



**News from
University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
Fall 2023**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We continue to work alongside others who are leaning into pressing issues and bringing our hearts and minds to the challenges we face. Read up on our latest accomplishments and events.

Sheri Johnson, Ph.D.

Director, UW Population Health Institute



UWPHI Receives Awards & Accolades

Just Recovery for Racial Equity Celebrates Groundbreaking Work

The journey of the Just Recovery for Racial Equity (JRRE) initiative reached a meaningful conclusion during the recent Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA) conference. At its heart, JRRE championed a community-led approach to grant making and administration. By extending grant funding to community partners statewide, the initiative ignited projects that fortified community resilience, expanded capacity, and addressed the underlying drivers of health inequities for communities of color.

This year's WPHA conference served as a platform for grantees to shine and share their impactful projects, echoing the spirit of collaboration that drove JRRE. For more details on the remarkable projects supported by JRRE, [**dive into the action for equity webpage.**](#)

Dr. Lola Awoyinka Receives Presidential Award at WPHA

Highlighting the power of dedicated leadership, Dr. Lola Awoyinka was the driving force behind JRRE's success. Her significant contributions to public health in Wisconsin and commitment to advancing health equity, exemplified through initiatives like JRRE, earned her the prestigious WPHA Presidential Citation award at this year's WPHA conference. Join us in celebrating Dr. Awoyinka for her exceptional contributions to public health in Wisconsin and beyond.



Dr. Lola Awoyinka

The Institute Stewards Funds to Strengthen Wisconsin Public Health Workforce

Funding the Wisconsin Population Health Service Fellowship

We are pleased to share that the Wisconsin Population Health Service Fellowship was awarded renewed funding for three years from the Wisconsin Partnership Program. We welcome six fellows to the new cohort ([**click here to meet them**](#)). This past spring, the Fellowship program also partnered with the

Wisconsin Public Health Association to pilot an initiative providing scholarships to incoming, early-career fellows to help support their transition and relocation to Wisconsin as part of public health workforce initiatives in Wisconsin. [Click here](#) to learn more and support the sustainability of this program.



UWPHI's 2023 Population Health Fellowship Cohort

UWPHI Supports Public Health Infrastructure

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services received a five-year Public Health Infrastructure grant in November 2022 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The grant monies will support Wisconsin's continuing efforts to build towards a vision of stronger, thriving communities that are better able to withstand tomorrow's pandemics or public health challenges, including chronic disease, and to support everyone living their best life.

UWPHI will play a key role to help move Wisconsin forward. UWPHI's funded efforts will support capacity-building on foundational capabilities across Wisconsin's public health system. Foundational capabilities are the cross-cutting skills and abilities required to support public health services and the safeguards (e.g., policies) that protect the public's health broadly. This also includes the activities essential to achieving equitable health outcomes across diverse communities.

UWPHI Evaluation and Engaged Research Team Partners to Advance Mental Health and Well-being for All Wisconsinites

UWPHI Evaluation Team Supports 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

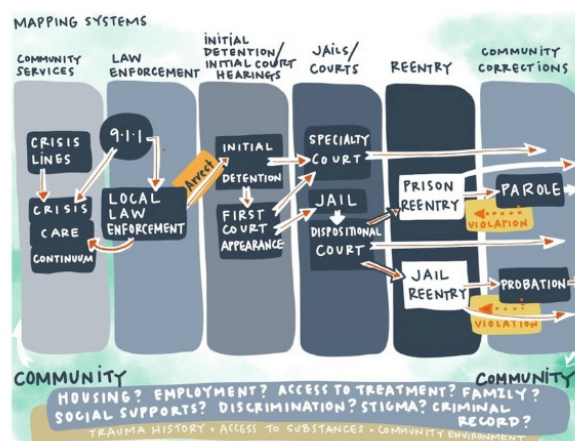
July 16th marked one year since the national transition from the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. UWPHI's Evaluation Research Group has worked in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to provide research and evaluation assistance.

Wisconsinites made more than 72,000 calls in the first year (averaging 5,900 calls per month) and nearly 92,000 contacts via texts to 988 and online chats through [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org). These services reduced pressures on the state's system of emergency services for mental health and substance use concerns as more than 98% of the contacts are resolved through conversation. You can find more about the Evaluation Research Group and [988 in Wisconsin here](#).

UWPHI Evaluation Team Conducts Mental Health Court Feasibility Study

In 2021, the Dane County Department of Human Services commissioned UWPHI's Evaluation group to assess the feasibility of implementing a Mental Health Court in Dane County. Researchers reviewed national best practices, analyzed intake data from contracted providers of behavioral health services in Dane County, and conducted 26 key informant interviews with local experts and stakeholders.

Findings from this assessment indicated large numbers of people with mental health issues cycle through the criminal justice, behavioral health, and social support systems becoming ensnared by the lack of effective, integrated treatment and supervision. Mental Health Courts operate primarily as post-booking diversion programs whereby eligible defendants voluntarily agree to judicial supervision of community-based mental health treatment, often in exchange for a reduced or dismissed charge upon successful completion. The full report can be found here: [Dane County Mental Health Court Feasibility Study](#).



County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

Building a Culture of Health, County by County

News from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

CHR&R Hosts New Civic Health Podcast Series

Tune in for a brand new *In Solidarity* podcast series on the importance of civic education and its connection to health. **Catch up on all episodes from earlier seasons here.** You can **sign up for County Health Rankings & Roadmaps' newsletter** to be the first to know when new episodes are released.

CHR&R Hosts Webinar on Healing Segregation and Health Equity

In August and September, CHR&R presented a two-part webinar series on healing segregation for health equity. Learn more and **catch the recordings here.**

Be sure to visit the award-winning CHR&R Website

Check out the new and improved features on the **CHR&R website**, recently recognized by the 40th Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards. Our website development partner, Forum One, received recognition for our collaborative efforts to improve the website's interactivity and accessibility.



Envision Program Continues to Support Community Health Workers

The Envision Community Health Worker Training and Technical Assistance Center team, housed within UWPPI, recently attended the National Association for Community Health Workers Unity conference in Austin, Texas. The annual conference showcases innovative efforts to expand and sustain the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce. Envision had a strong presence at Unity as a sponsor, exhibition vendor, and presenter. The team presented workshops on the Envision "Community of Transformation" and on building financial sustainability for CHW programs.

Envision supports CHW organizations that have received grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Those grants are called

"CCR", short for "Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities".

Prior to the conference, Envision hosted a gathering of Tribal organizations that have received CCR grants. Attendees had the opportunity to connect and to share their organizations' projects and lived experiences. Envision also hosted a meet-and-greet for CCR recipients, CDC staff, and Evaluation partners. More than 100 gathered to share knowledge and build connections at a national level.

Envision's online resources also expanded this year, with a new **resource library**. Explore toolkits, webinars, podcasts, and more created by Envision, national partners, and other organizations covering topics ranging from advocacy to health equity to sustainability.



UWPHI's Envision Team at Unity Conference

Publications

Power Up: A Call for Public Health to Recognize, Analyze, and Shift the Balance in Power Relations to Advance Health and Racial Equity

Heller, J. C., Fleming, P. J., Petteway, R. J., Givens, M., & Pollack Porter, K. M. (2023). *AJPH*; Volume: 113; Issue: 0; DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2023.307380
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37535894/>

Do Definitions Matter?

Aug 10, 2023 | Health Equity

Sheri Johnson, Ph.D., Director, Population Health Institute.

<https://www.rvphc.org/2023/08/10/do-definitions-matter>

Connecting Minority-Serving Institutions and Rural Research

Little, O., Joyner, H., Dabson, B., & Givens, M. (2023). Aspen Institute, Thrive Rural Framework, Field Perspective Series.

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/connecting-minority-serving-institutions-and-rural-research-2/>

Self-Compassion Among Sexual and Gender Minorities: The Importance of Self-Kindness in a Frequently Unkind World

Vigna, A., & Strauss, P. (2023). In Amy Finlay-Jones & Karen Bluth (Eds). Handbook of Self-Compassion. (pp. 143-164). Springer.

An Examination of the Complexity of Power and Race When a Predominately White Institution partners with Black Communities to Address Infant Mortality

Williams, T. M., Moberg, D. P., Godecker, A., & Walsh-Felz, A. (2023). <https://collaborations.miami.edu/articles/10.33596/coll.106>



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