NEW Leadership Wisconsin: Building Leadership Capacity to Reduce Health Disparities

HWPP PROJECT NUMBER 2007D-34

PROJECT SUMMARY
Describe the major purpose of the project, the need and how it relates to the Health Improvement Model. Briefly describe the project implementation plan, methods to be utilized and involvement of affected communities. Detail the community-academic partnership plan. Specify the evaluation method that will be used to measure feasible, quantifiable and significant outcomes and the impact the project will have on the health of Wisconsin residents. Do not exceed this one page.

The project purpose is to transform health improvement efforts through building health policy leadership capacity among college students and MCW students. This purpose relates to the Health Improvement Model’s focus on specific populations (underserved populations in the Milwaukee area, especially women). During a summer 2008 pilot project, students will use health policy leadership modules to develop their capacity to address community health disparities. The critical need to build this capacity is indicated by the racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes still existent in Wisconsin. Minorities experience much higher rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and other health conditions than do whites. As communities become more diverse, the future health of all WI residents will be influenced by our success in reducing health disparities across racial and ethnic minority groups (Wisconsin Minority Health Report, 1996-2000; www.statehealthfacts.org, 2001-2004).

The project partnership proposes five innovative strategies to expand the impact of a currently HWPP-funded project, NEW Leadership Wisconsin: Building Health Policy Leadership Capacity in the Health Care Workforce. We will: (1) Implement summer 2008 program targeting female undergraduate (MMC and selected students from other WI public/private colleges and universities) with priority given to underserved and underrepresented women. Include option to meet unique educational needs of 1st year MMC graduate and MCW medical students interested in careers in public health and health policy; (2) Provide all summer participants with service learning “action projects” in community health settings that address health disparities; (3) Develop a monthly seminar series in which students can discuss their action projects with NEW Leadership Wisconsin staff and selected MMC and MCW faculty; (4) Develop a model to integrate greater awareness of public health disparities and policy challenges facing Wisconsin and the local Milwaukee community into MMC curriculum; and, (5) Create Web site to facilitate the learning process and allow program graduates to communicate internally and share their lessons and outcomes with other Center for American Women in Politics (CAWP) programs across the nation.

Given current HWPP project success, we are confident this expansion will work. The health policy leadership module (in process) will be tested in summer 2007 and revised as needed. While this project will be unique, we will collaborate with key community health stakeholders, especially for service learning. They may include: InHealth WI, IMPACT, and WI Women Equal Prosperity (WW=E).

An effective MMC/MCW partnership already exists. For the new project, Dr. Krista Moore, MMC Associate Professor, will provide extensive experience in health policy (especially in gerontology), curriculum design, and working with students in community service learning settings. Dr. Ann Maguire, MCW Assistant Professor, will continue to partner on the in-depth expansion of current HWPP work. Both will coordinate activities with Ms. Yvonne Lumsden-Dill, Executive Director, MMC’s Women’s Leadership Institute, who plans and conducts the summer program.

Evaluation methods will include: (1) Administer pre- and post-program surveys (to determine increased knowledge of health care disparities/policy issues) to summer student participants; (2) Track participants via online/telephone surveys to assess increased public/community health involvement; (3) Conduct participant focus groups to refine summer program and provide input to monthly seminar and curricular enrichment; and, (4) Survey community stakeholders to assess needed program/service learning refinements.

The expected impact is increased student awareness of health disparities/public policy issues and enhanced leadership skills to improve the health of WI residents. The results of this initiative will be publicized and shared with campuses across the state so it may serve as a model for community-campus partnership. Nationwide dissemination of results will be via the new Web site.