Growing a Healthier State
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

426 Grants Awarded

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.
**Improving Health 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.

**Combating 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 disease and population health faculty to focus on reducing the threat of infectious disease.

**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.

**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 telemedicine 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.

**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.

**Strategic investments in education and public health leadership and training**

- **$26 Million**
  - Strategic investments in education and public health leadership and training ensure that SMPH graduates are prepared to play a significant role in promoting health for people and populations throughout Wisconsin.
  - More than 59 fellows have participated in the program since its inception in 2004.

- **$71 Million**
  - Awards focus on cancer, infectious disease, obesity, diabetes, child health and more.

- **98 research grants**
  - 98 research grants awarded 2004 - 2016
  - $26 Million

- **2004 – 2016**
  - 98 research grants
  - 2004 – 2016
  - Strategic investments in education and public health leadership and training
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
- test and implement novel community-based models for childhood obesity prevention in Marathon and Menominee Counties

The pilot communities of Marathon and Menominee Counties are making important steps to improve health in their communities. From improving the pedestrian infrastructure in Marathon County to expanding access to the tribal recreation center in Menominee County, both counties are exploring more ways to make “the healthy choice, the easy choice.”

Improved 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.

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

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.

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- SMPH Dean Robert Golden, MD

Promoting Adolescent Health
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.

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 the 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. The project enrolls individuals in transitional jobs, offers guidance for obtaining health insurance and provides primary health care consultations and follow-up referrals to address previous trauma experiences or substance use issues, if necessary.

“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.

298 community partnership grants

$96 Million awarded for community grants

“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

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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