



The Superheroes Partnership

Diversity
MATTERS
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



Our Superheroes Have Real Powers

“The more you partner with diverse groups, the more you learn to identify disparities and understand how they affect people’s lives.”

– Elize Brown, DrPH, JD

Health disparities in Wisconsin are prevalent and severe.

In a recent report from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, no age group in Wisconsin received a health disparities grade higher than a “C.” The Sullivan Commission on Diversity, one of the leading sources on diversity in the public health workforce, points to a diverse workforce as a means to address current and future health disparities. Cultural differences, a lack of access to adequate health coverage, combined with high rates of poverty and unemployment, contribute to the substantial ethnic and racial disparities in health status and health outcomes. Minorities comprise over 13% of Wisconsin’s population, yet account for less than 10% of local public health employees.

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Why Diversity Matters

“Minority Americans working in health care can help end disparities in health status. A diverse health workforce is important in assuring the delivery of culturally competent health care and preventative services. Minority health professionals can serve as role models in our diverse communities, and are five times more likely to treat other underrepresented minorities in underserved areas.”

– U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

While health disparities result from a myriad of complex causes, one major solution is increasing the diversity of the public health workforce. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) notes that “increasing the number of health professionals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups is viewed as

an integral part of the solution to improving access to care” and that “strategies to increase the numbers of underrepresented minority physicians and other health professionals are likely to increase access to care by underserved minority populations.”

This project is funded wholly by the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, a component of the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Increasing diversity offers a range of benefits including:

- ▶ **Increased access** to healthcare
- ▶ **A healthy, thriving workforce**
- ▶ **Increased cultural competence** among public health workers
- ▶ **Opportunities for minority health professionals** to serve as role models
- ▶ **Advancements** in medical/public health research

Diversity Matters Project Overview

Building a healthier, safer Wisconsin can be accomplished through policy, partnership and a diverse workforce. Established in 2011, Diversity Matters is a five-year partnership initiative among the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA), Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) with the primary goal of increasing the diversity of Wisconsin’s public health workforce by motivating

the future public health workforce—African American and Hispanic high school and college students—to explore and enter a career in public health. We believe that *Our Superheroes Have Real Powers*; and that Wisconsin’s public health workforce is, and should continue to be, comprised of diverse “superheroes” who all have the shared mission of creating a better Wisconsin for all.

The Diversity Matters project will target:

- ▶ **Parents** of African American & Hispanic high school students
- ▶ **Students** who are African American & Hispanic in high school
- ▶ **Current College Students** who are African American & Hispanic, within the first two years of college
- ▶ **Public Health Workers**, especially those of color
- ▶ **Community Organizations**, especially those with a public health focus and who employ public health professionals

Project Outcomes:

Increased cultural competence among public health workers

Greater access to healthcare

Minority health professionals serve as role models



Primary Partnership Goal:

Jointly collaborate in the effort to increase the diversity of Wisconsin’s public health workforce.



Super Partners Make the Difference!

A diverse talent pipeline is essential for the state of Wisconsin.

Society creates so many fictional superheroes to solve the world's problems. The truth is the real superheroes are the professionals in our public health workforce! We believe that this diverse talent can be developed through leadership, mentoring, and sponsorship programs. By engaging youth, their parents,

and Wisconsin's current public health professionals, we can come together to produce a workforce of superheroes who will create a healthier Wisconsin for generations to come.

We believe that successful partnerships are key to achieving this goal because they provide the capacity to

achieve what may not otherwise be achievable. Diversity Matters seeks to create lasting relationships with partners who operate in a fair, honest, and socially responsible manner, and support our vision to create a diverse public health workforce to fuel Wisconsin's long-term health and economic prosperity.

Take the Pledge! Become a Super Partner.

Like many Wisconsin-based organizations, we want to see the communities in which we live, work, and play, move forward. We are pleased to offer a variety of opportunities to support / sponsor the Diversity Matters project. Listed below are the 4 levels of partnership offered. Partners will receive recognition of their support / sponsorship at each level.



Partnership Levels

Connector:

Advocate for the Diversity Matters project to youth

- ▶ Include Diversity Matters logo and website link on your organization website
- ▶ Direct youth to explore the Diversity Matters website, its resources and events
- ▶ Exhibit at the yearly public health career fair

Educator:

Inform youth about obtaining a public health degree

- ▶ Establish a Diversity Matters contact at your educational institute
- ▶ Keep program information current on the Diversity Matters Webpage
- ▶ Scholarship Funds and opportunities
- ▶ Exhibit at the yearly public health career fair
- ▶ Include Diversity Matters logo and website link on your organization website

Employer:

Offer professional growth support to youth

- ▶ Provide internship, job shadowing, or mentoring opportunities
- ▶ Volunteer to speak at schools, clubs, and organizations in your area
- ▶ Exhibit at the yearly public health career fair
- ▶ Include Diversity Matters logo and website link on your organization website
- ▶ Become a WPHA member to list your job postings and support WPHA as a recruitment strategy for a more diverse employee pool of applicants

Donor:

Support the continuation of the Diversity Matters project

- ▶ Support costs associated with the yearly public health career fair
- ▶ Support career fair give away/incentives
- ▶ Support travel scholarships for schools to send youth to the fair (bus fares)
- ▶ Continued evaluation to include a longitudinal study of Diversity Matters youth transitioning from secondary to post-secondary and beyond.



Contact Us

Please contact us to explore how your organization can best partner with the Diversity Matters project.

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For more information on the Diversity Matters project please visit: oursuperheroesWI.org