



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Population Health Institute
Translating Research into Policy and Practice



University of Wisconsin
**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Advancing Evidence-Based Health Policy in Wisconsin: Translating Research into Practice

Project of the
Strategic Initiatives Allocation
The Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future
UW School of Medicine and Public Health

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In partnership with

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and

Legislative Partner Entity
Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council
Wisconsin State Legislature

in collaboration with
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PROJECT ABSTRACT

Advancing Evidence-Based Health Policy in Wisconsin: Translating Research into Practice

The UW School of Medicine & Public Health's Population Health Institute and the La Follette School of Public Affairs, in partnership with the Wisconsin Legislative Council, have joined together under the UWSMPH's stated intent *to accelerate the public health transformational processes and expedite programmatic development across sectors*. This unique collaboration between the Medical School and Public Policy School, and including an arm of the State Legislature, helps put the Medical School on the path toward a multi-disciplinary and very externally-engaged School of Medicine and Public Health.

Despite the ideals of the Wisconsin Idea and the efforts of individuals in both state government and the University, there remains a communication divide between researchers and policy makers. This is especially true in the health arena, where mechanisms and venues for communication between researchers and policy makers are often lacking. There is even less communication between researchers and industry leaders -- the private sector policy makers. Too often, policy makers rely on data supplied by lobbyists, and find themselves led by anecdote, dogma or conventional wisdom. Many decisions are based on little or no evidence, or information that is biased, outdated, or simply wrong.

Even with the political system as it is, we can provide mechanisms to ensure an efficient format for delivering timely and topical evidence. The project methods are based on the premise that, in order to translate research into practice, we need to bring more practice into research. This will produce work that is more relevant, more timely, and presented in formats that are more understandable by policymakers, increasing the likelihood that university-generated research will be used for policy and practice.

The purpose of this project is two-pronged: 1) to advance health in Wisconsin by providing policy makers, in both the public and private sectors, with timely, non-partisan, high quality information for evidence-based decision-making; and 2) increase involvement of UW faculty research and teaching activities in topical issues of state public policy.

The project includes four methods by which to provide public and private sector policy makers with timely, non-partisan, high quality information for evidence-based decision-making: 1) Issue-specific invitation-based forums for off-the record safe harbor dialogue; 2) Speaker/Panel Symposiums; 3) Rapid – response topic briefings of legislative committees; and 4) “Methods exchange” meetings between policy makers and researchers.

This partnership bridges medicine and health policy, research and practice, health science with other elements of the UW campus, and positions UW to link in a meaningful way in service to government and the Wisconsin Legislature. Our project draws on the leadership and talent of academic, government, and industry experts, who review and consider the available evidence and then discuss the merits of various policy alternatives within a non-partisan safe harbor.

Public sector participants in the program include members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, high-ranking officials of state agencies, members of the Governor's staff, and academics. From the private sector, this project engages industry executives, physicians, hospitals, insurers, and advocates. In this way, the project stimulates dialogue and familiarity among persons from differing arenas who might not have otherwise crossed paths; They then have opportunity to consider promising arenas for collaborative research and/or advancement of public policy.