

Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health, Inc. GMBFH



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GREATER MILWAUKEE BUSINESS FOUNDATION ON HEALTH PROMOTES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENING WITH GRANT AWARD

Milwaukee, Wis. (Jan. 7, 2014) – The Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health, Inc. (GMBFH) recently awarded a \$158,000 grant to four prominent State of Wisconsin health care purchasers to encourage health care providers to expand the routine provision of behavioral screening and intervention services (BSI) to patients seeking health care services. The recipients of the grant are employer-based organizations, the Business Health Care Group (BHCG) in Southeast Wisconsin and The Alliance covering South Central Wisconsin and Northern Illinois, as well as the Wisconsin Medicaid program and the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds.

The grant will be administered by the Partnership for Healthcare Payment Reform (PHPR), a statewide organization that engages health care stakeholders in payment reform efforts that advance health care value and the health status of Wisconsin residents. PHPR has a successful track record in bringing together health care providers and purchasers to develop pilot programs to address specific health care issues. The grant is intended to support the activities of a program manager who will lead efforts to make BSI a standard of care.

“The PHPR looks forward to supporting health care providers, purchasers and administrators across the state in expanding access to essential screening services for common behavioral health concerns,” stated Karen Timberlake, director of the PHPR.

In Wisconsin, behavioral risks and disorders, including smoking, binge drinking, drug use, depression and obesity are estimated to cost more than \$18 billion annually. Employers bear many of the costs of these behavioral issues through more expensive health care, increased absenteeism and higher rates of workplace injuries. Government, as large employers and administrators of the State's Medicaid program – and hence taxpayers – also bear many of these costs.

Despite these significant costs, few Wisconsinites routinely receive behavioral screening and intervention (BSI) services to identify these behavioral issues. Lack of time and inadequate training of providers and reimbursement are among the issues preventing the more widespread adoption of BSI services.

With funding from the GMBFH grant, the program manager will be tasked with:

- Determining current availability of BSI services (beginning in southeast Wisconsin)
- Identifying and addressing barriers to more widespread adoption of BSI services
- Securing commitments (beginning in southeast Wisconsin) from health care providers, purchasers and administrators to implement BSI services
- Developing a roadmap for spreading the adoption of BSI services to other parts of Wisconsin

“We hope this grant will serve as an impetus to make BSI services a routine standard of care, similar to checking a patient’s blood pressure,” said Ron Dix, executive director of GMBFH. “The adoption of BSI services as a routine standard of care is a highly effective way to address the substantial and costly problem of behavioral risks and disorders we face in Wisconsin. Employers, administrators and providers need to work together to make this happen,” added Dix.

About the Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health

The Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health is a private operating foundation created in 2002. The mission of GMBFH is to undertake studies, programs and activities which promote the general health of the persons residing in the greater Milwaukee area and advance their awareness of health and healthcare delivery issues. GMBFH works collaboratively with established organizations to improve health and healthcare delivery in the greater Milwaukee area. For more information about the foundation, its board of directors, past and current initiatives and copies of the complete reports, visit the website: www.gmbfh.org.

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