



For Immediate Release

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EXPANDING IMMUNIZATION ACCESS IN WISCONSIN – PHARMACY SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN PARTNERS WITH MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN

MADISON – Tuesday, November 21, 2017 – The Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) and Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) announce a partnership project between the Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation and MCW to expand immunization access in Wisconsin. The partnership was recently awarded one of five funding investments through the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin (AHW) Endowment to advance policy and systems change for health.

America’s Health Rankings and Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) data show the state of Wisconsin does not meet vaccination goals in many age and race demographics. Through this project work, the Wisconsin Pharmacy Foundation will work with MCW’s School of Medicine - Department of Family and Community Medicine and the School of Pharmacy to address policies and systems that serve as barriers to patient access to vaccines. Policy and systems changes will include developing a consistent vaccination protocol and training, engaging pharmacists as immunizers enhancing the role pharmacists play in the medical neighborhood, and addressing claims policies, consequently leading to sustainable and expanded patient access to recommended vaccines. This aims to increase the number of vaccines administered, thus, reducing the prevalence of vaccine preventable diseases in Wisconsin. The AHW Endowment is providing \$489,121 to support the 30-month project.

“Our goal of increasing access to immunizations in the state will result in better preventive care for patients and healthier communities,” said Kenneth G. Schellhase, MD, MPH, Professor of Family and Community Medicine in the School of Medicine at MCW and Principle Investigator. “Better access to immunizations will reduce the health care costs of preventable illnesses.”

“Wisconsin’s pharmacists applaud the focus of the AHW Endowment on immunization rates and look forward to implementing meaningful solutions to improve access,” said PSW Vice President of Professional and Educational Affairs Sarah Sorum, PharmD. “Wisconsin pharmacists are well positioned to make a meaningful impact on public and population health initiatives.”

Evidence shows a significant number of individuals receiving vaccines in non-traditional settings, including pharmacies, do not have primary care providers. Equipping pharmacists with the tools needed to provide immunizations can help pharmacists play an important role in identifying those individuals without a medical home and can partner with medical practices in their communities to expand communication among providers, ultimately, improving patient care.

“Pharmacists are one of the most accessible providers in the health care profession, uniquely positioned to provide care in medically underserved areas,” said George E. MacKinnon III, PhD, MS, RPh, Dean of the MCW School of Pharmacy. “The MCW School of Pharmacy will ensure that the health care provider, the pharmacist, has been educated and trained to extend the level of care in our diverse communities throughout the state. We are excited to partner with PSW, the School of Medicine and other partners to extend interprofessional training not only to pharmacy students, but to practicing pharmacists as well.”

The AHW Endowment, stewarded by the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) School of Medicine, has invested more than \$220M in 375 initiatives benefiting the health of the people of Wisconsin. *Expanding Immunization Access in Wisconsin* is one of five initiatives recently awarded funds by the AHW Endowment to improve health totaling \$2.1 million in funding, all working to change policy and systems to increase opportunities for people to more easily lead a healthy life.

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About the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin:

The Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin is the state professional society representing pharmacists and pharmacy practices. With over 4,200 members, PSW is one of the nation’s largest state-based pharmacy organizations. At PSW we believe that together we can inspire professional success with the singular purpose of enhancing the lives of patients. <http://www.pswi.org>

About the Medical College of Wisconsin

With a history dating back to 1893, The Medical College of Wisconsin is dedicated to leadership and excellence in education, patient care, research and community engagement. More than 1,200 students are enrolled in MCW’s medical school and graduate school programs in Milwaukee, 56 medical students are enrolled at MCW-Green Bay, and 26 students matriculated to MCW-Central Wisconsin in 2016. MCW’s School of Pharmacy matriculated its inaugural class in 2017. A major national research center, MCW is the largest research institution in the Milwaukee metro area and second largest in Wisconsin. In FY2015, faculty received more than \$158 million in external support for research, teaching, training and related purposes. This total includes highly competitive research and training awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Annually, MCW faculty direct or collaborate on more than 3,200 research studies, including clinical trials. Additionally, more than 1,500 physicians provide care in virtually every specialty of medicine for more than 525,000 patients annually.

About the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment

The AHW Endowment is dedicated to changing lives for a healthier Wisconsin through improving policy and systems, investing in strategic initiatives, and serving as a partner with communities to build capacity. With our partners, the AHW Endowment is driving meaningful change for a healthier Wisconsin. More information about the AHW Endowment can be found at www.mcw.edu/ahw.