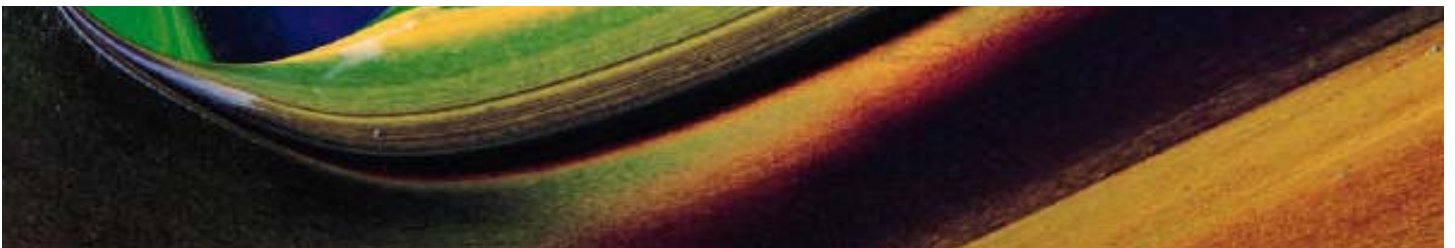




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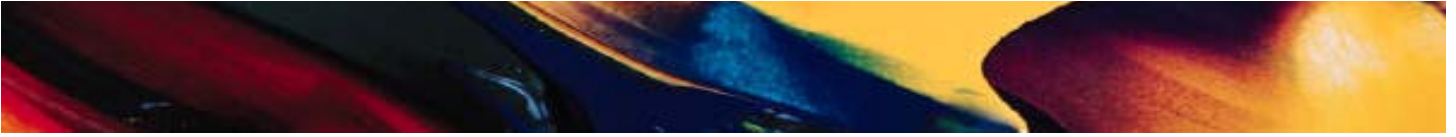
Annual Report 2011

Moving Health Equity Forward in Wisconsin





Wisconsin Center
for Health Equity



A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear WCHE Supporter,

The Wisconsin Center for Health Equity has had a whirlwind year in 2011. By expanding our staff, we have been able to develop and expand the capacity of WCHE. We have put a priority on partnership development, as we know that it is only with strong partners that we can move health equity forward in Wisconsin. Our partners are diverse, representing perspectives from public health and social justice. They are from community organizations, as well as government and academic institutions. Most importantly, they have bought in to the idea that by working together toward health equity, we can meet our vision, which is to create a society where all people have an equal chance to be healthy.

This report highlights progress in our mission's three main focus areas:

- ⇒ **Improve understanding of how socioeconomic conditions affect health outcomes**
- ⇒ **Support changes in public policy to improve the health of everyone in our community**
- ⇒ **Build civic capacity to address social determinants of health**

We know that our mission of improving the social and economic conditions that contribute to health inequities is a bold but vital one. Looking forward to 2012, we will continue our commitment to growing and developing health equity initiatives throughout the state.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank you for your interest in WCHE. We look forward to collaborating!

Sincerely,

Geoffrey R. Swain, MD, MPH
Director, Wisconsin Center for Health Equity

The Path to
Health Equity

Public
Health



Social
Justice

Health
Equity



Wisconsin Center for Health Equity

Who We Are

The Wisconsin Center for Health Equity (WCHE)—a partnership between the City of Milwaukee Health Department and the Wisconsin Public Health Association—works at the intersection of social justice and public health. Through our unique expertise, experience and approach, we work statewide to catalyze, support, and strengthen community and governmental efforts to attain health equity.

Guiding Principles

WCHE focuses its efforts on:

- Socioeconomic factors that most greatly affect population health
- Systemic, policy-oriented approaches to improving population

Given WCHE’s guiding principles and our operational definition of Health Equity—“fairness in the distribution of power and resources and the freedom to achieve healthy outcomes between groups of differing levels of social disadvantage”—WCHE works to advance health equity through *three main strategies*:

- ⇒ **Improve understanding of how socioeconomic conditions affect health outcomes**
- ⇒ **Support changes in public policy to improve the health of everyone in our community**
- ⇒ **Build civic capacity to address social determinants of health**

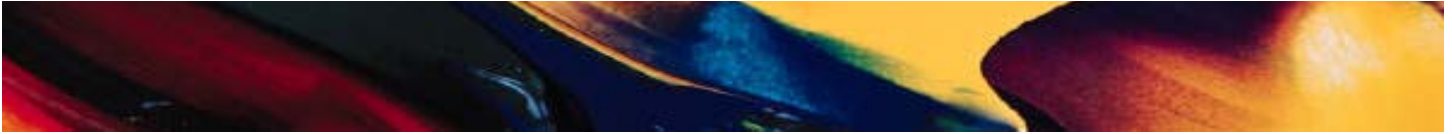
Services we can offer you:

WCHE provides a wide range of services to institutions and associations, including community and neighborhood organizations, local health departments, and policy and advocacy organizations. We offer:

- ⇒ **Customized, interactive training and education** on health equity, social determinants of health, and/or health impact assessment.
- ⇒ **Messaging assistance** to agencies that want to include health equity concepts in their work.
- ⇒ **Design and implementation of advocacy strategies** to address policies most likely to result in improvements in social determinants of health.
- ⇒ **Assistance with conducting Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)** on policies or programs.
- ⇒ **Strategy development** around incorporating social and economic factors into public health and social justice initiatives.
- ⇒ **Evaluation design** for initiatives focusing on social and economic factors that affect health.
- ⇒ **Grant-writing support** for initiatives focusing on social and economic factors that affect health.



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HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Education and Training

A person's socioeconomic status—income, education, race, etc.—strongly affects his or her chances of being healthy, and this is true for communities as well as for individuals. Understanding and addressing these dynamics is at the root of health equity work. For this reason, increasing awareness of the social determinants of health and related strategies to address the social determinants of health is a priority for the WCHE.

Over the last year, WCHE has engaged various public health and social justice groups statewide to provide education and training around health equity. Highlights from 2011 include:



Benedict Center. The Benedict Center, a long running successful criminal justice organization, approached WCHE with an interest in identifying intersections with public health and identifying public health impacts of its work. WCHE worked to develop a workshop for the Benedict Center to a) increase staff understanding of the intersection of criminal justice and public health and b) to identify needs in communicating public health impacts of the Benedict Center's work. This workshop will lead to future partnership to develop a communication plan for the Benedict Center to disseminate the public health impacts of its work.



New Public Health Worker Orientation (NPHWO). The Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) hosts a NPHWO bi-annually. WCHE partnered with DPH to include a Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health presentation at this orientation. We now have a regular spot on the orientation agenda. Since DPH and its staff have a key role in moving health equity forward in Wisconsin, we are excited to build staff awareness, knowledge and skills to effectively address social determinants of health.



Proyecto Salud. In partnership with Proyecto Salud, WCHE developed and implemented an eight week training on the topics of social determinants of health and community organizing for Proyecto Salud's Community Health Promoters. The training was very well received and set the stage for further community engagement and action around social determinants of health.

"We are excited about the possibilities that can come from re-framing our work through a public health lens, in partnership with the Wisconsin Center for Health Equity. I believe it will help open doors and improve the impact of our work in the community."

-- Jeanne Geraci,
Executive Director,
Benedict Center



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HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Policy and Advocacy

Improving policies in multiple areas—education, employment, and other social and economic factors that strongly influence health—will improve people’s chances of being healthy. WCHE has strongly engaged in this work.

One of WCHE’s main areas of policy focus has been Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool not only for assessing the health impact of socioeconomic policy, but also for engaging communities around policy change and communicating with policy makers about impacts. In partnership with the UW Population Health Institute, we have secured resources from the National Network of Population Health Institutes that provides support to build our Health Impact Assessments capacity. Highlights from 2011 include:



Health Impact Assessment Section of the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA). Started by WCHE, through this section we have laid the foundation for the development of the Wisconsin Health Impact Assessment Collaborative. The vision for this group is to increase health considerations, where appropriate, in policies and decision-making. We have developed and passed a WPHA HIA Resolution, established section structure and priorities, conducted outreach, scheduled a number of training opportunities and began the development of HIA tools.



Transitional Jobs (TJ). In partnership with Community Advocates’ Public Policy Institute, the Milwaukee Transitional Jobs Collaborative, and United Way of Greater Milwaukee, WCHE has begun work to address one of the major determinants of health disparities—unemployment in the African American community. This past year we have engaged with key partners in the fields of public health and jobs policy around planning for a full scale advocacy effort to pass an expanded and sustainable TJ policy. We will also partner on an HIA of the policy which will inform the advocacy efforts.



“Treatment Instead of Prison” (TIP) Campaign. In partnership with WISDOM, a statewide faith-based advocacy group, and with funding awarded in 2011 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, WCHE is supporting the TIP campaign. WCHE will be integrally involved in a HIA of treatment alternatives to incarceration, as well as creating and implementing strategies to communicate findings to policy makers and other stakeholders.

“It is imperative that health outcomes be factored into economic policy analysis. Good economic policy should have as its two central goals; the creation of material prosperity and the improved health of the community. This is what we’re working to achieve with the Wisconsin Center for Health Equity.”

**-- Conor Williams, Milwaukee
Transitional Jobs Collaborative**



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HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Civic Capacity Building

Building civic capacity is crucial to addressing social determinants of health. WCHE works to increase communities' capacity to advocate for policy and system change that, in turn, will create healthier, more cohesive communities.

Highlights from 2011 include:



Health Equity Indicators Toolkit. With the goal of developing, implementing and evaluating a dynamic and practical Health Equity Indicators Toolkit, this innovative initiative will be built on WCHE's significant experience working with health equity issues. The development of the Toolkit—based in part on similar initiatives nationally, most notably the Connecticut Health Equity Index—will build capacity of local communities to identify their own indicators of significance and measure progress toward health equity goals.

With a small grant and partnership secured in 2011 from the UW Population Health Institute, we have begun collecting and documenting a series of "Health Equity Case Studies" for the Toolkit, including resources to support community-based health equity work in Wisconsin. This will inform the creation of the Toolkit.



"Public Will Building to Reduce Obesity in the Latino Community of Milwaukee". With the goal of building public will of Latino community members to address socioeconomic and environmental determinants of obesity, this project engages Community Health Promoters (CHPs) in a process of grassroots advocacy and community organizing around system issues that plague the community. In partnership with Proyecto Salud and funded by Wisconsin Partnership Program, WCHE was instrumental in the design and implementation of this project.

"A drastic systemic change is necessary in order to eliminate health disparities and improve the quality of life of our communities. Proyecto Salud believes that engaging community and increasing capacity for leadership and action is a powerful way to address the social determinants of health that are impacting the lives of our Latino families in Milwaukee. In partnership with the Wisconsin Center for Health Equity, Proyecto Salud is helping leaders to identify the root causes of health issues, and to organize the community to voice their needs and create meaningful campaigns."

-- Ana Paula Soares Lynch,
Director, Proyecto Salud



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2012: NEXT STEPS

In 2011, we have made great strides in organizational and partnership development. We are happy to celebrate a number of accomplishments and look forward to continued success in 2012. Below we highlight where our 2012 efforts will focus:



In the area of **Education and Training**, we plan to:

- ⇒ Hold trainings on Health Impact Assessment at the Wisconsin Public Health Association's Annual Conference and for the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council.
- ⇒ Hold public health and social justice trainings for a faith-based youth group at Holy Angels Church, with Community Health Promoters at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, and with JONAH (Joining our Neighbors, Advancing Hope).
- ⇒ Engage in health equity curriculum development and education around the state.



In the area of **Policy and Advocacy**, we plan to

- ⇒ Continue to grow the capacity of statewide partners to conduct HIAs through training and technical assistance.
- ⇒ Successfully complete collaboration on "Treatment Instead of Prison" HIA. We will then use the recommendations from the HIA to engage communities in an advocacy campaign.
- ⇒ Use the creation of recommendations from the "Treatment Instead of Prison" HIA to launch a statewide Health Equity Alliance—bringing together the fields of public health and community organizing.
- ⇒ Continue to nurture partners interested in advocating for a comprehensive transitional jobs

"Criminal justice and mass incarceration in Wisconsin are public health issues. This is at the root of our 'Treatment Instead of Prison' campaign. We believe that by using a health lens and Health Impact Assessment methodology we will be able to influence decision-makers' perspectives on incarceration. The Wisconsin Center for Health Equity has been a critical partner for us in moving this perspective forward."

-- David Liners,
Statewide Director, WISDOM



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2012: NEXT STEPS (*continued*)



In the area of ***Civic Capacity Building***, we plan to

- ⇒ Engage community partners around developing health equity indicators that will help them measure progress toward goals. We will also provide technical assistance and training around strategy implementation and/or evaluation based on identified health equity indicators. This will inform and further develop the Health Equity Indicators Toolkit.
- ⇒ Implement the action plan created through the Community Action Board of the Public Will Building initiative. Use this experience to develop a replicable and customizable model that communities can implement as they build power to improve health.
- ⇒ Continue to build partnerships with community organizations to support incorporation of health equity concepts in their civic capacity building efforts, including evaluation of progress.

"Public health professionals have been involved in addressing the social determinants of health for years. The Wisconsin Center of Health Equity exists to translate knowledge and interest into action and improvement in the social determinants. They partner with diverse stakeholders throughout the state to make this happen."

-- Sheri Johnson, WCHE Advisory Board member and Assistant Professor, Medical College of Wisconsin

Thanks

A special thank you to our key funders since our inception in 2006:

- Columbia St. Mary's Hospital System
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Program at UW-Madison
- Milwaukee Health Services, Inc.
- The CDC-funded Public Health Impact Initiative at UW Milwaukee
- The Wisconsin Partnership Program funded Public Will-Building Initiative at CORE/El Centro
- New funding partners who will be supporting us in 2012 and beyond



Wisconsin Center for Health Equity



Our Team

Staff

- Geoffrey R. Swain, MD, MPH - Director
- Raisa Koltun, PharmD, MPH - Associate Director
- Paula Tran Inzeo, MPH - Program and Policy Specialist
- Marjory Givens, PhD, MPH - Program and Policy Specialist
- Sarah Beversdorf, MSW, MPH - Program Manager

Advisory Council

- Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
- Ron Cisler, PhD
- Robert Frediani
- Corey Hoze
- Sheri Johnson, PhD
- Eric Ostermann
- Stephanie Robert, PhD

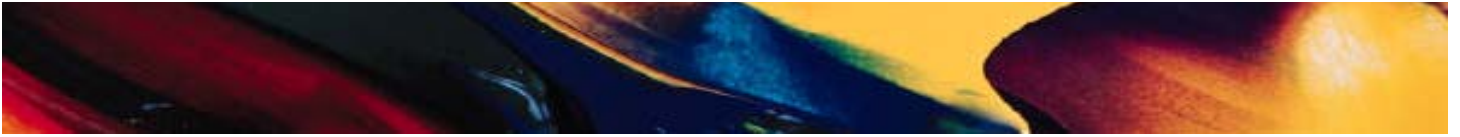
Partners

A large thank you to all of our partners:

- Adams County Health Department
- Benedict Center
- Capitol Area Regional Planning Commission
- Center for Urban Population Health
- City of Milwaukee Health Department
- Community Advocates Public Policy Institute
- CORE/El Centro and Proyecto Salud
- DHS Minority Health Program
- DHS Office of Practice and Policy Alignment
- DHS Western Regional Office
- Eau Claire County Health Department
- JONAH: Joining our Neighbors, Advancing Hope
- Neighborhood Housing Services of Richland County
- Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
- Polk County Health Department
- United Way of Greater Milwaukee
- UW – Milwaukee Zilber School of Public Health
- UW Population Health Institute
- Wisconsin Public Health Association
- WISDOM



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