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Endowment Transitions from Grantmaker to Changemaker

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Improving the health of communities is a foundational mission of the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). The last 10 years have been characterized by substantial progress in fulfillment of our promise to the public, and plans for the future are poised to be even more transformative.

The enhanced capacity to effect change began with Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin's decision in 1999 to become a for-profit stock corporation. This conversion led to the Insurance Commissioner of Wisconsin issuing an order directing that the proceeds from this process be allocated equally to Wisconsin's two medical schools, MCW and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. MCW's portion of the funds was used to create an endowment with an initial value of \$318 million called Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin. In 2004, MCW funded its first initiatives through the endowment in community health, research, and education.

In the years that have followed, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin (AHW) endowment has helped over 150 MCW faculty mem-

bers engage more than 350 diverse community groups to advance public and community health. The AHW endowment has awarded \$164.8 million to 311 initiatives dedicated to improving community health, advancing biomedical and population health research, and enhancing education for health professionals

long-term change for maximum impact in the community.

As a changemaker, the AHW endowment will shift its focus to other roles beyond making grants. These roles include convening needed multisector discussions and partnerships, informing smart policies and effective health

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in Wisconsin. In addition, these opportunities to work with partners to change the health of Wisconsin were accomplished with an underlying purpose of excellent financial stewardship. With this philosophy, the endowment has grown to more than \$419 million, allowing MCW and its partners to be well positioned to further advance the AHW vision into the future.

On May 8, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment formally celebrated its 10-year anniversary by looking forward and pledging to build on the knowledge and experience gained during the last decade. The vision for the future is to shift from an emphasis on grantmaking to an emphasis on changemaking. This will challenge AHW to be proactive in seeking initiatives that focus on strategic,

improvement efforts, and investing differently to seek sustainable results and more substantially transform systems throughout Wisconsin.

With our partners, MCW maintains a commitment to inform by bringing meaningful and data-driven ideas into the public sphere to encourage healthy behaviors. Through the leadership of our faculty and community stakeholders, we aim to influence participation and collaboration in community-engaged research and interventions as well as strong public policy that enhances the quality of life in Wisconsin. Intrinsic to these goals is the responsibility to learn about the most urgent problems facing Wisconsin communities through dialogue and research so MCW can bring to bear the resources and talents of its faculty to begin

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translating knowledge into solutions.

As a whole, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment, using a community-academic partnership model, has supported research into basic, clinical, translational and population science; enhancement in undergraduate and graduate medical education; and education for health and public health professionals, as well as patients, to improve the health of people in Wisconsin. Capitalizing on strengths in these essential areas, the endowment's framework for the future will integrate cross-cutting initiatives that address Wisconsin's leading causes of death and disability. In our role as changemaker, we will make strategic, targeted investments designed to result in measurable improvement in long-range outcomes.

These initiatives will be complemented by responsive funding opportunities dedicated to pilot and development projects whose results will demonstrate the viability of new ideas for further implementation. This approach will allow MCW to be nimble while also upholding our core priorities.

Both the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment's history and future are built on collaboration and the diligence of community partners statewide. The evaluation of our efforts to date and the development of our plan for the next 5 years and beyond were solidly informed through input from public stakeholders, our board of trustees, MCW faculty, staff, and students, and the directors of other similar conversion foundations, who contributed lessons learned and best practices. This model has served the state well and has our full confidence as we move ahead.

Through the past 10 years, the Medical College of Wisconsin has been acutely aware of the unique responsibility and opportunity that has been provided to the medical schools in Wisconsin through this conversion fund. Working with our partners, MCW and the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment is committed to catalyzing positive change to secure better health for Wisconsin communities.

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