This project will develop a deliberate and transparent collaborative plan between statewide public health system partners to advance the state health plan system priority of a sufficient, and competent public health workforce. Wisconsin’s State health plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010, has identified public health workforce as a system priority with objectives related to competency, diversity, and enumeration. In order to effectively address the complex components of the Health Improvement Model (Health Risks, Specific Populations of Concern, Preventable Causes of Disease, and System Transformation), Wisconsin must have a workforce that is competent and sufficient. Unfortunately, momentum has slowed on this priority, and therefore specific, strategic steps forward must be taken. This project will work to develop engagement and ownership of this critical system priority by broad public health system partners.

The primary goals of this plan are to first, develop and disseminate a Call to Action, and second, develop a sustainable process that generates a commitment to action and strong partnerships between broad public health system partners. The five core partners in this project will develop a strong partnership as a starting point for this project. However, it is essential that this partnership be broadened and include diverse stakeholders that will commit to the creation and dissemination of the Call to Action. At the conclusion of this project, there will be a written and prioritized plan for the public health workforce in Wisconsin, and a commitment to on-going action that will be facilitated and monitored beyond the life of this grant.

Seven primary objectives of this project are to: (1) Collect and analyze Wisconsin’s current data on public health workforce sufficiency and competency (Summer/Fall 2007); (2) Identify best practices in public health workforce enumeration and development (Summer/Fall 2007); (3) Conduct statewide Public Health Workforce Summit with leadership by five key partners and committed participation by broad public health workforce (Winter 2007-08); (4) Develop a comprehensive Call to Action based on Summit findings (Spring 2008); (5) Hold Commitment to Action Kickoff (Spring 2008); (6) Disseminate Call to Action to broad public health workforce (Summer 2008); (7) Develop process to sustain public health system partner commitment to action and collaborative relationships (Ongoing).

Key to the success of this Call to Action will be strong public health system partnerships. The key partners in this project include the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA), Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH), Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB), and Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (AHEC). All of these organizations have had a history of commitment to advancing the public health workforce and have worked together in varying levels to advance the state health plan priorities. Each of these five partners have also committed to a unique role in ongoing efforts to advance the Call to Action that are outlined in the sustainability section. The project will use the partnership principles outlined as guidance for the grant as tenets for the statewide Summit and Call to Action. All stages of partnership development will be addressed as the activities of this grant project progress. Planning of this effort will take place based on best practices for collaborative action, and the history in Wisconsin that sustainable collaboration can only be maintained if a common vision is developed and commitment to partnerships is sustained.

This project will evaluate success by looking at successful completion of the objectives as well as meeting the overall goals of advancing the Healthiest Wisconsin 2010 System priority of a sufficient and competent workforce. Outcomes include: workforce data collected and analyzed (report); best practices in workforce development identified (report); statewide Summit held (participant list and feedback); Call to Action developed (report); Commitment to Action kick-off (participant list and feedback; commitment forms); Call to Action disseminated (dissemination plan outlined and implemented); sustained commitment to action (ongoing efforts documented).

The health of the public is a priority to Wisconsin. In order to assure that the health priorities are addressed, prevention is a key focus, population groups at risk are identified and prioritized, and the systems transform, the public health workforce has to be diverse, sufficient and competent. Taking the first steps to identify a commitment to action for the state public health workforce will provide the opportunity to make lasting and systemic change.