



2021 Call for Applications: Innovations to Advance Wisconsin's Health Workforce

Merit Review Panels

The review panels for community-led and MCW-led submissions consist of Wisconsin-based individuals with a broad range of expertise related to:

- Familiarity with Wisconsin's health needs
- Familiarity with Wisconsin's health workforce data, trends, gaps, and opportunities across health field
- Understanding of best practices in pipeline programs, adult education and continuing education
- Knowledge of health equity as it relates to Wisconsin's health workforce and Wisconsin's health



Laura Conklin, MPH
Health Officer and Director
City of Wauwatosa Health
Department

Ms. Conklin is currently the Director of Community Health Initiatives with the American Academy of Pediatrics. Until very recently, she was the Health Officer and Director of the Wauwatosa Health Department. Prior to WHD, Ms. Conklin worked at MCW in the MPH Program, as Health Educator for the Rock County Health Department, and as Employee Programs Coordinator at a private manufacturing facility in Waterford, WI. She received her Masters of Public Health from MCW and BS in Human Services from Carroll College.



Kim Contardi, MPH
Program Manager, Institute for
Health & Equity
Medical College of Wisconsin

Ms. Contardi received her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Hawaii and is a Certified Health Education Specialist with over 30 years of experience in the field of public health. Her first position at MCW involved coordinating the development of a PhD Program in Public and Community Health. Prior to its launch, Ms. Contardi transitioned into the online MPH program in order to assist with the redevelopment of the MPH program. This resulted in accreditation of the program for a maximum seven-year term. Following the successful reaccreditation process in 2010, she remained with MCW, but accepted a position with the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute (HWLI), providing continuing education, training, and technical assistance to build capacity among community leaders in Wisconsin as they work to advance health equity. In 2015, she returned to the MPH program as Program Manager. Prior to her time at MCW, Ms. Contardi worked with a variety of programs within the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency on issues including prenatal care, tobacco control, childhood lead poisoning prevention and immunizations. Primary responsibilities involved planning, implementing and evaluating programs, developing and maintaining partnerships, providing assessment services and consultation to health care providers, participating on coalitions and committees, and conducting special projects.



Matthew Dellinger, PhD
Associate Professor, Division of

Since 2004, Dr. Dellinger has dedicated himself to environmental and biomedical science collaborations in the Great Lakes. This has led to hard-earned and productive working relationships with rural and local organizations such as Great Lakes Native American Tribes. He is a co-investigator at the Great Lakes Native American Research Center for Health (GLNARCH). Health research in Indian Country faces diverse challenges. Dr. Dellinger's versatile skillset of scientific research, quantitative analysis, cinematography/editing, digital imaging, and risk assessment has allowed him to pursue translational research in diverse, multidisciplinary settings. Specifically, he focuses on improving access to toxicological and risk assessment data in the relevant community via culturally tailored media. Dr. Dellinger also has over 13 years' experience promoting Native American youth education programs through digital media

<p><i>Epidemiology Institute for Health & Equity Medical College of Wisconsin</i></p>	<p>combined with academic research and cultural perspectives.</p>
<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Elizabeth Ellinas, MD <i>Associate Dean for Women’s Leadership Professor, Anesthesiology Medical College of Wisconsin</i></p>	<p>As Associate Dean for Women’s Leadership, Dr. Ellinas advances the MCW community as it becomes a destination of choice for women in academic medicine, and assists the recruitment, retention, advancement, and leadership achievements of women faculty. Dr. Ellinas became interested in women and leadership as chair of the Women’s Faculty Council in 2013, receiving both an MCW grant and AMWA grant to study barriers and facilitators to leadership and promotion for women. Seeing the need, Dr. Ellinas developed and initiated a plan for a women’s leadership center at MCW in 2016 in conjunction with Dean Joseph Kerschner, and launched AWSM as its first director in 2018. As Center Director, she leads AWSM in its efforts to create an environment that allows all genders to grow and thrive in the health sciences. Galvanized by the events of 2020, AWSM is working to lead through crisis, focusing on caregiving through COVID and racial injustice. Dr. Ellinas’s research interests include determining faculty motivations and choice-making as regards promotion, retention, and leadership seeking in academic faculty, and the interplay between gender and journals and professional societies.</p>
 <p>Jose Franco, MD <i>Director-Community and Institutional Engagement Pillar, Kern Institute Medical College of Wisconsin</i></p>	<p>Dr. Franco attended medical school at MCW where he also completed residency in Internal Medicine and a GI/Hepatology Fellowship. He has been a course director, clerkship director and served as Director of the Discovery Curriculum. Dr. Franco is currently Associate Dean for Educational Improvement at MCW. In this role, he also oversees much of the Inter-Professional Education efforts, as well as faculty development. He also oversees the Community and Institutional Engagement Pillar in the Kern Institute. Dr. Franco has been involved in pipeline programs and was PI for the AHW-supported StEP-UP Program. He is currently leading the effort to develop a Physician's Assistant Program at MCW.</p>
<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Toni Gray <i>Program Coordinator, Office of Diversity and Inclusion Medical College of Wisconsin</i></p>	<p>Ms. Gray serves as a community program coordinator in the MCW Office of Diversity and Inclusion and works with various entities within the college on learning and growth efforts that bring awareness to our biases and how to honor and celebrate differences, among other areas. She created an anti-racist learning and growth series that heightened conversations around race, culture, and being more activated. Ms. Gray brings life experience with a relative understanding of how systemic racism has impacted people of color, the families, their health, and their lives and an invaluable and necessary perspective to the process.</p>
 <p>Shandowlyon Lyzette Hendricks-</p>	<p>Dr. Hendricks possesses over 25 years of experience in public, private, charter and higher education, inclusive of serving at the State of Wisconsin’s Department of Public Instruction as an Education Administrative Director. She established a non-profit, Project Hope Inc., which provides housing to adults with disabilities as well as those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Dr. Hendricks is an author, coach and consultant. Academic Preparation: Executive Certification in Diversity Coaching – Howard University & Coach Diversity Institute, Washington DC; Certified Public Manager – University of Wisconsin Madison, Madison, WI; Ed.D. Doctor of Education – (Sigma Alpha Pi – National Society of Leadership and Success) National Louis University, Wheeling, IL; Ed.S. – National Louis University, Wheeling, IL; MA – Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI; BS – (Cum Laude, Valedictorian and Dean’s List),</p>

<p>Williams, Ed.D. <i>Adjunct Faculty</i> Viterbo University <i>Coach and Consultant</i></p>	<p>Springfield College, Springfield, MA; AAS – (Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society), Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI. Professional Experience: Adjunct Faculty, Viterbo University, Lacrosse, WI; Director, State of Wisconsin Office of the Governor; Education Administrative Director, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Regional Director, Nonpublic Educational Services Inc. (NESI); Adjunct Faculty, Graduate School of Education, Alverno College, Milwaukee, WI; District Administrator, Urban Day School, Milwaukee, WI; Educational Leader/Principal, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI. She is a member of Zeta Phi Beta, Sorority, Inc., Metropolitan Milwaukee Alliance of Black School Educators, Rev Collective, American Association of Notaries, and the Rotary Club of Milwaukee.</p>
<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Paula Lucey, PhD <i>Director of the Master’s Program</i> <i>and Assistant Clinical Professor</i> University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee</p>	<p>Dr. Lucey has worn many hats in her health care career in Milwaukee. She has served the community as leadership of the safety net health and mental health service providers, been a cabinet officer at the county level, and is currently a university nursing educator. Dr. Lucey has been on many community boards and continues to serve on the board of a FQHC. She was a founding board member and past chair of the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health.</p>
 <p>Jeremy Miner, MA, BS <i>President</i> Miner & Associates</p>	<p>A seasoned research administrator with 20 years of progressively increasing responsibility and experience with academic and health care environments. A problem-solver with strong political, analytical, and communication skills who has collaborated successfully with faculty and administrators globally to build infrastructure, develop capacity, secure millions from public and private sponsors, and realize institutional goals. A lifelong resident of Wisconsin, Mr. Miner has deep connections to its urban and rural areas, having lived for about a decade in each of Milwaukee, Green Bay, and Eau Claire. Professional highlights include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced as director-level research administrator in public and private higher education. • Expertise in preaward and non-financial post-award, including fluency in Uniform Guidance. • Given 300 presentations on grantseeking and research administration nationwide and globally. • Published 8 books, 2 micrographs and 9 articles on grant writing and research administration. • Served on 31 grant review panels for 13 public and private education and health programs. • Served on NCURA board of directors, PRA conference chair, and traveling workshop faculty.
 <p>Ravi Misra, PhD <i>Professor of Biochemistry and</i> <i>Dean of the Graduate School of</i> <i>Biomedical Sciences</i> Medical College of Wisconsin</p>	<p>Dr. Misra is Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and Professor of Biochemistry. He received a BA in Microbiology and Religion from Rutgers College and his MS and PhD in Biochemistry from the Sackler Institute of Biomedical Sciences at the NYU School of Medicine. His postdoctoral training was eukaryotic gene regulation and signal transduction in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Misra joined the faculty of the Biochemistry Department at MCW in 1993 and in 2010 was appointed Dean of the MCW Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at MCW. Research interests include regulation of signaling and gene expression in cancer and neurons, and the control of early coronary vascular development. Dr. Misra has been funded by the NIH and other national funding agencies including the American Heart Association, American Federation for Aging, and the American Cancer Society. He has served on numerous NIH study sections. He was a charter member of the Cardiovascular Differentiation and Development section, as a reviewer on the AHA Regenerative Cell Biology study section, and currently as Chair of the Physiology and Pathobiology of Cardiovascular and Respiratory Systems Fellowship NIH study section. Dr. Misra is also Peer Reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and served as a member of the AAMC GREAT Group Steering Committee. As Dean, he also has extensive experience in high level institutional administration and program development.</p>

<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Sandra Pfister, PhD <i>Professor, Pharmacology and Toxicology</i> Medical College of Wisconsin</p>	<p>Dr. Pfister has taught both medical and graduate students for over 25 years and serves as course directors for M1 Principles of Drug Action and M2 Cardiovascular unit. The Kern Institute leads a national movement to transform medical education from pre-medical school through physician practice and Dr. Pfister was selected by MCW leadership to be in the Kern Institute and received an appointment to the Faculty pillar. She teaches in the Kern Kinetic3 Teaching Academy and has developed a workshop for faculty to help support MCW students. With a team of Kern colleagues, they designed a project entitled: Personal and Professional Transformation in Undergraduate Medical Education. Recognizing that the current status of MCW curriculum lacks wellness content, self-awareness and emotional intelligence training, they proposed a 4 year curricular thread to address these needs. Dr. Pfister is also a current member of team for TI2. Based on her basic science work on sex-based differences in disease, she led a capstone project for the Leadership Academy on how to integrate sex and gender health into current MCW medical school curriculum. Dr. Pfister is currently working with both M1 and M2 students to audit the preclinical content related to sex and gender topics.</p>
<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Linda Piacentine, PhD, RN, ACNP-BC <i>Associate Professor</i> Marquette University College of Nursing</p>	<p>Dr. Piacentine has a lengthy career as a registered nurse and has worked in many professional roles. Her professional roles have included staff nurse, nurse manager, clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, nurse researcher and nurse educator. Early in her career, Dr. Piacentine focused on acute care hospital nursing and neuroscience nursing. For the last 13 years, she has been working in academia at Marquette University teaching undergraduate and graduate nursing. She has taught in-person, blended, and online courses. Dr. Piacentine has designed courses and is now chair of our undergraduate curriculum course. She continues to take course work on education including curriculum development and teaching methods. Her research has been in the area of symptom management in chronic disease. Dr. Piacentine has collaborated in her research with physicians, physical therapists, and exercise scientists. Her research has been both in the lab and with a community-based triathlon team. The depth of her practice experience and her role as a nurse academic allow her to bring unique expertise to a team.</p>
 <p>Amy Prunuske, PhD <i>Associate Professor, Biochemistry</i> Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin</p>	<p>Dr. Prunuske is a founding faculty member at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin campus. She was an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth campus and was involved in a number of programs designed to support the inclusion of underrepresented students in biomedical sciences and medicine. She brings her scientific rigor to medical education evaluation monitoring the effectiveness of MCW-Central Wisconsin programs. She is passionate about mentoring and is a Master Facilitator as part of the National Research Mentoring Network and started a mentoring program in teaching through the American Society for Cell Biology. She is currently funded through the AHW workforce development pathway to develop the Advocates in Medicine Pathway.</p>
<p><i>(photo not available)</i></p> <p>Achuthan Sourianarayanan, MD <i>Assistant Professor, Medicine</i> Medical College of Wisconsin</p>	<p>Dr. Souranarayanan's current and earlier studies have been clinically oriented, evaluating liver disease pathophysiology, and outcome. His current studies also include the evaluation of different metabolic pathways related to liver diseases through lipidomics and metabolomics. Dr. Souranarayanan is also currently engaged in community-based population screening of liver diseases. This involves certain underserved groups, including the inner-city population in Milwaukee and Hispanic communities allowing him to bring a wider exposure in understanding of health requirements of the community.</p>



Jim Vergeront, MD

Physician (retired)

Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Director (retired)

Wisconsin HIV Program

Adjunct Professor

University of Wisconsin-Madison
School of Medicine and Public Health

Dr. Vergeront received his Medical Degree from the UW-Madison in 1978. For 39 years, he was employed by the Wisconsin Division of Public Health; he retired in May 2019. As the longest serving state AIDS director in America, Dr. Vergeront devoted his career to HIV and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) prevention, coordination of care, dissemination of information, education and training, and eliminating HIV and HCV. He provided leadership and direction in developing a statewide network of care and treatment to make health care and medications available to everyone with HIV and HCV disease in the state. He finds the amazing strength and resolve on the part of individuals affected by HIV and HCV inspiring; it is extremely important to listen to individuals and the voice of the community to really grasp the diversity of the people these diseases affect in order to make sure their needs are being met. Dr. Vergeront has also dedicated more than 30 years to providing public health education opportunities to medical residents, medical students, post graduate fellows, graduate students and undergraduate students. He has been an Adjunct Faculty and Professor at the University of Wisconsin—Madison School of Medicine and Public Health since 1984. He served as faculty to the U. W. Preventive Medicine Residency Program and the U. W. Population Health Service Fellowship Program. Also, Dr. Vergeront has served on numerous community advisory committees and public health curriculum committees for the U. W. Madison and La Crosse public health programs.



Rebekah Walker, PhD

Assistant Professor, Medicine

Medical College of Wisconsin

Dr. Rebekah Walker is an Assistant Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the Center for Advancing Population Science (CAPS). She has a PhD in health services research and was trained in research methodology and health disparities. Her research focuses on social determinants of health and chronic disease, with an emphasis on low income populations and diabetes outcomes. Dr. Walker has expertise in analytical techniques focused on understanding mechanisms and pathways, including confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis, and structured equation modeling. She also has training in health behavior, health services theory, health economics, and implementation science. Her ongoing work is funded through the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the NIH National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) focused on addressing food insecurity in African Americans with diabetes. In addition, as the Lead for the Health System Research Unit, she supports faculty, fellows, and residents conducting research, quality improvement, and operations efforts focused on for efficacious and cost-effective care.