



Wisconsin Partnership Program

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH



FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2024-2029

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On the cover:

Left: Andrea Galmozzi, PhD, assistant professor in the SMPH Department of Medicine, is using a New Investigator Grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program to better understand the role certain enzymes in the body play in energy expenditure and obesity.

Center: The Wisconsin Population Health Services Fellowship Program places fellows in community, governmental and health service organizations across Wisconsin. Emily Dejka, pictured here, was placed with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Right: Check-in Wednesday, an initiative launched by the Rebalanced-Life Wellness Association, provides a culturally appropriate setting to support the well-being of Black men ages 60 and over who may be at risk for social and emotional isolation.

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is home to the Wisconsin Partnership Program, a grantmaking program within the SMPH established as the result of a generous endowment gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin’s conversion to a stock insurance corporation. The Wisconsin Partnership Program expresses its continued gratitude for this gift to benefit the people of Wisconsin.

Dean's Message

It is a privilege to present the Wisconsin Partnership Program's 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan.

The 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan reflects the voices of diverse partners across Wisconsin who gathered for in-depth strategic design activities over the past year. The plan advances and expands the vital journey of improving health and advancing health equity through investments in community partnerships, education and research.

This journey is guided by the Wisconsin Partnership Program's goals and strategies. It is sustained through our strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and stewardship of the resources resulting from the Blue Cross Blue Shield conversion and gift that established the WPP more than twenty years ago.

The 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan is designed to be strategic and intentional, while maintaining the nimble flexibility required to address new opportunities and unexpected challenges.

Like any journey, plans can take unexpected turns. This was certainly the case during this past five-year period when we faced critical health challenges including a once-in-a-century pandemic that disproportionately impacted many members of our communities. The Wisconsin Partnership Program was able to respond rapidly, nimbly and effectively, establishing grant programs in the very first weeks of the pandemic that provided critically needed resources. These quick responses resulted in grants to support researchers to innovate, health systems to increase capacity and community organizations to expand and adapt. In this way, the WPP helped our state navigate the dangerous, turbulent seas of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The goals and strategies put forth in the 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan build upon WPP's history of impactful work. WPP grantees are solving complex health challenges, responding to critical health needs, strengthening the health care



workforce and promoting the health and well-being of Wisconsin communities. They leverage WPP funding for greater impact by successfully competing for external funding, sustaining partnerships and building new collaborations.

Through the 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan, and with the full support of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the Wisconsin Partnership Program will continue to engage partners across the full continuum of health, throughout our communities, universities and state. We will dedicate resources and energy for supporting innovative ideas and new approaches that are built on community and university partnerships and expand WPP's legacy of successful outcomes and impact.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Together, we can achieve our shared vision of advancing health and health equity for the people of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert N. Golden".

Robert N. Golden, MD
Robert Turell Professor in Medical Leadership
Dean, University of Wisconsin School of
Medicine and Public Health
Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs, University of
Wisconsin-Madison

Executive Director's Message

Thank you for your interest in the Wisconsin Partnership Program's 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan.

The 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan forwards the Wisconsin Partnership Program's (WPP's) mission and vision to improve health and advance health equity. This plan embraces strategies that catalyze innovative solutions to meet emerging health needs, engage and build capacity with a broad and diverse range of partners, and propel high-value community, research and education invention and infrastructure.

The development and evolution of this plan is the result of extensive engagement with people across the state of Wisconsin through a multi-step in-depth strategic design process that included a diverse array of voices over a twelve-month period. The Wisconsin Partnership Program provided outreach to more than 7,000 individuals, collecting input through public surveys and listening sessions, and received guidance from an advisory panel comprised of leaders from Wisconsin nonprofits, urban and rural communities, public health, health care and academia. The resulting feedback shaped the strategies put forth here to guide WPP's work throughout the next five years.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program remains steadfast in our commitment to support initiatives that advance health equity and reduce health disparities. We know that some communities and populations are disproportionately impacted by factors that result in poor health outcomes, often because of historical and/or on-going structural inequities. This plan includes support for work that addresses these multi-domain social influencers of health.

Over the past five years, WPP grant partners – community organizations, researchers and educators – have moved health forward in remarkable ways. They have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, innovated to address complex health challenges, prepared our future medical and public health leaders, and improved



health and health equity by implementing a diverse range of interventions across our state. I hope you will take a moment to review the examples highlighted in this plan.

This five-year plan is shaped by our commitment to progress and optimism for the future. As we move forward over the next five years, we will continue to ensure rigor and impact in our investments, funding work with the greatest potential for successful outcomes and long-term sustainability. We will build upon the successes of the past five years, remain nimble in responding to critical health needs, and support partnerships and projects that will positively impact health and advance health equity.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together towards our shared vision that everyone in Wisconsin will live healthy and full lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amy Kind".

Amy JH Kind, MD, PhD
Executive Director, Wisconsin Partnership Program
Associate Dean for Social Health Sciences and Programs
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

Introduction

The Wisconsin Partnership Program 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan is the fifth since the inception of the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Developed as part of an in-depth year-long strategic planning process with partners, this plan serves as WPP's roadmap for the next five years, charting a course towards the vision that everyone in Wisconsin will live healthy and full lives.

BACKGROUND

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is home to the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP), a grantmaking program committed to improving health and advancing health equity in Wisconsin through investments in community partnerships, education and research.

This commitment is underscored by the Wisconsin Idea, our shared belief that the university should improve people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom. WPP grant partners and funded projects embody this notion through work that is propelling medical research and discovery, preparing future clinicians and public health leaders to care for patients and populations, and improving health and advancing health equity across Wisconsin communities.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program was established at the University of Wisconsin School

of Medicine and Public Health through a generous endowment gift resulting from the conversion of Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin to a for-profit enterprise in 2000. Since beginning grant making in 2004, WPP has built a strong foundation of progress and impact and a commitment to stewardship and fiduciary responsibility, while directing this tremendous resource to benefit the people of Wisconsin.

The UW System Board of Regents holds oversight responsibilities of the WPP. In addition, two committees composed of UW faculty and community members are responsible for the governance, oversight and strategic planning of the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

The Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) is a nine-member committee including representatives from Wisconsin communities, the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. The Board of Regents approves committee appointments and appoints a Regent liaison to OAC. The committee is responsible for directing and approving funds for public health initiatives and community grants.

The Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC) directs and approves funds for faculty-initiated education and research initiatives that advance health. It is comprised of UW faculty and representatives from the OAC.



The Oneida Nation is partnering with the UW School of Medicine and Public Health to decrease stroke risk factors in its tribal community through health promotion, screenings and personal coaching. Health coach Amanda Riesenbergl leads a community walk.

Developing the 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan

This five-year plan is the result of an in-depth, rigorous strategic planning process, incorporating multi-modal input collected from a diverse variety of groups over a twelve-month period.

SURVEY AND LISTENING SESSIONS

In late fall 2022, a survey was sent to 7,267 individuals across the state drawn from several sources including current and former WPP grantees and applicants, Wisconsin community organizations and public health departments, UW faculty and staff and subscribers to WPP's mailing lists. This survey asked for input on the goals, strategies and priorities of WPP for the next five-year period. The surveyed population included government and public health employees, nonprofit workers and community advocates, faculty and staff from a variety of Wisconsin colleges and universities, hospital workers and other individuals who had previously expressed interest in the work of WPP. Survey respondents included nonprofit workers (35.4 percent), employees at academic institutions (35 percent) and government or public health department workers (25 percent). Respondents spanned all areas of the state.

The survey was followed by three 60-minute listening sessions with academic and public members (including an open virtual session) to obtain feedback on the new five-year plan

framework. This open public virtual listening session was led by staff from the UW-Madison Office of Strategic Consulting and invited reflection on the draft five-year plan framework. All responses were assessed to inform the final five-year plan framework and document.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN ADVISORY PANEL

Incorporating input gathered through the surveys and listening sessions, a draft framework was developed and shared with a WPP Leadership Advisory Panel in April 2023 for additional feedback. This panel consisted of 44 people including leaders from Wisconsin nonprofits, urban and rural communities, public health, health care and academia. The additional feedback and refinements offered by the advisory panel during this meeting resulted in the final draft Five-Year Plan framework released for public comment. This draft and all comments generated during the public comment period are presented to the OAC and PERC for approval. Following this, the plan is presented to the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents for approval.



A new research project led by Dr. Suzanne Ponik aims to better understand the recurrence of estrogen receptor positive breast cancer, the most prevalent subtype of breast cancer diagnosed in Wisconsin and across the nation.

Defining Health Equity

The 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan is informed and guided by WPP's equity statement:

The Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) believes in just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential. The WPP defines health equity as the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. This requires addressing obstacles to health, such as poverty and discrimination and their consequences, including lack of access to quality employment, education, housing, health care, safe environments and other factors.

The WPP is committed to improving health and health care and advancing health equity in Wisconsin, especially for populations disproportionately impacted by health inequities, through investments in community partnerships, education and research. This commitment extends to all aspects of how we engage, both internally and within Wisconsin communities.

WHAT SHAPES OUR WORK

The work of the Wisconsin Partnership Program, including our equity statement, is shaped by feedback obtained during the development of this plan, as well as leading experts and consensus documents from the fields of medicine, public health, health education and research and health equity. In particular, the following publications have influenced the development of the 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, July 1). [What is Health Equity?](#)
- National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (2017). [NIMHD Research Framework](#).
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). [Healthy People 2030](#).



Health care partners from the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, Harambee Village Douglas and Unity Point Health Meriter are expanding upon a successful telehealth blood pressure home monitoring program that incorporates an all-inclusive approach to addressing postpartum needs including basic postpartum care, lactation and social support.

2024 – 2029 Five-Year Plan Framework

Vision

Everyone in Wisconsin will live healthy and full lives.

Mission

To bring about lasting improvements in health and well-being and advance health equity in Wisconsin through investments in community partnerships, education and research

Values

Academic and Community Leadership	Multi-sector Partnerships
Creativity and Flexibility	Sustainability

Goals

Advance Health Equity	Build Capacity and Leadership
Catalyze Systems Change	Promote Innovation

Strategies

Address critical and emerging health needs
Advance health equity across a wide range of approaches, populations, geographic areas and issues
Cultivate convening and capacity-building opportunities
Develop and strengthen Wisconsin's health care and public health workforce
Engage with a wide range of partners and communities
Foster partnerships that address the social factors influencing health and well-being
Promote diversity in health care education, outreach and delivery
Propel research and education innovations with the potential to positively impact health and advance health equity
Support and strengthen community-driven approaches and initiatives with the potential to positively impact health and advance health equity

2024-2029 Five-Year Plan

The Wisconsin Partnership Program's 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan builds upon our existing values, goals and strategies and introduces new concepts to reflect the input of our diverse partners. It enhances our capacity to nimbly serve and strengthens our mission to improve health and advance health equity for the people of Wisconsin.

VALUES

The Wisconsin Partnership Program is guided by a set of values essential to achieving our mission and realizing our vision:

- **Academic and Community Leadership:** We value the exchange of ideas and knowledge amongst all partners, holding equally important high standards for excellence and rigor in expertise across all domains.
- **Creativity and Flexibility:** We challenge ourselves to stay nimble in our approaches, curious in our thinking and flexible in response to new opportunities or emerging health needs.
- **Multi-sector Partnerships:** We recognize that solving our state's most complex health challenges requires the participation and contributions of many partners. We will draw on the diverse perspectives, assets and knowledge of interdisciplinary teams and collaborators.
- **Sustainability:** We understand that to achieve successful outcomes and impact, work must persist beyond a grant cycle or single investment, strategize for the long-term, and build capacity when needed.

GOALS

- **Advance Health Equity:** To achieve health equity, we will address the social factors that influence health, and support work to address the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by health inequities.
- **Build Capacity and Leadership:** To meet emerging health and health care needs, we will extend our resources to enhance the knowledge and skills of all our partners and will invest in initiatives that promote the clinical and public health workforce.
- **Catalyze Systems Change:** To improve the health and well-being of the people of Wisconsin, we will support work to positively impact the systems that influence health.
- **Promote Innovation:** To address complex health challenges, we will invest in new and evolving ideas and discoveries and their successful implementation into practice.



Esperanza is a WPP-funded community-academic partnership that developed a bilingual psychological services certificate to increase access to culturally appropriate mental health services and training. Alyssa Ramirez Stege (center), director of the certificate program, joins a cohort of graduates.

STRATEGIES

WPP's grant programs are the primary mechanism for implementing our strategies and achieving our goals. WPP's Oversight and Advisory Committee and Partnership Education and Research Committee guide the development and refinement of WPP's grant programs in alignment with WPP's goals and strategies. The Wisconsin Partnership Program will employ the following strategies in support of our mission:

Address critical and emerging health needs

Being nimble and responsive is vital to addressing Wisconsin's health needs, both known and unexpected. When faced with the urgent health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin Partnership Program's Oversight and Advisory Committee and Partnership Education and Research Committee developed rapid response funding opportunities to support researchers and community organizations in meeting the immediate needs of the pandemic. Two cycles of funding awarded more than \$6.2 million to support the immediate pandemic response and later to address long-term consequences of the pandemic. The WPP will remain nimble and flexible, and prepared to implement similar responsive programs to future critical and emerging public health needs.

Advance health equity across a wide range of approaches, populations, geographic areas and issues

WPP is committed to improving health and health care and advancing health equity in Wisconsin, especially for populations disproportionately impacted by health inequities, including urban, rural and tribal communities. All Wisconsin Partnership Program grant applicants are asked how their proposed work aims to advance health equity in Wisconsin. The Oversight and Advisory Committee and Partnership Education and Research Committee select proposals for their merit, rigor, potential impact and geographic reach.

Cultivate convening and capacity-building opportunities

WPP provides opportunities for grantees to increase their knowledge and skills and build capacity to advance their missions. This is achieved through virtual and in-person learning events, networking opportunities, and through access to professional consultations, including evaluation training which helps grantees demonstrate their achievements and leverage their grants for additional external funding.



Since 2004, WPP-funded education initiatives have been enhancing medical education at the SMPH. WPP-funded programs help to address critical health care and public health workforce shortages and prepare graduates to better serve both patients and populations.

Develop and strengthen Wisconsin's health care and public health workforce

The Wisconsin Partnership Program invests in innovative clinical and public health education models that strengthen the state's workforce. These models employ a number of approaches including enhancements of curricula, development and evolution of competencies, leveraging of technology and support of service-based learning. These investments prepare trainees and graduates to meet the health needs of patients, communities and populations, and further enhance the UW School of Medicine and Public Health's role as a national leader in medical and public health education.

Engage with a wide range of partners and communities

The Wisconsin Partnership Program recognizes that true change is only possible through the work and commitment of many individuals, organizations and sectors. WPP research grant programs encourage collaboration across the research spectrum and academic disciplines. We partner with health care systems, governmental organizations, schools, non-profit organizations, tribal entities, faith institutions and more to advance shared goals for improving health in

Wisconsin. Community grantees, when applicable, work with academic partners within the many schools, programs and institutes within the University of Wisconsin System. In addition, WPP provides convening and networking opportunities for multi-disciplinary partners to engage across common issues and diverse geographic areas. The WPP staff engage with an array of other agencies and organizations to promote our mission and funding opportunities.

Foster partnerships that address the social factors influencing health and well-being

WPP grant applicants are reviewed upon how their proposed work aligns with WPP's commitment to advancing health equity and reducing health disparities, especially for populations disproportionately impacted by health inequities. There is a focus on projects that support promising interventions, approaches and solutions to address health disparities. This includes support for projects that advance health equity by addressing the social factors that influence health outcomes; projects that address gaps in health and health care across communities and geographic areas and work that addresses health challenges that disproportionately impact some patients and populations.



The Rebalanced-Life Wellness Association is using a grant from WPP to improve the health of Black men, including through events such as Check-in Wednesdays, designed to promote community and connection for men ages 60 and older.

Promote diversity in health care education, outreach and delivery

The Wisconsin Partnership Program, in alignment with the mission of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, recognizes that diversity is vital to meeting the health needs of the people of Wisconsin and strengthening the health care workforce. WPP provides strategic education investments that support the recruitment and retention of students from communities disproportionately impacted by health inequities, and the creation of new pathways to expand pre-college and college programming focused on career exploration in health care fields. These initiatives are designed to reach Wisconsin's urban, rural and tribal communities.

Propel research and education innovations with the potential to positively impact health and advance health equity

WPP's strategic and competitive research and education funding mechanisms demand scientific quality, innovation and rigor, as well as strong potential for application, reproducibility and sustainability through future external funding. Successful research grants span the spectrum of basic, clinical, translational and applied public

health research, and describe how the proposed work will positively impact or translate to improved health, health care or health equity in Wisconsin. Strategic education grants support new initiatives that focus on scholarship and leading-edge techniques, providing graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to care for patients and promote health equity.

Support and strengthen community-driven approaches and initiatives with the potential to positively impact health and advance health equity

The Wisconsin Partnership Programs community grant programs are designed to leverage the expertise, assets and leadership of community organizations, and advance community-led solutions and approaches to improve health and advance health equity. These funding mechanisms have varied approaches, including funding that provides training and technical assistance, requests for proposals designed strategically for smaller nonprofits, and mechanisms designed for large-scale, community-led, evidence-informed initiatives. Grant programs may also target specific health goals, such as improving maternal and infant health outcomes in Wisconsin.



The United Community Center is developing the Latino Health Regional Consortium in partnership with the Aging and Disability Resource Center offices and others to expand UCC's Memory Care Clinic services to a regional model of virtual and mobile dementia services.

Measuring Success and Impact

The Wisconsin Partnership Program recognizes the importance of evaluation, continually seeking to understand the impact of our funding. In the 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan, we put forth a rigorous and standardized approach to evaluation, including the examination of short-, medium- and long-term outcomes across WPP-funded initiatives.

Over the next five-year period, WPP will execute a standardized evaluation plan, collecting grantee evaluation data to provide insight into the direct impact of the work being carried out using WPP funds. When relevant, grantees will be asked to report on people served through programming, networks and partnerships formed and sustained, policies and procedures impacted, populations served, training and capacity building and health impacts. Data will be gathered on dissemination of the work and additional leveraged funding that stems from the project. Finally, recipients will periodically be asked to participate in post-funding evaluation efforts. These long-term follow-up efforts will enable tracking of the impact of projects funded by WPP beyond the grant period.

On previous surveys, WPP grantees have requested additional opportunities to develop their evaluation skills as a means to better compete for external funding and achieve sustainability.

As such, WPP will expand the program evaluation capacity-building opportunities for grantees over the next five years by providing resources and programming to support grantees in building skills, knowledge and capacity in this area.

Conclusion

The Wisconsin Partnership Program carries out its mission by supporting and catalyzing partnerships that have the greatest potential to improve health and advance health equity through sustained impact. These partnerships create pathways to new research and discoveries, drive innovations in clinical and public health education, and support a multitude of approaches for tackling complex health issues and improving community health—reaching all corners of the state, across a diverse range of health challenges, communities, populations and geographic areas.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program operates with a deep sense of stewardship and responsibility, guided by our foundational documents – the Insurance Commissioner’s Order, Grant Agreement and five-year plans. We are driven by a commitment to collaboration and a sense of purpose and optimism, recognizing that there is more than a single path to achieving health, and that by working together we will realize our vision of a healthier Wisconsin for all. The 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan provides the framework that will propel us on this journey.



With support from the Wisconsin Partnership Program, the SMPH continues to provide an innovative education model that infuses public health principles and practices with the SMPH medical curriculum. Through community engagement opportunities like the cooking class pictured here, SMPH students learn beyond the classroom to better understand community needs.

Selected Impact and Achievement Highlights

As we transition to the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2024-2029 Five-Year Plan, we reflect on the many accomplishments of the past five years. WPP funding helps grantees initiate new projects and collaborations in research, launch new education and community initiatives and build capacity across all domains. Grantees’ progress and achievements are measured in outcomes during the grant cycle and beyond, as grantees continue to leverage their work for greater impact. Hundreds of WPP-funded projects have impacted the lives of thousands of individuals, families and populations throughout Wisconsin.

BY THE NUMBERS: 2019-2024

159 GRANTS AWARDED

\$84.9 MILLION AMOUNT AWARDED



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

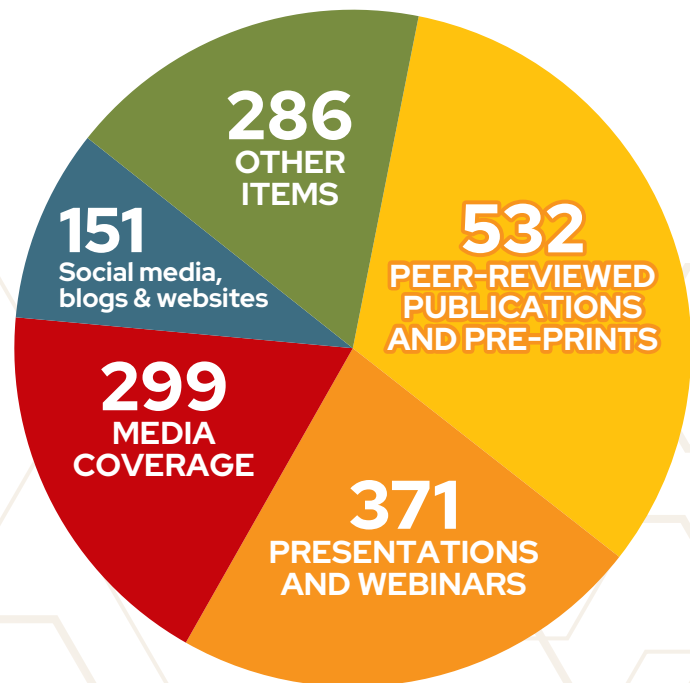
\$136 MILLION

Amount of money leveraged by grantees to expand or sustain their work.

During this five-year period, WPP grantees obtained more than **\$136 MILLION** in additional funding as a result of projects initiated with WPP support (2019-2024), resulting in a return on investment of **153%**.

1,639 TIMES

Number of times grantees disseminated their work



GRANTMAKING AT A GLANCE 2004 – 2023

611
GRANTS
AWARDED

\$292
MILLION
AMOUNT AWARDED



\$776.5 MILLION

Amount leveraged by WPP grantees

Since 2004, WPP grantees have obtained more than **\$776.5 MILLION** in additional funding to expand or sustain their work, resulting in a return on investment of **266%**.

Funded work that directly impacted all

72
WISCONSIN
COUNTIES

Selected Highlights

The following illustrative cases exemplify how the Wisconsin Partnership Program grantees are positively impacting health by addressing complex health challenges, leading innovations and discoveries and strengthening the health care workforce—improving health for patients and populations now and for years to come. To read about more examples of WPP funded project outcomes, visit our [Funded Projects page](#).

Developing Public Health Leaders to Serve the State



A WPP-funded initiative is helping address the long-standing shortage of public health leaders in Wisconsin and across the nation. [The Wisconsin Population Health Services Fellowship](#), a cornerstone of WPP’s educational investments, attracts and places early-career public health workers in government and community-based organizations. The fellows support public health programming for numerous local health initiatives and build their skills as public health leaders. To date, more than 97 fellows from diverse backgrounds have served at more than 50 placement sites throughout Wisconsin, including urban, rural and tribal communities. Eighty percent of recent fellowship graduates have gone on to fill public health leadership positions in Wisconsin. Meet some of the fellows in this [story](#).

A Clinic-Campus Partnership to Improve Patient Health



With funding from a WPP Community Impact Grant, Marshfield Clinic Health System (MCHS) has established a Community Connections Team (CCT), in partnership with UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stevens Point. The team connects patients with community resources to help them overcome obstacles to health improvement, including accessing resources for food, housing, transportation and other vital needs. More than 140 students from UW-Eau Claire and UW-Stevens Point who are planning to enter a variety of health professions have been trained to staff the CCT. To date, Marshfield health providers have screened 53,700 patients. Of those, 7,600 were referred to the CCT. As a result, CCT staff made more than 17,000 referrals to agencies such as food banks, dental clinics, energy and transportation services and more to address critical patient needs. MCHS is incorporating a new software platform to support this work and sustain the program beyond the grant. Read the [story](#).

Supporting Black Women's Health and Well-Being



The [Foundation for Black Women's Wellness](#) (FFBWW) is working to eliminate the health disparities impacting Black women in Dane County and Wisconsin, where Black birth disparities and racial health disparities are among the worst in the nation. With an initial four-year grant from WPP, the FFBWW expanded its staff and capacity from a staff of one to 15, strengthened collaborations with health systems and community partners and realized one of its central priorities: the creation of a community health worker program which employs three community health workers to better meet the health needs of community members. The FFBWW then successfully competed for a WPP Community Impact Grant to support the creation of the Well Black Woman Institute, an innovative leadership development program. In its first year, 13 fellows from across Wisconsin received 55 hours of health equity and leadership training. The team also plays a key role on another WPP-funded project, [Connect Rx](#), a new model of clinical and community care coordination that has served more than 200 pregnant women in Dane County to date, providing support needed to promote a healthy peri-partum period. With support from the WPP, the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness is advancing its mission to transform how Black women experience health and build solutions that can be replicated across the state. Read the [story](#).

Improving Health and Well-Being for Wisconsin Farmers



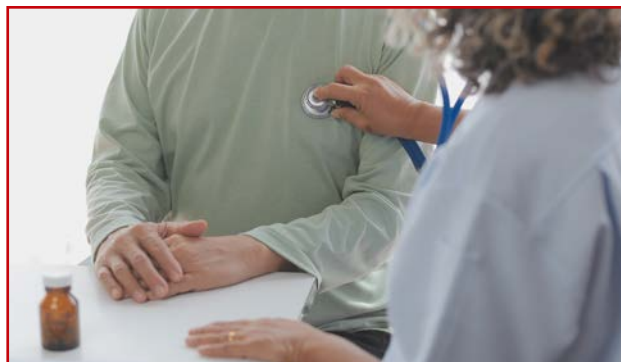
In 2018 the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program, an agency serving Iowa, Lafayette, Grant, Green and Richland counties, received initial funding from the Wisconsin Partnership Program to address the mental health crisis facing Wisconsin farmers by providing training in suicide and crisis prevention and stress management. The project's success led to another WPP grant in 2020 to develop [Farm Well Wisconsin](#), an initiative to support the well-being of the farming community through community trainings and resources focused on stress, rural mental health and suicide prevention. Farm Well's efforts have extended beyond their service territory through statewide coalitions and partners, with more than 700 rural community members and agribusiness professionals trained in peer support, community resources and suicide prevention. Farm Well is also building capacity for rural health providers. They conducted training for more than 75 health providers, residents and medical students and have been asked to join statewide coalitions and steering committees related to farmer mental health and rural suicide prevention. These partnerships with UW-Division of Extension, Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection Farm Center, Mental Health America and others have expanded the group's reach and influence. Listen to the [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) piece (January 2023).

Advancing Tele-ophthalmology for Diabetic Retinopathy in Rural Wisconsin Health Settings



Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in working-age Wisconsin adults, yet less than half of the people at risk for this condition are screened annually. Access to vision care is a significant barrier. SMPH assistant professor Dr. Yao Liu received a WPP grant to partner with Mile Bluff Medical Center in Mauston, Wisconsin to use telemedicine to improve access to vision screenings. Dr. Liu and her research team have leveraged their findings to obtain a \$4.4 million grant from the National Eye Institute. The multi-center clinical trial will test this vision-saving program at eight rural health systems across the country. The findings have the potential to improve access to eye care, and the translation into practice will help meet the growing needs of our aging population. Read more about this new award in [this article](#).

Restoring Cardiac Function after a Heart Attack



Heart failure remains a major health problem in the United States, and treating it requires ongoing innovation in interventions and therapeutic approaches. The study *Identifying the Mechanisms of Nerve Regulation of Heart Regeneration*, led by Dr. Ahmed Mahmoud, SMPH assistant professor, and supported with a WPP New Investigator Program grant, found that a new therapeutic approach for heart failure could help patients regain cardiac function after a heart attack by regenerating the heart muscle. The findings have the potential to inform future treatment of heart failure. The study was published in the journal [Circulation](#). Read the [press release](#).

LEARN MORE:

Please see the [appendix](#) for more impact and achievement highlights.



Wisconsin Partnership Program

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