

## Press Release

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### For Immediate Release

#### **Milwaukee Coalition Awarded \$1 Million to Improve Children's Mental Health** *Five-year initiative will emphasize cross-sector collaborations and community engagement*

**Milwaukee, August 1, 2017** – Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) today announced that it has been awarded \$1 million by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin (AHW) Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin to help improve the mental health of children aged 0-8 and their families in the City of Milwaukee. This funding is the second phase of funding through AHW's community-based behavioral health improvement component. As part of its mission to improve health in Wisconsin, AHW supports community-based projects that demonstrate the potential to change systems and protocols that could lead to sustainable improvements in health at the local level.

This funding makes possible the convening of the **Milwaukee Coalition for Children's Mental Health**, a cross-sector, community-driven coalition that will address the prevention and early intervention of mental and behavioral health issues among the youngest and most vulnerable children in Milwaukee. MHA will serve as the backbone organization for the Coalition, and IMPACT Planning and Evaluation will serve as partners in the evaluation of the initiative. The Coalition will implement a comprehensive, systems-level plan, developed over the past year through an AHW-funded period of collaborative learning, community relationship building, and coalition development. Committed Coalition partner organizations (to date) are:

- Aurora Family Service
- Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
- City of Milwaukee Health Department
- Community Advocates  
Public Policy Institute
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Marquette University
- Milwaukee Chapter of the Links, Inc.
- Milwaukee Public Schools
- Milwaukee Succeeds Kindergarten Readiness  
Partnership
- Mount Mary University
- National Alliance on Mental Illness – Greater  
Milwaukee
- New Concept Self Development Center
- Next Door
- Rogers InHealth
- School Community Partnership for Mental  
Health (SCPMH)
- The Parenting Network
- United Voices/CORE El Centro
- United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha  
County
- UW-Milwaukee Zilber School of Public Health  
and School of Education
- WISE (WI Initiative for Stigma Elimination)
- Wraparound Milwaukee (Milwaukee County  
Behavioral Health Division)

“MHA is pleased to partner with so many forward-thinking community organizations on such an important project for children and their families in the City of Milwaukee,” said Martin Gollin-Graves, President and CEO of MHA. “Through the generous funding of AHW, the Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health is able to truly create a systems-level approach to improving child and adolescent mental health through prevention and early access to care.”

Children face numerous risk factors for poor mental health outcomes, and are missing out on critical early screening, diagnosis, and treatment to address them. Research points to disparities that drive these factors higher for children of color and for those who live in poverty – a large proportion of Milwaukee’s children. There is a great deal we as a community can do to offset these risk factors to improve child outcomes and reduce disparities; the Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health has been convened to do just that.

More information about the Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health can be found [here](#). A Coalition website is currently under development.

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### **About Mental Health America of Wisconsin**

*Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) is a non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental disorders and achieving victory over mental illness through advocacy, education, information and support. Our work is driven by our commitment to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated care and treatment for those who need it, with recovery as the goal. MHA is an affiliate of the nation’s leading community-based non-profit dedicated to helping all Americans achieve wellness by living mentally healthier lives. For more information, please visit [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org).*

### **About the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment**

*The Medical College of Wisconsin’s School of Medicine’s Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment works to catalyze health improvement in Wisconsin and was created by funds generated from Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin’s conversion to a for-profit corporation. The Endowment’s Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program funded the new awards as part of its continued work supporting partnerships between academics and community health and non-profit organizations for urban, rural and statewide health improvement projects in Wisconsin. Since 2004, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment has invested almost \$200 million in more than 300 research, education and community health initiatives. More information on individual projects is available online: [www.mcw.edu/AHW](http://www.mcw.edu/AHW)*