

# M C W E N G A G E

A New Era of Community Engagement  
6th Annual Community Engagement Spring Conference

May 4, 2023



**Community Engagement**

## Welcome to MCW Engage 2023!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our 6th annual community engagement conference, "A New Era of Community Engagement." As we gather together, we will explore the changes, challenges, and successes with community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic – and beyond.



The last several years have challenged us to rethink and reimagine the way we engage with our communities. This conference will provide a platform for us to share our experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. We are thrilled to have a diverse group of speakers and participants from various sectors, community-based organizations, and institutions who will share their experiences and insights on innovative community engagement strategies.

We hope these sessions provide a valuable learning experience that will empower all of us to continue building and growing vibrant communities. Thank you for contributing to the New Era of Community Engagement!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Staci Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Staci Young, PhD**

**Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement**

**Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine**

**Director, Office of Community Engagement**

**Director, Center for Healthy Communities and Research**

**Inaugural Faculty Director, ThriveOn Collaboration**



**8:30am - 9:00am**

**Registration and Professional Headshots**

As the day gets started, optional professional headshots are being taken by the photographer at no cost!

Headshots offered by *John O'Hara Photography*

**9:00am - 9:30am**

**Welcome**

*Advancing Community Engagement to Improve Health Equity*

Staci Young, PhD

Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement

Medical College of Wisconsin

**9:30am - 10:30am**

**Keynote Address**

*Between Healthcare and Welfare: A Community Engagement Perspective*

George Hinton, MHA, Dr. Hum h.c.

CEO, Social Development Commission

**10:30am - 10:45am**

**Break and Guided Meditation**

Experience and share in a grounding guided sound bath meditation to set meaningful intentions for the day ahead.

**Facilitator:**

Melissa Blue Muhammad

Founder, Allah Mode

**10:45am - 11:45am**

**Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19**

Explore social determinants of health within the context of COVID through interactive case studies. Engage in dynamic discussions, generate actionable ideas, and gain insights from diverse perspectives. Consider questions, challenges, strengths, and opportunities for each case.

**Facilitators:**

Rebecca Bernstein, MD

Ella Dunbar, MEd

Tanya Potter, MA

Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS

Shary Pérez Torres, MPH

Azure'De (DeDe) Williams

**11:45am - 12:30pm**

**Lunch and Professional Headshots offered by *John O'Hara Photography***

**12:30pm - 1:45pm**

**Equitable COVID-19 Response:**

**Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders in Urban and Rural Settings**

Learn about effective and equitable COVID-19 public health outreach efforts developed collaboratively with communities of color in both the Milwaukee region and northcentral Wisconsin. Community Health Workers (CHWs) from African American, Hispanic, Hmong/SE Asian, and Native American communities were recruited to provide culturally and linguistically adapted infection control information, masks, and relief supplies. The City of Milwaukee Department of Public Health and MCW led this rapid response project in the Milwaukee region. Similarly, in central Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) in partnership with MCW-Central Wisconsin embarked on a project which became known as the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network (H2N). This session will describe both traditional CHW work, and strategies developed collaboratively with the CHWs as workarounds during times of crisis. Management strategies, supervision, and role reversals within multi-agency teams will be explored as part of ongoing learning from the COVID-19 event.

**Presenters:**

Zeno Franco, PhD

Mariana Savela

Cecilia Garcia

Toufue Xiong

Corina Norrbom, MD



**1:45pm - 2:00pm**

**Break**

**2:00pm - 2:45pm**

**Voices from the Frontline**

Listen to panelists discuss how their work with the community was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic for a variety of populations. Panelists will shed light on the systemic challenges and barriers to care and how care and resource provision has evolved since the onset of the pandemic. Learn what challenges are here to stay, and what lessons have been learned to inform and improve the care of the community.

**Moderator:** David Nelson, PhD, MS

**Panelists:** Eddie Cannedy  
Jessica Currie  
Raza Hotak  
Bryan Johnston, MD  
Wally Orzechowski, MSPH, MBA

**2:45pm - 3:00pm**

**Closing Remarks**

Zeno Franco, PhD  
Associate Professor, Family & Community Medicine  
Medical College of Wisconsin

# **Keynote Speaker**

## **George Hinton, MHA, D.Hum h.c.**



George P. Hinton is the Chief Executive Officer of Milwaukee County's Community Action Agency, Community Relations-Social Development Commission (SDC), and his years as a health president at one of Milwaukee's Aurora Health hospitals, serving families in economically distressed neighborhoods in our community, has created his self-imposed call to action to do more.

He oversees Wisconsin's largest Community Action Agency, which operates numerous transactional programs to improve the quality of life for Milwaukee County's low-income residents.

Through eight core service areas including residential (weatherization and lead safe homes), home ownership, financial readiness, mental health and wellness, family strengthening, nutrition, education, and career training, SDC serves tens of thousands of people each year.



SDC partners with others in the Milwaukee County Community to engage in transformative change through active research of poverty, community-centered advocacy, and targeted policy/system change work.

Hinton has a personal commitment to eliminating the barriers that keep families in poverty and living in unhealthy and unsafe environments. For nearly three decades, he has worked with the most vulnerable populations who are excluded from economic prosperity and opportunities for wealth building.

Hinton is not interested in perpetuating the models that contribute to systemic poverty. He is interested in moving from transactional fixation to transformational actions that can break the cycles of racism, inequity, and disinvestments that have led to deep segregation within the Milwaukee County community and have institutionalized poor access to resources that disadvantaged populations need to make a positive economic impact on their lives.

Hinton's goal is to transform his community into a safe, healthy, and stable place to live.

**Rebecca Bernstein, MD, MS**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She enjoys clinical practice, teaching residents and students, and doing primary care research. She has special clinical interests in vulnerable populations and primary care of complex patients and has experience working in safety-net clinics. She teaches community medicine in the M3 family medicine clerkship and serves as co-Director of the Urban and Community Health Pathway. She sees patients and precepts residents at the Ascension All Saints Family Medicine Residency and focuses on health disparities, preventive health, oral health, and refugee health.  
*Session: Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19*



**Eddie Cannedy** is an advocate of radical liberation politics in the field of Public Health. They strive to see happy and healthy people and believe we cannot have liberation and movement without a happy, healthy, and autonomously aware community. As a Certified Community Health Worker, they have five years of Health Education and Community Organizing and engagement

competency and have been involved in political advocacy since their youth. Eddie sees a future in which members of communities whose health is often in jeopardy providing the leadership and policy changes that create healthier communities.

*Session: Panelist, Voices from the Frontline*

**Jessica Currie** is the Founder and Executive Director of Missionary Currie for Women and Children Inc. Her non-profit organization is dedicated to helping underserved families in Southeast Wisconsin through transitional housing, financial literacy, workshops, free clothing, and other essential resources. Despite growing up in one of the most impoverished zip codes in Wisconsin (53206), Jessica overcame significant personal struggles including homelessness and teenage motherhood. Now she is a motivational speaker, and author who has been featured on TV, news, and radio.

**Session: *Panelist, Voices from the Frontline***



**Ella Dunbar, MEd**, is Community Outreach Manager at the Social Development Commission, Milwaukee, WI where she has worked since 2000. She manages the agency's external outreach and collaborations with organizations that complement SDC's mission. She is also involved in cultivating community partnerships and collaborations for the agency, including community-based research with academic partners. Ella participates on various boards,

committees and community taskforces. She also volunteers and supports several civic organizations in the community. Ella holds a bachelor's degree in Community Education and a master's degree in Cultural Foundations of Education from UW-Milwaukee.

**Session: *Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19***

**Zeno Franco, PhD**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He has led many community/academic partnerships, particularly on veteran and Latino mental health over the last 15 years with MCW. He is currently the site Co-PI of the All of Us Research Program, and his research focuses on using technology to improve the accessibility of care, including mobile mental health applications and database-driven systems for monitoring, and optimizing community-based interventions.



*Session: Equitable COVID-19 Response: Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders*



**Cecilia García** is of Mexican nationality and is a community health worker who has been serving the Latino community in Milwaukee for over 12 years. She is deeply committed to connecting low-income families with essential organizations and resources. Through her work with the MCW All of Us Precision Medicine Initiative and Planned Parenthood, Cecilia has become

a respected specialist and educator in her field. She facilitates sexual reproductive health classes, works at outreach health fairs, and provides resources to the community. Helping her community remains her lifelong passion.

*Session: Equitable COVID-19 Response: Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders*

**Raza Hotak** is a former first lieutenant in the Afghan National Military Academy, who received a scholarship to study English in Malaysia. He worked as an interpreter for the U.S. Marines stationed at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. He helped secure Hamid Karzai International Airport during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Raza and his family fled Kabul to Germany and then to the U.S. in August 2021.



In Milwaukee, he became a volunteer community health worker and interpreter at Aurora Walker's Point Community Clinic, helping recently arrived Afghans with resettlement and accessing healthcare, education, and basic needs. Raza strives to help Afghan women achieve independence.

**Session: Panelist, Voices from the Frontline**



**Bryan Johnston, MD**, is a Family and Addiction Medicine Physician and Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He cares for patients and teaches residents and medical students at All Saints Family Medical Residency Program and St. Joseph's Hospital. He focuses his clinical and research efforts on health equity and wellness for individuals and communities experiencing health disparities, with a special focus on people who use drugs, people experiencing food and housing insecurity, and refugee populations. Originally from Olympia, Washington, he completed all of his medical training in Milwaukee.

**Session: Panelist, Voices from the Frontline**

**Melissa Blue Muhammad** is the founder of Allah Mode—a restorative space designing healing experiences through wearable art, reiki, and sound therapy. She is a wife, mother, jeweler, spoken word, and healing artist. After losing her son during a tragic drowning, she resigned from her career and pursued her passions. She has since transformed pain into purpose by applying the significance of the materials used in her crafts as a means of facilitating healing for herself and others. Her goal is to offer natural modalities for women to tap into their power through the art of “being” rather than “doing.”



**Session: Sound Bath Meditation**



**David Nelson, PhD, MS**, is a Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin with expertise working in partnership with diverse communities around issues of health. As a community-engaged researcher, he has worked extensively with communities throughout Wisconsin on projects around childhood obesity, promotion of health and wellness, supporting senior caregivers, homelessness and housing instability, and food security. His post-doctoral training in community-based participatory research (CBPR) instilled in him the importance of engaging communities throughout the research process as equal partners. His approach is to be culturally humble and to support the health needs of the community as they define those needs.

**Session: Moderator, Voices From the Frontline**

**Corina Norrbom, MD**, is an Assistant Professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Central Wisconsin. She co-directs the Physician in the Community Pathway, through which she mentors students in community-engaged scholarly projects. She is also Health Policy Fellow at the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service. She is currently Project Director for the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network and Rural Resiliency Network programs. She is Co-PI for the Advocates in Medicine Pathway, an MCW-CW pipeline program targeting Hmong and rural undergraduate students. She was a recipient of the 2021 MCW President's Community Engagement Award. She has practiced full-spectrum Family Medicine in rural northeast Wisconsin and New Zealand.



**Session: *Equitable COVID-19 Response: Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders***



**Walter (Wally) Orzechowski, MSPH, MBA**, retired in 2023 as the Executive Director of the Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP), a rural, anti-poverty program located in southwestern Wisconsin. While there, Wally initiated multiple new programs and services including medical and dental clinics, mental health support, addiction recovery, suicide prevention, rural transportation, food

security, and many others. During the last two-plus years, his organization initiated new programming to support rural communities through the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing coordination and support to the five local county health departments and other healthcare organizations.

**Session: *Panelist, Voices from the Frontline***



**Shary Pérez Torres, MPH**, is the Health Research Program Coordinator at the United Community Center (UCC). The UCC is a Latino non-profit organization established in 1970, providing a variety of educational, health, and social service programs to the Milwaukee area Latino community. As part of the Health Research Department, she works to facilitate community health research projects, activities, and programs that promote the physical and mental well-being of Hispanics and community residents to reduce or eliminate inequities in the health and wellness of the community. She collaborates on projects and research grants with a variety of universities in Wisconsin.

***Session: Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19***

**Tanya Potter, MA**, serves as the TSBIRT (Trauma - Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral, Treatment) Project Coordinator at Workforce Resource, Inc. In this work, Tanya oversees the implementation of a trauma screening and referral protocol to address trauma barriers to employment within the W-2 Program in northwestern Wisconsin. Tanya earned her BSW from UW-Eau Claire, and her MA in Public Administration from Saint Mary's University. She has over 17 years of experience as a domestic violence advocate, trauma recovery specialist, case manager, and internship field supervisor. She believes community engagement is a critical aspect of the Human Services field and advocates for volunteerism, social activism, and creating intentional community relationships.



***Session: Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19***



**Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS**, is an Associate Professor and the Co-Director of Medical Student Education in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She is a community-engaged health researcher and educator, with appointments in several departments. Her research focuses on using community-engaged research principles to address health issues, such as veteran health, food security, school-based health, and rural health. She also serves as the course director for several courses in the medical school and graduate school.

***Session: Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19***

**Mariana Savela, BA**, is the Program Manager and a Certified Health Navigator with the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network (H2N), a project with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS). Her role involves leading various H2N projects, as well as overseeing the budget to ensure that expenses are attributed to the correct grants. As a bilingual (English/Spanish) Health Navigator, she supports consumers in navigating complex healthcare systems and shows great commitment to the Hispanic community through her ongoing involvement and advocacy efforts.



***Session: Equitable COVID-19 Response: Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders***



**Azure'De (DeDe) Williams** is the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Area Health Education Center (MAHEC). Since 2017, she has been responsible for recruiting a diverse group of healthcare professionals, securing sponsors and strategic alliances, partnering with advocacy groups to increase engagement in local healthcare systems, liaising with governmental agencies focused on diversity and health disparities, and

managing MAHEC training programs. With over 25 years of work experience in the non-profit sector, she supports efforts in addressing health disparities and achievement gaps through program development, civic engagement and program evaluation. She received the 2021 MCW President's Award for her exemplary community-engaged work with MCW and partners.

***Session: Ideas to Action: Addressing Social Determinants of Health During COVID-19***

**Toufue Xiong** is a Community Coordinator with the Hmong and Hispanic Communication Network (H2N) in Wausau, WI. Bilingual in Hmong and English, Toufue works closely with Community Health Workers (CHWs) and vaccinators to coordinate pop-up vaccination clinics in safe locations that are sensitive to community needs. Toufue provides support and resources to CHWs and partners with local organizations and healthcare providers to ensure that essential resources are provided to the community. He is also pursuing his BS in Data Analytics at UW-Stevens Point. Toufue is a lifelong learner who is passionate about serving his community.

***Session: Equitable COVID-19 Response: Moving from CHWs to Community Health Leaders***





**Staci Young, PhD**, is the Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Director of the Office of Community Engagement at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She is also a Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, Director of the Center for Healthy Communities and Research, and the Inaugural Faculty Director for the ThriveOn Collaboration. She teaches graduate courses and mentors students for MCW's PhD in

Public and Community Health program, is a founding faculty member in the DrPH program, and serves as a research faculty advisor for the student-run Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured. As a medical sociologist, her work demonstrates a deep commitment to examining structural barriers and conditions that contribute to health disparities. Dr. Young has been the Principal Investigator for multiple research projects with longstanding local and statewide partners, addressing the public and community health workforce, and the role of safety net clinics in ensuring access to healthcare for the uninsured. She is a co-investigator for NIH-funded studies related to cancer prevention and disparities among racial and ethnic minority women. She works in partnership with the Benedict Center – addressing women's exposure to violence – and worked to increase access to safe shelter and housing for women in street-based sex work.

***Session: Welcome Address, Advancing Community Engagement to Improve Health Equity***



**2023 Spring Conference  
Planning Committee**

**Ella Dunbar, MEd**  
Community Outreach Manager  
*Social Development Commission*

**Shary Pérez Torres, MPH**  
Health Research Program Coordinator  
*United Community Center*

**Tanya Potter, MA**  
T-SBIRT Project Coordinator  
*Workforce Resource, Inc.*

**LaNelle Ramey, MA**  
Executive Director  
*MENTOR Greater Milwaukee*

**Azure'De (DeDe) Williams**  
Executive Director  
*Milwaukee Area Health Education Center*



***2023 MCW President's  
Community Engagement Award***

**The President's Community Engagement Award annually recognizes exemplary community-academic partnerships, community-engaged research and community outreach activities of faculty, staff, students and community partners of MCW.**

**Join us in congratulating this year's winners!**

**MCW Faculty**

**Team of David Milia, MD, and Terri deRoon-Cassini, PhD**

**MCW Staff**

**Karen Dotson, MHSA**

**MCW Student**

**laong Vang**

**Community Partners/Program**

**Vera Roddy, BA**

**and**

**First Presbyterian Church Wausau Free Clinic (WFC)**



*The Medical College of Wisconsin's  
Office of Community Engagement  
thanks you for joining us today!*

**Staci Young, PhD**  
Senior Associate Dean for Community  
Engagement & Professor

**Kristine Burke, MPH, MSW**  
Program Coordinator

**Yesica Desarden**  
Program Coordinator

**Zeno Franco, PhD**  
Associate Professor

**Kelsey Heindel**  
Program Coordinator

**Ayodele Idowu, MBA**  
Business Operations Coordinator

**Bryan Johnston, MD**  
Assistant Professor

**Jai Lor**  
Administrative Associate

**David Nelson, PhD, MS**  
Professor

**Sarah O'Connor, MS**  
Program Director

**Leslie Ruffalo, PhD, MS**  
Associate Professor

**Karri Stock**  
Senior Communications Consultant  
Office of Communication's Community Engagement Liaison



MCW Community Engagement

# PROGRAMMING

## Spotlight Series

This monthly virtual series features community partners and the important work they are doing for and with the community; highlights their goals, motivations, and accomplishments, and the ways they have partnered with people and programs at MCW. Hear stories of resilience and inspiration from those who work on the ground – often silently – to make a positive impact on the health and lives of people in our community.

*Join us virtually on the 3rd or 4th Wednesday of the month at 4 pm.*

## Poster Session

The MCW Office of Community Engagement hosts an annual poster session to showcase projects, research, and lessons learned from the field of community-engaged research by MCW students, staff, faculty, and academic and community collaborators.

*Join us this November!*

## Immersion Program

This 3.5-day program focuses on the foundational elements necessary for creating successful, sustainable, and authentic community-academic partnerships. Participants will learn the principles and processes of community engagement and community-engaged research (CEnR), learn from community partners' experiences with community-academic partnerships, engage in discussion with researchers who've developed and maintained partnerships, and explore approaches to relationship development.

*2023 applications have closed. Join our email list for future announcements!*

*Visit our website to join our email list and  
learn more about our programming :*

[www.mcw.edu/departments/community-engagement](http://www.mcw.edu/departments/community-engagement)

MCW *Community Engagement*

# RECOGNITION

## Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

In 2015, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which works to develop networks of ideas and institutions to advance teaching and learning, awarded the Community Engagement Classification to the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) in recognition of MCW's community engagement practices. The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification designation for MCW is an honor and a monumental achievement, as it recognizes the innumerable exemplary campus-wide programs and initiatives that are focused on excellence in community engagement and on serving the needs of our communities. MCW is now one of four medical schools nationwide that have received this honor.



## Richard Guarasci Award for Institutional Transformation

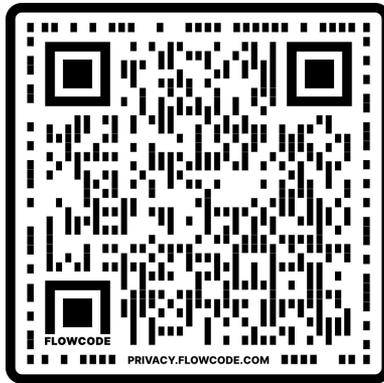


The Richard Guarasci Award for Institutional Transformation recognizes institutions that have successfully implemented institution-wide efforts to address issues of public concern by aligning teaching, research, practice, and values in service of the common good. As a national leader in community engagement, the Medical College of Wisconsin was

### Campus Compact

recognized for this award in 2020 for integrating engagement into research, education, and clinical care with the goal of advancing health policy and advocacy and addressing the social determinants of health. "Through initiatives like [Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment] and its extended community-engaged research, the Medical College of Wisconsin demonstrates a deep strategic commitment to community, embracing its responsibility as a place-based institution to address diverse health needs throughout Wisconsin."

*Please scan the QR code below to learn more about common community engagement terms, principles of community engagement, and to explore other valuable resources.*



MCW Community Engagement

# DONATION DRIVE: ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

The Office of Community Engagement is collecting underwear and backpacks to be supplied to one or more Milwaukee-area community organization partners serving people experiencing housing instability and other challenges.



Scan QR code to donate via Amazon Wishlist

**May 1- May 31, you can help by donating:**

- NEW packages of underwear for children and adults
- New and gently used adult-size backpacks that are clean with working zippers and no holes

Questions? Contact Jai Lor in the MCW Office of Community Engagement  
jlor@mcw.edu | 414-955-4434







