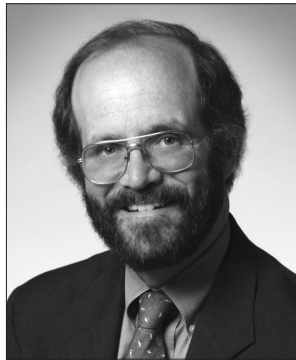




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Discovery, Education and Community Engagement—Foundations for Improving Public Health

Richard Moss, PhD; Robert N. Golden, MD

This is the second of two articles that describe the activities of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) Wisconsin Partnership Program. The program represents a far-reaching commitment by the school to greatly improve the health of people in Wisconsin in the years to come. The Wisconsin Partnership Program—which is celebrating its 10th anniversary and recently released a plan for its next 5 years—includes two main, complementary committees: the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) and the Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC). SMPH faculty members chair the committees. Richard Moss, PhD, chairs the PERC; Patrick Remington, MD, MPH chairs the OAC. The first article was published in the August 2014 issue of WMJ (volume 113, number 4).

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In the decade since its 2004 inception, the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) has allocated grant funds to research, education, and community partnerships designed to improve the health of state residents. In the August 2014 Dean's Corner, we summarized the impact of programs funded by the

tional, and applied public health research, as well as education and training and community interventions.

PERC Strategic Programs

The following strategic PERC programs are designed to launch new approaches to health

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WPP's Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC), which focuses on collaborative projects involving community and local government agencies and university faculty. This month, we describe the activities of the WPP's other arm, the Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC), which focuses on research and education projects. This committee has awarded 137 grants totaling \$99.3 million—a significant contribution to our vision of making Wisconsin a healthier state.

The PERC supports a remarkable breadth of meritorious programs, selecting those with the greatest potential impact on the health of people in Wisconsin. PERC grants aim to address issues of health and health care in a continuum that spans basic, clinical, transla-

and health care issues in response to emerging needs in the state.

The **Master of Public Health (MPH) Program**, which received start-up funding from the PERC, responds to the State Health Plan goal of developing a sufficient, competent, and diverse public health workforce. Two-thirds of its graduates have remained in Wisconsin and are working for local and government public health agencies, health care organizations, schools, and universities.

Transforming Medical Education (TME) is making significant progress toward more fully integrating public health into the educational experiences of our medical students and graduate medical trainees. Integrative cases comprise a particularly innovative component of

TME, which has developed 7 comprehensive case studies. With a cast of instructors from the SMPH and communities, students examine health issues from many perspectives, including public health, social and ethical issues, health care systems, clinical services, and basic science. The SMPH is widely considered to be among the nation's top programs for integrating public health into the curriculum.

The **Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM)**, which received start-up funding from the PERC, is dedicated to increasing the number of physicians who will practice in rural Wisconsin. Fifty SMPH students have completed the WARM program, and more than 60% of them have entered Wisconsin residencies.

The Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW) collects data from healthy people across Wisconsin and makes the data available to researchers and public health officers to identify population health priorities and rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of state and community programs and policies in improving population health. As examples, SHOW evaluated the effectiveness of the statewide smoking ban and partnered with the state of Wisconsin to obtain data and biological samples to measure mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels in people who fish in the state. SHOW also is collaborating with community partners in Racine County on an application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for Promise Zone funding, a federal initiative focused on poverty-related challenges.

The **Health Innovations Program (HIP)** works to improve health care delivery and population health across Wisconsin through partnerships between UW faculty and Wisconsin health organizations. For example, together with the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality and the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, HIP hosts statewide educational events that focus on improving the quality of care for patients with diabetes and other high-priority chronic conditions.

Investigator-Initiated Research Projects

The PERC also features a robust portfolio of

SMPH faculty-initiated research programs. The **New Investigator Program** provides opportunities for early-career faculty to initiate new, innovative pilot research projects that, if successful, can lead to more substantial extramural support from federal and other granting agencies.

The **Collaborative Health Sciences Program** supports established investigators in new programs of collaborative, interdisciplinary research focused on critical health problems that haven't yielded to traditional approaches. With PERC funding for initial feasibility studies, the best of these ultimately succeed in securing extramural funding and opening subfields of research such as antibiotic resistance in infectious diseases and early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

Sustained Impact Through Leveraging

Much of the PERC grant funding is intended to support project initiation with the anticipation that sustainability will depend upon competitive extramural support for research or institutional support for educational initiatives. Overall, sustainability has been extraordinary: PERC-initiated projects have leveraged more than \$220 million in extramural funding—more than double the total PERC grants that have been awarded.

OAC/PERC Joint Programs

Bringing the PERC and OAC resources together to support programs is a priority for both committees and reflects their shared purpose. For example, the OAC initiated the Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families (LIHF), which addresses the dramatic disparities in birth outcomes for African Americans in Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine. In turn, the PERC became a partner in advancing this program and supported the appointment of a maternal and child health expert, Deborah Ehrenthal, MD, MPH. She provides faculty leadership in bringing together health care providers and public health leaders, and engaging community leaders and other stakeholders in a coordinated effort aimed at this concern through research, education, and community interventions.

Another OAC/PERC collaboration—the Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Initiative—addresses one of the most challenging public health issues facing Wisconsin. The PERC established the program, and the OAC committed to support the development of community-level interventions to help prevent childhood obesity. This initiative brings together many organizations in the state that have been addressing obesity separately and provides an infrastructure to work together toward common solutions.

Other collaborations involve successful OAC community grants that then receive follow-up PERC support for research that tests and evaluates the generalizability of findings on a broad, statewide scale. An example of this approach is a fall-reduction intervention developed by Jane Mahoney, MD, professor of medicine, which received support for a larger scale study after a successful community pilot program.

Looking Ahead

Wisconsin faces substantive, entrenched public health challenges. The most effective responses require broad-based mobilization of stakeholders. Collaboration by the OAC and PERC on two of the most challenging public health issues—infant mortality among African Americans and the obesity epidemic—provide strong evidence of the SMPH's commitment through the Wisconsin Partnership Program to provide leadership in addressing difficult health problems.

The PERC also has devoted significant resources to innovative changes in education of the next generation of health care professionals. These innovations reflect our vision of integrating the fields of medicine and public health. At the same time, the PERC hopes to create an environment that nurtures close, collaborative partnerships between Wisconsin communities and our faculty. In this way, we hope to advance the health of the people of Wisconsin, and in doing so, serve as a national example that other states can emulate.

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