Grantee: WISDOM, David Liners

Grant Title: Wisconsin Health Equity Alliance (WHEA): Driving Policy Change to Improve Health in Wisconsin

Academic Partner: Brian Christens, PhD, UW-Madison, School of Human Ecology

Dates: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

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Thrive Wisconsin Seeks to Create Alliance for Health Equity

The Challenge: The UW Population Health Institute’s population health model recognizes that the strongest factors that influence health outcomes are socioeconomic determinants such as employment, community safety and social support. While there have been many strides in public health over the last two decades, there is an increasing understanding and need for intervention approaches that involve community organizing and community development, and pull on the collective strength of all stakeholders in communities.

Project Goal: This project sought to develop a partnership between community organizers, public health practitioners and academics — leading to the creation of an alliance for health equity in Wisconsin. The project also provided a gathering space for alliance members to discuss issues related to organizing and refine local organizing action plans.

Results: The Thrive Wisconsin summit led to the creation of the Wisconsin Health Equity Alliance – a formal group of public health and community organizing professionals. Alliance members have increased their skills by participating in trainings and successfully advocated for state-level funding for treatment alternative diversion programs. A statewide infrastructure is now in place, and the Alliance continues to meet regularly.