



WISCONSIN'S GREEN COUNTY MOVES BUSINESS LEADERS TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH

Million Hearts® in Action

[Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts® Goals]



Sparked by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) grant opportunity, the Wisconsin Chronic Disease Prevention Program became one of the 26 state programs participating in their Million Hearts® Learning Collaborative. The Million Hearts® initiative in Wisconsin aims to prevent 3,000 heart attacks and strokes by 2022. Approximately 1.3 million Wisconsin adults have hypertension, of which half do not have it under control. Wisconsin's efforts focused on pilot sites working to improve hypertension outcomes through community-clinical partnerships in Milwaukee, West Allis, and Green County.

[Bi-directional pathway between public health and a health system]

Serving a primarily rural county, the Green County Health Department (GCHD) saw their role as the 'Chief Health Strategist' with "local health departments being well-positioned to improve hypertension outcomes in partnership with their communities," said RoAnn Warden, a champion for Million Hearts®. GCHD became the first Wisconsin local health department to digitally connect to a health system using EpicCare Link, providing an immediate bi-directional pathway for patient information (blood pressure readings) between the public health department and Monroe Clinic, a member of SSM Health. Leveraging their shared values and longstanding relationship addressing hypertension, GCHD and the Monroe Clinic increased control rates by 7% in the first year of the community-clinical linkages program. Efforts with the grant also activated the Green County Healthy Community Coalition to develop and promote a hypertension community-clinical protocol.



Developing a strong system of clinical-community linkage for heart health

The coalition continued their improvement efforts with a worksite wellness assessment developed by the GCHD which engaged employers in the coalition's efforts. The Wisconsin Community Health Fund (WCHF), a statewide organization, supported the assessment. The fund works to increase resources for healthy communities, deepen relationships with employers and philanthropy organizations and assist in identifying strategies that strengthen support for community health initiatives.

Guided by the goals of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), the coalition met quarterly, increasing participation of area business, philanthropy and healthcare leaders. The expanded interest in health improvement sparked a successful Get Green County Moo-ving week which later added a community-wide Family Fun Fitness Festival and Farmers Market in August 2019. The Festival involved business, philanthropy, health system and other coalition members and was a well-received addition to their existing physical activity and nutrition offerings.



New business and resource engagement

The event's success inspired the Coalition to support the expansion of community health to include the growth of flexible resources and the development of a new funding model for public health. The new model, Community Health Empowerment Fund (CHEF) Teams, is guided by the WCHF in collaboration with local community foundations. As Rebecca Thompson of WCHF stated "Health does not happen alone and takes the shared values and attention of healthcare systems, business leaders, philanthropy, public health and local residents to build and coordinate resources that enable the meeting of emerging health needs and the deployment of essential evidence-based strategies to reduce chronic disease burden and death".



The graphic above shows the Wisconsin Community Health Fund's Resource Bridge. The CHEF Team works to support existing community health coalitions with targeted long and short-term resources as well as vital leadership and operational infrastructure support for ongoing community health improvement.

From the state's first electronic heart health bi-directional pathway between public health and a health system, to the development of a strong system of clinical-community linkage for heart health, to a new business and resource engagement CHEF Team model, Wisconsin's Green County is a continuing success story of the Million Hearts® initiative, implementing a small set of evidence-based priorities and targets that can improve cardiovascular health for all.

Information for this spotlight was gleaned from the May 2018 [Set Your Heart on Health Toolkit](#) from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. For more information regarding the Wisconsin Community Health Fund and CHEF Teams visit <https://www.wicomhealthfund.org/chef>.