

# MCW Surgery

*knowledge changing life*

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February 10, 2023

Dr. John R. Raymond, MD  
President and CEO  
MCW President's Community Engagement Awards Committee  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
8701 Watertown Plank Road  
Milwaukee WI 53226

RE: Nomination of Dr. David Milia and Dr. Terri deRoon-Cassini for the MCW President's Community Engagement Award – 414LIFE Program

Dear Dr. Raymond and Members of the President's Community Engagement Award Committee:

It is with tremendous enthusiasm that I nominate Dr. David Milia and Dr. Terri deRoon-Cassini for the MCW 2023 President's Community Engagement Award to recognize their efforts to curb gun violence in Milwaukee through Milwaukee's first hospital-based violence interruption program 414LIFE. Importantly, this program was developed in partnership with the City of Milwaukee Health Department Office of Violence Prevention. This partnership would not be possible without Froedtert Hospital's Trauma Center and front-line support.

David is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and a proud alumnus of the Medical College of Wisconsin. His surgical training was completed at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, Pennsylvania with a fellowship in surgical critical care here at MCW. He joined our faculty in 2010. David is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserve Medical Corps and completed four military surgical deployments to Afghanistan. We are very fortunate that David is currently medical director of our Level I trauma program: arguably one of the most important administrative positions within the clinical arena at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. His commitment to the community is made evident through his leadership with the 414LIFE Program and its efforts to curb gun violence in our community.

Terri received her masters and PhD in clinical psychology from Marquette University. Dr. deRoon-Cassini has a full-time appointment as Professor in the Department of Surgery, Division of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery at MCW and secondary appointments with the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine and the Institute for Health and Safety. She is also Director of the MCW Comprehensive Injury Center. Her expertise is in working with survivors of traumatic injury and with individuals having difficulty coping with acute illness in need of emergency surgical intervention. Her nationally funded research focuses on trauma-associated post-traumatic stress and efforts to address violence prevention. Her work has helped to inform the initiatives and scope of 414LIFE's important mission.

Drs. Milia and deRoon-Cassini bring their collective first-hand experience and expertise to the 414LIFE Program by viewing violence through a different lens. They see violence as a public health emergency requiring a public health response; reduce violence by treating it like a disease. Methods that work to control disease are also effective in interrupting violence and keeping it from spreading. A public health approach to violence prevention focuses on identifying individuals, families, and communities most affected by violence and reducing the severity of modifiable root causes. The aim is to stop violence before it starts, and community engagement and ultimately prevention is the most effective, long-term

solution to violence. This approach is separate but complementary to the criminal justice system's efforts to reduce violence through enforcement, and suppression strategies. Combining public health, trauma centers and emergency rooms, and the community, in a coordinated partnership can lead to safer, healthier communities.

The F&MCW hospital-based violence intervention program is designed to interrupt the cycle of violence through interventions which begin when gunshot victims are brought to the Froedtert Hospital Trauma Center. The in-hospital coordinator of the Violence Interruption Program meets with patients to assess their particular situation. Patients who can benefit from interventions are connected with appropriate resources, which may include community resources, as well as resources from Froedtert Hospital to help patients recover and avoid future violent events.

This novel approach is seeing results. As of November 11, 2022, homicides and non-fatal shootings are down significantly in two of the City of Milwaukee's 414LIFE Priority Neighborhoods. In Old North Milwaukee, homicides are down 40% and non-fatal shootings decreased by 18%. In Walker's Point, the incidence of homicide is down 50% and non-fatal shootings have decreased by 41%. These results represent the hard work, spirit, and promise of Milwaukee's residents and all sectors working together with the courage and conviction to heal the past and make a better present and future through the 414LILFE Program. These goals chart a course for collective action to advance more effective, coordinated, and sustained efforts to prevent violence and ensure the safety of all Milwaukee's residents.

In summary, Dr. David Milia and Dr. Terri deRoon-Cassini demonstrate the care, compassion and resolute ambition indicative of the core values of Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin and that of the President's Community Engagement Award. As Department of Surgery Chair, I am proud of the collaboration of the Froedtert Trauma Center, the City of Milwaukee and the leadership and support of Drs. Milia and deRoon-Cassini. As such, it is with great pride that I submit this nomination of Drs. Milia and deRoon-Cassini for their extraordinary efforts with the 414Life Program in partnership with the City of Milwaukee Health Department, Office of Violence Prevention. I am also pleased to include a letter of support from Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson as well as articles that further demonstrate the goals of this unique partnership. I would like to thank the Committee for their thoughtful consideration of this nomination.

Warmest regards,



Douglas B. Evans, MD