



Comprehensive Injury Center

January 31, 2025

Selection Committee
President's Community Engagement Award
Medical College of Wisconsin
8701 Watertown Plank Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53226

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest possible recommendation for the 414LIFE team at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) to be considered for the MCW President's Community Engagement Award. I have been working with the 414LIFE team since its inception in 2019 and currently, as Director of the Comprehensive Injury Center, the 414LIFE is housed in our Division of Community Safety. Director Lynn Lewis oversees the program within this division. The 414LIFE team is a remarkable example of a community and hospital-based partnership that is not only transformative but also lifesaving in its impact. Through its innovative approach to violence prevention, along with community engagement and collaboration, this team has consistently gone above and beyond in addressing the complex challenges of violence and trauma within our community.

414LIFE is a multi-faceted violence prevention program that integrates the expertise of community members to perform outreach and violence prevention within neighborhoods and in hospitals (Froedtert Hospital, Ascension St. Joes, Advocate Aurora, and Children's Wisconsin) across Milwaukee. The program takes a proactive, community-centered approach that blends hospital-based response, street-level intervention, and public health strategies to prevent violence before it happens, while also responding to those affected by it to prevent future violence related injury. The team's work is vital to reducing the cycle of violence and offering hope to those impacted by trauma through partnering with other agencies (schools, County of Milwaukee, City of Milwaukee Health Department, Office of Community Wellness and Safety) to coordinate response to conflict and violence.

One of the key strengths of the 414LIFE program is its ability to bridge the often-fragmented gap between healthcare systems and the communities most at risk for violence. This collaboration is especially important in our city, where the effects of violence disproportionately impact marginalized populations already at risk for health disparities. By providing direct intervention to those who are injured or at high risk for future harm, 414LIFE not only addresses immediate needs but also works to prevent future violence through its community outreach efforts, education, and healing initiatives.

The team's commitment to improving the health and safety of our community is matched by their dedication to fostering long-term change. The program's success is evident not only in the numbers it reaches but also in the real, tangible changes it has made to individuals' lives. Stories of personal transformation from both participants and their families underscore the program's profound impact. Daily team members are connecting with participants in the program, talking through situations to maintain a peaceful response, while also connecting participants with other organizations that can help with social determinants of health.

When considering the numbers, over 1,500 patients have been referred to 414LIFE in the hospital since May 2019. Nearly half (45%) are supported by the 414LIFE community programming to support patients after

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hospital discharge while they continue to recovery back in the community. 414LIFE most commonly supports patients with multiple post-injury needs rooted in social determinants of health, such as financial assistance (26%), mental health support (22%), and retaliation prevention (20%). To accomplish this, 414LIFE spends anywhere from 15 minutes to 28 hours per patient to support them and their loved ones as soon as possible after violent victimization. On the community-side of the program there have been over 250 successful mediations that averted violence to resolve conflict – that's at least 250 people who were not injured or killed from violence. The community team engages in canvassing neighborhoods with recent incidents of violence to identify situations to intervene, works within schools to discuss ways to resolve conflict without violence, and make referrals to much needed resources such as to secure stable housing, food and other immediate needs. And in 2024, for the second year in a row, there has been a significant reduction in firearm related homicide and non-fatal shootings in Milwaukee.

Through community mobilization, the 414LIFE team engage with local organizations, schools, and other stakeholders to create a more comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to violence prevention. This network of collaboration is a testament to the team's dedication to take a public health approach to make Milwaukee a safer and healthier place for all its residents.

The 414LIFE team truly exemplifies the spirit of community engagement and service. Their work is vital to reducing violence, enhancing public health, and making meaningful connections that empower individuals and communities. I believe the President's Community Engagement Award would be a well-deserved recognition of the tireless efforts of the 414LIFE team and the transformative impact they have had on both individuals and our broader community.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination. I wholeheartedly support the 414LIFE team's candidacy and remain confident that their ongoing work will continue to improve lives for years to come.

Sincerely,



Terri deRoos-Cassini, Ph.D., M.S.

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