today and the future, including:

- Public and Community Health PhD Program Planning Support (2005, \$40,000)
- Master of Public Health Distance Learning Program (2006, \$2,200,848)
- Public and Community Health PhD Program (2006, \$3,576,864)
- Community Medical Education Program: Planning Phase (2012, \$4,023,658)
- Anesthesia Master of Science Program (2015, \$969,426)
- School of Pharmacy Design and Development (2015, \$3,024,132)
- Global Health Equity Master of Science Program (2019, \$488,683)
- Genetic Counseling Master of Science Program (2019, \$1,301,461)
- Precision Medicine Master of Science Program (2020, \$518,120)
- Public Health DrPH Program (2020, \$702,478)

PROJECT PROFILE

Building the health workforce of tomorrow through investment in a precision medicine education program aimed at improving diagnoses, treatments and patient health outcomes in Wisconsin

As health care practitioners worldwide continue to advance tools to fight disease, the field of precision medicine has emerged as a driving force toward data-driven, personalized health care. Precision medicine uses the knowledge of a patient’s genetic make-up, environment, and lifestyle to understand, prevent, diagnose, and treat disease more quickly and precisely. While it was originally used to treat rare diseases, today the use of precision medicine is growing thanks to its ability to tailor treatments to individual patient needs.

“Precision medicine matches patients with therapies that are more likely to be effective, safer, and therefore less expensive, too,” said John Meurer, MD, MBA, director of the MCW Institute for Health & Equity. “For example, the science of drugs and the study of genes can be combined to prescribe better, safer drugs the first time and to more accurately determine the right dose.”

Yet the approach is new, and both today’s clinicians and tomorrow’s health practitioners need training in order to bring the promise and benefits to patients.

At the Medical College of Wisconsin, a targeted program focused on expanding knowledge, understanding, and use of precision medicine is being launched to do just that. A new Master of Science in precision medicine degree and certificate program is being developed with the support of a four-year, **\$518,120 AHW education and workforce development investment**.

While the program will initially enroll MCW students and local practitioners, the goal is to shift to an online model that is open to physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and genetic counselors nationwide. This will enable the knowledge and expertise of Wisconsin’s leading precision medicine experts to impact patients far beyond Wisconsin.

“More clinicians trained in precision medicine is expected to positively impact patient outcomes,” said Meurer.

Project Title:	Building Precision Medicine Capacity for Innovative Patient Care
Award:	\$518,120
Award Date:	February 2020
Principal Investigator:	John Meurer, MD, MBA, Institute for Health & Equity
Co-Investigator:	Raul A. Urrutia, MD, MCW Department of Surgery
Project Description:	Developing a precision medicine education for physicians to prevent and treat disease by accounting for individual variation in genes, environment and lifestyle





Population and Community Health Studies

FOCUS ON

propelling promising work and ideas in population and community health studies to establish evidence and build resources that can inform programs, policies, and practices to advance health equity in Wisconsin.

PARTNERING FOR CHANGE

with public and community health professionals and Medical College of Wisconsin researchers.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

by enabling our partners to develop promising practices by:

- Investing in grant awards that support multi-sector, multi-stakeholder collaborations that produce actionable knowledge
- Connecting researchers and communities through programming that seeks solutions through collaboration
- Influencing action by enabling our partners to develop the evidence and resources they need to develop measurable, replicable, and scalable approaches to Wisconsin's complex health needs

PRODUCING OUTCOMES FOR A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

by developing innovative research and discovery, translating and disseminating new knowledge, and developing effective programs, policies, and practices.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Avoiding Health Disparities When Collecting Patient Data for Clinical Care and Pragmatic Research

Illness Perceptions in Congestive Heart Failure

Reclaiming Our Neighborhoods Coalition Sustainability Planning

*Find a listing of each completed project with a summary of outcomes on AHW's website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects



PATHWAY PROFILE

Since issuing its first funding awards in 2004, AHW has invested in both community-led and MCW-led population and community health studies. The investments have resulted in new evidence or solutions to challenging health problems – and, today, this success has led to a new, focused approach to investing in building evidence that can drive action.

“Previously, we funded impactful population health studies, and we funded work that drives positive action,” said Tim Meister, AHW population and community health studies program manager. “But over time, we recognized that to help our partners build the evidence they need to inform policies and practices that produce health outcomes, we needed a dedicated pathway that explicitly made that possible.”

This re-focused approach has become a dedicated Population and Community Health Studies Pathway, one of four pathways through which AHW releases funding awards and capacity-building programming.

While additional AHW pathways aim to promote health education and workforce development, advance scientific research and discovery, and affect change in the systems that drive health, this pathway was created to help community and MCW research partners build an evidence base that will support changes in policies or practices that impact health.

“Through this pathway, we have an incredible opportunity to help our partners in communities and in research gather data that will allow decisionmakers to take action,” said Christina Ellis, AHW program director overseeing AHW's commitment to community-led impact. “Not only is this core to our mission to impact health, but it combines the strengths of AHW from our placement as a statewide health philanthropy housed within an academic medical center.”

While the commitment to funding studies in population health isn't new, the approach AHW is carving out is, with newly funded projects now being asked to go beyond the study phase to do more.

“We want to provide the time to conduct research and test an idea to improve the health of a population,” said Meister. “But the defining point of what we seek through this pathway is the action stage. We want the new knowledge generated through the discovery and engagement stages to be applied to health issues in Wisconsin in ways that can create change.”

Projects will now be tasked with expanding beyond traditional academic dissemination of study results to produce the kinds of materials that communicate better to their target audiences: White papers, policy briefs, public awareness campaigns, or anything similar.

“We want each project to ultimately result in a product that will speak to the key decisionmakers who are in a position to drive change on that particular issue,” said Meister.

PROJECT PROFILE

AHW investment in eliminating health disparities, creating infrastructure, and growing the next generation of change agents.

Milwaukee is the most racially and ethnically diverse county in Wisconsin, with about **53% of residents** having an ethnic minority background. It’s also a county with significant disparities of poverty, education, income, employment, and health.

These social and economic factors – such as a person’s neighborhood, education level, access to health care and potential language barriers, among others, are referred to as “social determinants of health.” These social determinants of health are often the cause of health inequities.

Funded in 2017 and active during this reporting period, this **\$2.8 million, six-year award** aims to reduce the burden of chronic disease and health disparities in **10 high-risk minority communities** through a coordinated effort that will include direct patient intervention and augmentation of existing infrastructure, while supporting efforts to grow the next generation of change agents in the community.

The project is led by principal investigator Leonard Egede, MD, MS, professor of medicine, chief of the MCW division of general internal medicine, and director of MCW’s Center for Advancing Population Science.

“We spent two years conducting focus groups and interviews, and immersed ourselves in the central Milwaukee community to better understand its needs,” said Egede. Going forward, the program team will work to reduce the burden of chronic disease and eliminate health disparities in minority communities, as well as to grow the next generation of researchers.

The project will develop a coordinated effort through a novel approach that is building collaborative community relationships and using scientific rigor to identify sustainable ways to improve the health of these Milwaukee neighborhoods today, and for generations to come.

“Chronic stress drives poor health in a community,” Egede explained. “Removing one stressor, such as access to health care services, doesn’t take care of all things, so we must shift the paradigm to incorporate social determinants into our clinical care models.”

Project Title:	COME ALIVE MILWAUKEE: Community empowerment and lifestyle intervention for ethnic minorities
Award:	\$2,800,000
Award Date:	October 2017
Principal Investigator:	Leonard E. Egede, MD, MS, MCW Center for Advancing Population Science
Project Description:	Reducing the burden of chronic disease and eliminating health disparities in high-risk minority communities in Milwaukee



Leonard Egede, MD, MS (right) kicks off the work of COME ALIVE MILWAUKEE with community partners.



Policy, Systems, and Culture Change

FOCUS ON

propelling promising work and ideas to change the social, economic, health, and health care policies and systems that can create lasting, population-level health improvements across Wisconsin.

PARTNERING FOR CHANGE

with community-based nonprofit or government organizations that can lead collaborative, cross-sector coalitions.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

- by supporting our partners in creating lasting changes in health outcomes by:
- Investing in grant awards that help community-led coalitions change the systems that determine how we live, work, learn, and play
 - Connecting partners across sectors through programming that builds the skills and capacity for creating systems change
 - Influencing long-term, sustainable change through both funding and programming initiatives that support the sharing of ideas and knowledge

PRODUCING OUTCOMES FOR A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

by promoting effective partnerships, translating and disseminating new knowledge, and developing effective programs, policies, and practices.

\$1.6 MILLION FUNDED IN FY20

INVESTMENTS

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRIMARY COMMUNITY & ACADEMIC PARTNERS
Behavioral Health Crisis Response Transformation in Douglas County \$475,347 1/1/2020-12/31/2022	Changing the crisis response system in Douglas County to one that works to prevent crisis as well as one that is more efficient, effective, and person centered.	Community: North Country Independent Living Academic: Michelle Broaddus, PhD, MCW Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
Healthcare Collaborative Against Sex Trafficking (HCAST) \$399,618 1/1/2020-12/31/2022	Developing protocols and workflow changes, treatment guidelines, and community referral processes as well as a vetting process of community resources by those with lived experience to improve access to quality support and care for adult victims of sex trafficking.	Community: Convergence Resource Center Academic: Angela Rabbit, DO, MCW Department of Pediatrics

PROJECT NAME & AWARD	PROJECT AIM	PRIMARY COMMUNITY & ACADEMIC PARTNERS
Integrated Public Health Nursing Training and Internship Program (IPHN Training) \$399,962 1/1/2020-12/31/2023	Developing a system that will infuse the nursing curriculum with education on the social determinants of health and provide nursing students with opportunities to understand, engage with, and experience public health fields in order to build a workforce that is able to address both acute care and community needs.	Community: Milwaukee Area Health Education Center Academic: Joni Williams, MD, MPH, MCW Department of Medicine
Project Zero: Every One Matters \$316,760 1/1/2020-12/31/2022	Reducing the rate of suicide in the tri-county region by implementing a Zero Suicide framework to improve the ability of the health care systems beyond psychiatry, as well as and non-clinical systems, such as workplaces, to support individuals in crisis and prevent suicide.	Community: Winnebago County Health Department Academic: Sara Kohlbeck, MPH, MCW Comprehensive Injury Center

* Find a listing of each project's additional partners on AHW's website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Born Learning: Portage County Rural Community Collaboration for Optimal Child Development

Implementing Systems Change to Impact Veteran Health and Well-being

Marshfield School-based Mental Health Consortium Strategic Planning

*Find a listing of each completed project with a summary of outcomes on AHW's website at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects





PATHWAY PROFILE

Our health is shaped by systems – from the health care systems, public health systems, and food systems to the economic systems, housing systems, justice systems, transportation systems that impact how we live, work, play, and access care in our everyday lives.

At AHW, the recognition of how connected these – and many other – systems are to our health is an important part of improving health in Wisconsin.

“Changing the systems that impact our health is critical to making healthy choices practical and available to all,” said Maureen Busalacchi, AHW policy, systems, and culture change program manager. “If we can support a community in making a particular system work for the most vulnerable among us, the result is that the health of everyone in our community – and our state – benefits.”

It is precisely the impact that AHW has aimed to catalyze through its Policy, Systems, and Culture Change Pathway, one of four dedicated pathways through which AHW issues funding awards and capacity-building programming that focuses on supporting community-led projects impact health issues at their root causes.

“As a health funder, we recognize that we need to look upstream from today’s health outcomes and improve the systems that drive how we live, work, learn, play, and receive health care,” said Christina Ellis, AHW program director overseeing AHW’s commitment to community-led change. “Through this pathway, we aim to catalyze longer-lasting change across the state.”

“I like to think of it as building something that is sustainable to address one complex challenge impacting health so that we can go on to the next problem,” said Busalacchi. “And, importantly, creating systems change means working to assure that the good, positive impacts don’t go away after the funding is finished – it continues.”

At its inception, the pathway’s focus was grounded in evidence supporting the approach with a focus on addressing disparities in health outcomes.

“Systems are what hold inequities in place,” said Busalacchi. “But systems can also be shifted to ensure equity. That is what we want to see.”

Today, AHW’s Policy, Systems, and Culture Change Pathway continues to invest in community-led projects that are creating change both within communities and across the entire state.



The pathway is supporting a growing number of projects in addressing community-specific needs that range from reducing the long-term impact of witnessing violence on Milwaukee children to establishing a community-based system to prevent suicide in Fond du Lac County, while also supporting statewide changes such as establishing a system to promote high-quality care at free and charitable clinics, developing and then expanding adoption of patient-friendly prescription labels, and expanding immunization access at pharmacies.

While funded projects vary in their particular focus, they each come back to the AHW mission: To improve the health of people in Wisconsin.

“These projects are focused on how to create the best outcomes in health and well-being for people impacted,” said Busalacchi. “I can’t think of a better reason to create change than that.”

“Systems are what hold inequities in place, but systems can also be shifted to ensure equity. That is what we want to see.”

Maureen Busalacchi, AHW Policy, Systems, and Culture Change Program Manager

PROJECT PROFILE

AHW funding working to increase access to safe housing for vulnerable women in Milwaukee County to reduce their risk of violence, injury, and poor health outcomes.

The Milwaukee-based nonprofit the Benedict Center noticed a crisis among a population of women it served – those in the street-based sex trade – when data pointed to a solution: Housing. Women in the Benedict Center’s programs often reported being homeless. To build safer and healthier lives, they needed supportive programming, which the Benedict Center could provide, but, importantly, they needed a safe, stable place to call home.

Recognizing the unbreakable connection of housing as a root contributor to good health, the center’s leadership looked to the existing housing support system to build a solution. The only problem? There was no clear entry point for the women they served as they were largely overlooked in the current system. It presented an opportunity to change the system to work better for these vulnerable women, and for the community as a whole.

Under a three-year, \$349,886 AHW investment through the Policy, Systems, and Culture Change pathway, the Benedict Center’s work to address the connection between housing and good health for a vulnerable population is underway. After launching in 2018, an important first step has been to redefine for the community what support is needed to help women exit the street-based sex trade.

“Support is not law enforcement ticketing or arresting women, and jail is not a recovery program,” said Jeanne Geraci, executive director at the Benedict Center. “Support is about finding people who believe in them. At Benedict Center, we do. And we’re in it for the long term – walking with them every step of the way.”

The step toward stable housing is critical, experts say, pointing to a lack of safe housing as a factor increasing exposure to violence, substance abuse, and mental illness, as well as other poor health outcomes. By making it easier for women to get the shelter they need, the ultimate goal is to help them find permanent housing and services to help them find employment and improve their health and well-being.

Alongside additional project collaborators including the Milwaukee Continuum of Care and Impact 2-1-1, the project is working to change the housing system policies to work for the communities most vulnerable. Women with lived experience are a critical partner to the project – helping to guide key changes to the systems used to assess service needs.

“We’re not the first social service agency these women will interact with, and we may not be the last,” said Geraci. “But if we can establish any lifeline to a woman, build trust, and help them navigate their way to better health – then we have done our work.”

Project Title:	Access to Safe Shelter & Housing for Women in Street-based Sex Work
Award:	\$349,886
Award Date:	January 2018
Primary Community Organization:	Benedict Center
Primary Academic Partner:	Staci Young, PhD, MCW Department of Family and Community Medicine
Community Partners:	IMPACT 2-1-1, Milwaukee Continuum of Care
Project Description:	Increasing access to safe housing and improved health for women in street prostitution in Milwaukee County

“Support is about finding people who believe in them. At Benedict Center, we do.”

Jeanne Geraci, Executive Director
Benedict Center



Ongoing Commitments & Impact

CONTINUATION OF THE ADVANCING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

TITLE:	Advancing Behavioral Health Initiative
FOCUS:	Eight-year commitment to advance mental and behavioral health outcomes in 10 Wisconsin communities. The initiative combines funding with the resources, time, and supports that partners need to develop strategies, put them into action, and evaluate their impact for sustainable change.
AWARD:	Up to \$20 million
PROGRESS:	<p>In FY20, each of the 10 projects entered the third year of their implementation phase, carrying out work to impact health in their communities. Alongside their work, AHW continued its unique learning community model to support each project. During this reporting period, the following learning community meetings were held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">September 2019, Green Bay: forging collaboration among health systems to better support the mental health of Brown County residentsNovember 2019, La Crosse: utilizing a trauma-informed and resilience framework to meet the needs of local residentsMarch, April, May, 2020, virtual: connecting colleagues from across the state to share stories of challenges and obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and share useful tools and resources to overcome hurdles to their work

MCW SCHOOL OF PHARMACY GRADUATES FIRST CLASS

TITLE:	An Innovative Model for Educating the Pharmacists of the Future: Pharmacy School Design & Development
FOCUS:	Established a School of Pharmacy curriculum to prepare pharmacists to provide quality care in a team setting, reshaping pharmacist training in Wisconsin to focus on the pharmacist of the future.
AWARD:	\$3,024,132
ACHIEVEMENT:	The MCW School of Pharmacy's Inaugural Class of 2020 graduated with their Doctor of Pharmacy degrees and are stepping forward to serve the community in a variety of different practice areas in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout fiscal year 2020, AHW had 93 active projects. During this reporting period, active and completed AHW investments continued to make notable progress or achievements, including:

CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVE: CREATING AN INTEGRATED HUB

TITLE:	Community and Cancer Science Network
FOCUS:	Create and sustain an integrated hub to bring together community, research, and academics to tackle breast and lung cancer disparities.
AWARD:	\$1.6 million
PROGRESS:	In FY20, the project entered year two of a five-year, \$1.6 million award to create and sustain an integrated hub to coordinate across community, research, and academics. With an advisory team, the project has developed a framework centered around equity and justice in order to transform partnerships and drive meaningful and sustained impacts on cancer disparities, academic medicine, and community needs. The hub is currently providing oversight and leadership in the development of the three programmatic initiatives: multi-sector, collaborative workgroups focused on key issues around these disparities; a cancer disparities pilot curriculum for research and community stakeholders; and a mammographic quality initiative. The initiatives are developing funding proposals to carry out their work to impact cancer disparities in Wisconsin.





Our Process

The MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium) and AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC) follow standard request for application (RFA) processes, including a multi-stage application and review process for all funding awards.

MCW-LED PROJECT (REP) APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The MCW-led research and education funding awards are distributed from AHW’s Research and Education Program (REP) investment allocation through a multi-level review process. REP REAC-initiated proposals are received upon invitation, include the submission of a letter of intent and full proposal, and involve additional work with REP staff and AHW Scientific Consultant to ensure the proposal’s alignment with AHW’s mission and vision. All letters of intent and full proposal 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. REP investigator-initiated Basic, Clinical, and Translational Research Pathway proposals are awarded through a competitive application process, and receive review for scientific merit by a panel of either basic science experts or clinical/population science experts, depending on the proposed research, as well as an external review by a content expert. REAC-approved awards are shared with the MCW Consortium and advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination.

AHW Learning Event Support awards are distributed in adherence to the resource allocation and review process approved by the Consortium and REAC. These smaller, rolling funding awards follow a review process that includes submission of a written application and AHW staff review and approval.

HWPP & REP

The Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program (HWPP) is dedicated to community-academic partnerships for health

The Research and Education Program (REP) is dedicated to advancing health through research and education initiatives

COMMUNITY-LED PROJECT (HWPP) APPLICATION PROCEDURES

AHW’s community-led funding awards are distributed from AHW’s Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program (HWPP) investment allocation through a competitive application process that includes a multi-level review and assessment. All submissions are screened by AHW staff to determine that all eligibility, content, and submission requirements are fulfilled. Community-led project proposals begin with submission of brief proposals that go through a multi-level qualitative and quantitative assessment by an external merit review panel. Meritorious proposals are invited to submit a full proposal for review of merit and alignment with the AHW Five-Year Plan by the Consortium before consideration of approval and advancement to the MCW Board of Trustees for final funding determination.

AHW Learning Event Support awards are distributed in adherence to the resource allocation and review process approved by the Consortium and REAC in alignment with the AHW Five-Year Plan. These smaller, rolling funding awards follow a review process that includes submission of a written application and AHW staff review and approval.

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 and criteria approved by the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation, Inc.

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS & 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. Reports are submitted on an established timeframe consistent within the funding mechanism for each award. Multi-year awards are reviewed for progress annually by the appropriate AHW oversight body. Project updates and outcomes are posted on our funded project database at ahwendowment.org/fundedprojects.

MCW Consortium on Public & Community Health

The MCW Consortium on Public & 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 and 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. Meetings of the Consortium are open to the public, in accordance with the law. Agendas and minutes approved by the Consortium are posted online at ahwendowment.org/Consortium.



Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH*

Senior Associate Dean and Director, Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
Professor, Anesthesiology MCW



Genyne L. Edwards, JD

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Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD (Chair)*

Senior Vice President for Strategic Academic Partnerships; Professor of Population Health; Founding Director, Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment; Founding Director and Board Member, Kern National Network for Caring and Character in Medicine, MCW



John R. Raymond, Sr., MD

President and Chief Executive Officer, MCW



Rebecca Rice, MA

Chief Executive Officer, NorthLakes Community Clinic



Tony Shields, MSM

President & CEO, Wisconsin Philanthropy Network



Joy R. Tapper, MPA (Chair)*

Executive Director, Milwaukee Health Care Partnership

AHW Research & Education Advisory Committee

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 health care and public health workforce.



Ivor Benjamin, MD

Director, Cardiovascular Center; Professor of Medicine, Physiology, Pharmacology and Toxicology, Cell Biology, Neurobiology and Anatomy, Surgery; Program Director, CVC T32 Training Program, MCW



Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH (Chair)*

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Cecilia J. Hillard, PhD

Associate Dean for Research; Professor; Director, Neuroscience Research Center MCW



William J. Hueston, MD

Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education and Associate Provost of Education MCW



Joseph E. Kerschner, MD (Chair)*

Provost and Executive Vice President, Dean, School of Medicine MCW



Christopher P. Kops, CPA, MBA

Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Operating Officer, MCW



Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD*

Senior Vice President for Strategic Academic Partnerships; Professor of Population Health; Founding Director, Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment; Founding Director and Board Member, Kern National Network for Caring and Character in Medicine, MCW



Ann B. Nattinger, MD, MPH, MACP

Associate Provost for Research; Senior Associate Dean for Research, School of Medicine; Professor of Medicine, Lady Riders Professor of Breast Cancer Research MCW

* Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, joined the Consortium in September 2019. Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, served as chair through September 2019. Joy R. Tapper, MPA, began service as chair in October 2019.

* Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, joined the REAC in September 2019 and began service as chair in October 2019. Joseph E. Kerschner, MD, served as chair through September 2019. Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, served on the board through September 2019.

INVESTMENT SUMMARY

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 Order of the Insurance Commissioner.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

An independent 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, 2020 and 2019.

The following pages reflect the financial position for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019 and the activities and changes in net assets for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020.

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
Statements of Financial Position
As of June 30, 2020 and 2019
(in thousands)

	2020	2019
Assets:		
Investments, at fair value:		
Spendable income funds	\$ 63,918	\$ 66,171
Endowed funds	375,809	390,510
Total investments, at fair value	439,727	456,681
Total assets	\$ 439,727	\$ 456,681
Liabilities and net assets:		
Liabilities		
Due to The Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc.	\$ 448	\$ 226
Total liabilities	448	226
Net assets with donor restrictions	439,279	456,455
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 439,727	\$ 456,681

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020
(in thousands)

	HWPP*	REP**	TOTAL
Changes in net assets without donor restrictions:			
Net assets with donor restrictions released from restrictions	\$ 5,694	\$ 13,724	\$ 19,418
Program Expenditures:			
Faculty salaries	633	3,458	4,091
Staff salaries	895	4,587	5,482
Fringe benefits	314	1,610	1,924
Services, supplies, and other	280	4,069	4,349
Payments to community partners	3,572	-	3,572
Total expenditures	\$ 5,694	\$ 13,724	\$ 19,418
Increase (decrease) in net assets without donor restrictions	-	-	-
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Changes in net assets with donor restrictions:			
Contributions	\$ 1,163	\$ 626	\$ 1,789
Investment return	331	122	453
Net assets released from restrictions	(5,694)	(13,724)	(19,418)
Decrease in net assets with donor restrictions	(4,200)	(12,976)	(17,176)
Net assets with donor restrictions at beginning of year	\$ 188,871	\$ 267,584	\$ 456,455
Net assets with donor restrictions at end of year	\$ 184,671	\$ 254,608	\$ 439,279

* Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program
** Research and Education Program

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020
(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.

COMMITMENTS:

	Grants ¹ Awarded	Grant ² Expenditures	Amount Lapsed	Amount Remaining to be Spent
Grants Awarded from Inception to June 30, 2019:				
Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program	\$ 75,912	\$ 56,776	\$ 4,488	\$ 14,648
Research and Education Program	190,803	123,967	13,616	53,220
Program Development by AHW Staff	5,500	2,236	2,977	287
SUBTOTAL	\$ 272,215	\$ 182,979	\$ 21,081	\$ 68,155
Grants Awarded from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020:				
Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program	\$ 5,232	\$ 4,415	\$ 331	\$ 486
Research and Education Program	6,554	11,864	479	(5,789)
Program Development by AHW Staff ³	(467)	1,055	(1,476)	(46)
SUBTOTAL	\$ 11,319	\$ 17,334	\$ (666)	\$ (5,349)
Outstanding commitments June 30, 2020	\$ 283,534	\$ 200,313	\$ 20,415	\$ 62,806

¹ Reflects grants awarded net of grant reductions made due to the economic recession that began in December 2007
² Reflects life-to-date expenditures related to grants awarded
³ Reflects adjustments to remove prior year administrative program commitments

Our Team

LEADERSHIP



Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH
Senior Associate Dean and Director,
Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
Professor, Anesthesiology
MCW



Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD
Senior Vice President for Strategic Academic
Partnerships
Professor of Population Health
Founding Director, Advancing a Healthier
Wisconsin Endowment
Founding Director and Board Member, Kern
National Network for Caring and Character in
Medicine
MCW

Diversity Statement

AHW and the Consortium are subject to, comply with and affirm the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policy of the Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc. The MCW Consortium is committed to optimizing the talents of people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives as a means of improving the health of the residents of Wisconsin. AHW will continue to be equally accessible to all qualified persons without regard to an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, predisposing genetic characteristic, or military status. This policy represents AHW and MCW's commitment to nondiscriminatory practices and affirms its value for fair treatment of all qualified applicants and employees.

STAFF

- Kate Beadle**
Program Coordinator – Compliance
- Laura Bennett**
Administrative Assistant
- Maureen Busalacchi**
Program Manager – Policy, Systems &
Culture Change Pathway
- Sarah Deering**
Senior Communications Consultant
- Christina Ellis**
Program Director – HWPP
- Erin Fabian, JD**
Program Director – REP

- Kristen Gardner-Volle, MNM**
Program Manager – Basic, Clinical &
Translational Research Pathway
- Shari Hagedorn**
Program Coordinator – Operations
- Karen Hess, MA**
Communications Specialist
- Amy Homel, MS**
Director of Administration &
Continuous Improvement
- Autum Kowalczyk, MBA**
Business Manager – Compliance

- Mark McNally, PhD**
AHW Scientific Consultant – Basic Science
- Tim Meister, MA**
Program Manager – Population &
Community Health Studies Pathway
- Liliana Pezzin, PhD, JD**
AHW Scientific Consultant – Clinical/
Population Science
- Abby Sokol-Roberts**
Program Coordinator – Compliance
- Tracy Wilson, MPH**
Program Manager – Education &
Workforce Development Pathway



In memory of our colleague,
co-worker, and friend
Shari A. Hagedorn
1976 - 2020





Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment
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