Growing a Healthier State
On the cover:
The Cultivate Health Initiative to Grow the Wisconsin School Garden Network is a five-year Community Impact Grant funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program to expand the school garden network in five regions in Wisconsin. The initiative provides technical assistance and training to educators who are working to provide garden-based education to children in both urban and rural Wisconsin.

Right:
A Wisconsin Partnership Program funded project, Improving Assisted-Living through Collaborative Systems Changes seeks to improve the quality of life for the residents of Wisconsin’s assisted-living communities by enhancing and expanding access to the Wisconsin Coalition for Collaborative Excellence in Assisted Living (WCCEAL). The coalition uses quality indicators including falls, hospital readmission, medication management and more to improve outcomes for residents.
Making Wisconsin a healthier state for all

The Wisconsin Partnership Program represents a far-reaching commitment by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsin residents through investments in research, education and community partnerships.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program administers competitive research and community grant programs. It also supports strategic initiatives, including public health leadership and training and strategic education and research, aimed at improving health through investments in research, education, prevention practices and interventions and policy development.

As its name implies, the success of the Wisconsin Partnership Program resides in the connections it creates among people and communities across the state. Whether in the laboratory, classroom or community, the Wisconsin Partnership Program and its partners are working together to achieve their shared vision of making Wisconsin a healthier state for all.

2004 – 2016

Supported projects in every county in Wisconsin

$193 Million
Awarded

72 counties

426 Grants Awarded
Improving Health Care for Amish Infants

Christine Seroogy, MD, and a team of collaborators are using a Partnership Program grant to improve health for newborns in Wisconsin Plain communities, where there is an increased risk for inherited genetic diseases. The project aims to expand newborn screening tests to all Amish infants in a high-risk area of southwestern Wisconsin, and assure appropriate communication and follow-up care—ultimately to improve access to approachable, culturally appropriate, high-quality affordable health care for all Wisconsin Plain community children.

Preventing Blindness

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in working-age Wisconsin adults. Yao Liu, MD, is using a 2015 New Investigator Award from the Wisconsin Partnership Program to change this. Dr. Liu’s research aims to improve eye-screening rates in underserved, rural Wisconsin communities. Using teledmedicine at the Mile Bluff Medical Center in Mauston, Dr. Liu screens for signs of diabetic retinopathy. Patients are interviewed to determine why they have or have not received screenings previously. Dr. Liu and her team are testing different interventions to increase eye-screening rates. “We want to determine, in partnership with patients, providers and staff, what the ideal methods are to increase eye screening and reduce blindness in rural communities,” she said.

Combatting Infectious Disease

Infectious disease is the second leading cause of death worldwide and new threats from antibiotic-resistant micro-organisms are occurring at an alarming rate. A project funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program brought together campus basic scientists and clinical, infectious disease and population health faculty to focus on reducing the threat of infectious disease.

The project created the Wisconsin Center for Infectious Disease (WisCID), to investigate microbiological areas of public health importance and translate the research findings into new treatments and preventive measures in response to the alarming rise of drug-resistant infections.

The virtual center, directed by Bruce Klein, MD, professor of pediatrics and medical microbiology and immunology, fosters interdisciplinary research and training in microbiology and infectious disease to promote discovery and translate findings into public health benefits.

“WisCID has been very successful in achieving its goals,” says Dr. Klein. “The project has fostered new collaborations and extramurally funded research, expanded training opportunities through a National Institutes for Health (NIH)-supported training program and provided a pre- and post-doctoral training program.”

The project’s focus on drug discovery was particularly successful and helped leverage a five-year, $16 million NIH Center for Excellence in Translational Research (CETR) grant at UW-Madison focused on anti-microbial drug discovery.

2004 – 2016

98 research grants

$71 Million

Awards focus on cancer, infectious disease, obesity, diabetes, child health and more.
Transforming Medical Education

Strategic funding from the Wisconsin Partnership Program is helping to prepare the next generation of physicians at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). With support from the Partnership Program, the SMPH has redesigned its medical curriculum into a model that fully integrates basic, public health and clinical sciences throughout the medical student’s education. Students learn to work in the exam room and within communities and complex health systems to understand how to care for both patients and populations.

The innovative curriculum emphasizes team-based learning with a special emphasis on the hands-on application of knowledge in clinical and community settings.

Early on, medical students leave their classrooms to meet with local community leaders at organizations like the Lussier Community Education Center. Here they learn about the challenges and unique health care needs within different neighborhoods and communities.

Through clerkship opportunities, future physicians also learn how to work as part of a team and to navigate the complexities of the health care system in order to serve their patients more efficiently and effectively.

“Support from the Wisconsin Partnership Program has helped us make meaningful changes in medical education,” says Christine Seibert, MD, SMPH associate dean of medical education. “Our goal is to help our future physicians understand the world beyond the exam room, and how that world shapes the health of their patients.”

Improving Health in Rural Wisconsin

Launched in 2007 with funding from the Wisconsin Partnership Program, the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM) at the SMPH is helping to address the state’s shortage of physicians in rural areas. The program prepares and supports students like Hope Villard, MD (pictured above). Dr. Villard, now a medical resident, intends to practice medicine in Wisconsin and help improve the health of rural Wisconsin communities.

Serving Wisconsin Communities

The Wisconsin Partnership Program is proud to support the SMPH Wisconsin Population Health Service Fellowship. In collaboration with local and state health departments and community-based organizations, the program extends the school’s reach beyond campus and gives fellows like Janine Foggia, MPH (pictured below) the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills as future public health leaders.

Foggia holds a dual placement with the Marathon County Health Department in Wausau and Ascension Wisconsin in Stevens Point, where she focuses on nutrition and active living within the hospital system and the use of data to inform community health initiatives. She intends to use her skills to build collaborative partnerships that create positive community change.

More than 59 fellows have participated in the program since its inception in 2004.
Investing in Health

The Wisconsin Partnership Program makes strategic infrastructure investments in programs that address the mission of improving health, health equity and well-being in Wisconsin residents through investments in research, education, prevention practices and interventions and policy development. Two current initiatives, the Obesity Prevention Initiative (OPI) and the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) take aim at combatting two of the state’s most challenging public health concerns.

Preventing Obesity

The Obesity Prevention Initiative (OPI) is the cornerstone of the Partnership Program’s efforts to address Wisconsin’s obesity epidemic. The initiative provides the infrastructure to bring together communities, agencies, organizations, researchers, UW faculty and other stakeholders to:

• develop a childhood obesity surveillance system to track obesity and share data
• promote statewide messaging and collaboration among groups working to prevent obesity

The initiative launched healthTIDE in 2015 to promote and support collaboration among groups and organizations working toward policy changes to prevent obesity throughout Wisconsin. It focuses on areas where evidence shows that action can affect change, such as promoting active communities, healthy food choices in restaurants and food retailers, and healthy food and exercise opportunities in schools and early childhood programs.

Visit [healthtide.org](http://healthtide.org) and [wihealthatlas.org](http://wihealthatlas.org) for resources and data on obesity prevention in Wisconsin.

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25% of Wisconsin high school students and 29% of children 2-4 years old participating in the Wisconsin Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children are overweight or obese.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services
The Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families is a collaborative effort to support African American women and their families to have healthy birth outcomes.

**Improving Birth Outcomes**

The Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF) addresses infant mortality—one of Wisconsin’s most concerning health disparities. The innovative community-academic collaboration aims to improve maternal and infant health by addressing the root causes of disparities in infant health outcomes.

LIHF supports action-oriented collaboratives in Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee—three counties in southeastern Wisconsin that account for 85 percent of African American births in the state.

Collaborative members include community members and leaders from nonprofit, health care, business, public sector and faith-based organizations. Each collaborative has developed a community action plan to guide efforts to improve birth outcomes in its community.

The Wisconsin Partnership Program has also funded community-based project grants to implement innovative programs in these communities.

LIHF provides leadership in statewide maternal and child health efforts. In partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, LIHF supports data collection from new mothers about their experiences through the Wisconsin Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). Wisconsin PRAMS data is used to measure LIHF’s impact, help stakeholders better understand factors related to disparities in birth outcomes, and inform strategies to address these disparities.

Learn more at [lihf.wisc.edu](http://lihf.wisc.edu).

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Babies born to African American mothers in Wisconsin were nearly three times more likely to die before their first birthday than babies born to white mothers.
Improving Health through Enhanced Work enrolls participants in transitional jobs and facilitates access to health insurance and health care.

Improving Health and Economic Well-Being

The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute and its academic partners at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and other local agencies are working in Milwaukee to improve the health and economic well-being of residents in some of their city’s poorest communities by increasing employment and income, and connecting people to effective physical and mental health care. Their project, Improving Health through Enhanced Work, is funded through a five-year, million dollar Community Impact Grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

Improving Health through Enhanced Work builds upon the success of Wisconsin’s Transitional Jobs Program by facilitating access to health insurance and primary and behavioral health care for job-seeking individuals in order to increase their employability.

“Economic health, physical health, behavioral health and mental health are not sufficient on their own,” says Conor Williams of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. “But when combined, individuals have the opportunity to realize their full human potential. Through this project, we hope to help people not only start jobs and become more productive, but to thrive in the workplace and lead healthier lives.”

Encouraging Community Health

The Northwoods Linking Education, Activity and Nutrition (LEAN) Coalition’s Pathways to Health project is using Partnership funding to support residents in Oneida and Vilas Counties in achieving healthier diets and increased physical activity. The multifaceted approach to sustainable community change includes evidence-based practices such as community awareness campaigns, Safe Routes to School activities, garden-based nutrition education and worksite wellness programs to encourage healthy behaviors.

Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) is an innovative, teen-delivered educational program targeting barriers that interfere with the ability of health care providers and teens to communicate effectively with one another about sensitive health topics—such as sexual health, mental health, alcohol and drug abuse and safety. Recognizing that teens themselves are best equipped to offer providers accurate insight into adolescent experiences, PATCH helps providers connect with teen patients. The group works to empower teens, the population least likely to seek preventive care, to view providers as valuable and trusted resources. With funding from the Wisconsin Partnership Program, PATCH serves Milwaukee, where participants are working to improve health for the city’s teens.

Promoting Adolescent Health

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298 community partnership grants

$96 Million awarded for community grants
Dr. David Williams, of the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, shares a passionate message about health equity from a national perspective.

**Advancing Health Equity**

How can we advance health? How can we improve health at a more rapid rate for people who are disproportionately suffering poorer health outcomes? How can we bring a lens of health equity to the decisions we make? In 2016, the Partnership Program hosted the conference *Advancing Health Equity* to explore answers to these questions. Hundreds of people joined nationally recognized thought leaders and local experts to better understand how to address health disparities and advance health equity throughout Wisconsin.

SMPH Dean Robert Golden, MD, told participants that the conference was a first step in the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s journey to expand the incorporation of health equity into the program’s vision and framework for future investments. Knowledge and insight gained are helping to shape the program’s strategy, grant programs and framework going forward.

The conference summary report, video and additional health equity resources are available at med.wisc.edu/partnership.

“**This is the time to spark an inclusive effort to address the crucial imperative of health equity head on.**”

- SMPH Dean Robert Golden, MD

“**Your zip code may be a stronger predictor of your health than your genetic code.**”

- David Williams, PhD, MPH, of the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health
HAPPY and Healthy

Middle school students from Bruce Guadalupe Community School (BGCS) in Milwaukee visited UW-Madison to see firsthand the science behind the Health Activities Partnership Program for Youth II (HAPPY II), a program to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits among Latino middle school students in Milwaukee.

HAPPY II was a community-academic partnership between the UW School of Medicine and Public Health and the United Community Center (UCC), Milwaukee. UCC houses the BGCS, which serves 950 students, of whom 95 percent are Latino and 78 percent are economically disadvantaged. The community’s obesity rates are higher than the national average. HAPPY II used culturally appropriate lessons in physical activity, healthy eating and media literacy. Through activities such as lunchtime nutrition classes, neighborhood hikes and step counting, participants learned how to be more physically active and to make healthier food choices.

“Our program has been less about facts and figures and more about real ways kids can incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their daily lives, in their own families and their own neighborhoods.”

- Sam Dennis Jr., PhD, project lead and associate professor
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