



# University of Wisconsin (Madison & Milwaukee) MCH Training Programs

## ABOUT

There are three Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Training Programs within the University of Wisconsin (UW) system: the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) (at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee) and Pediatric Pulmonary Center (PPC) (at UW-Madison) training programs for graduate students, and the MCH Pipeline training program for undergraduates at UW-Milwaukee. UW's Diversity and Health Equity Collaborative (DHEC) team consists of training program directors and faculty, recruitment and outreach staff, diversity and university equity staff, and former trainees at both campuses.

The overarching goal of the Wisconsin DHEC team is to create a pathway for supporting UW-Milwaukee MCH Pipeline program graduates during the first years of graduate training in MCH disciplines, and to increase their application and admission to the LEND and PPC training programs at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee. The team aims to achieve this goal through improved collaboration and implementing uniform processes across the three training programs.

## THE NEED

The purpose of the UW-Milwaukee MCH Pipeline Training Program is to increase cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) of MCH trainees by creating a "pipeline" of undergraduates who go on to graduate school and careers in MCH fields. The program noticed that, while over 95% of UW MCH Pipeline program participants go on to graduate school, those who attended a graduate school outside of the UW system (either Madison or

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Milwaukee) were less likely to continue on an MCH track. Given the strong outcomes of graduate MCH training in WI, the WI DHEC team hypothesized that UW-Milwaukee MCH Pipeline program graduates who continue training through the UW LEND (Madison or Milwaukee) or PPC training programs would be highly likely to continue to work with MCH populations five years after graduation. Thus, continued engagement of culturally- and linguistically-diverse trainees is essential as they look to make decisions about graduate school and their future careers.

While training program faculty and staff have worked to recruit, engage, and retain CLD of trainees, many of these efforts have been conceived of and executed as independent activities rather than combined and coordinated efforts across the UW system. The UW team chose to apply for the DHEC, because they viewed it as an opportunity to work collaboratively to strengthen these efforts.

As the team worked to further develop their goals and objectives, they noted a few potential environmental constraints. As mentioned, the UW system strives to recruit undergraduate trainees from diverse population groups. However, the environment from which to recruit such trainees is lacking in diversity (highlighted in the following chart). The percentage of CLD trainees

varies annually but has averaged 20% across the LEND and PPC training programs.

UW Population Group	Non-White
Madison graduate students	14.5%
Madison faculty	19.2%
Milwaukee graduate students	32%
Milwaukee faculty	24.6%

The UW team also noted that lack of staff and student time to engage in activities may present a barrier to achieving the identified goals. In addition to the training program staff, the WI team realized that achieving the identified goals would require a variety of other stakeholders including the Offices for Diversity on each campus, champions in each academic graduate program to identify potential trainees for recruitment, and current trainees to provide input on trainee engagement programs and activities.

## APPROACH

The DHEC encouraged state teams to break their overarching goal into smaller action steps. To achieve the UW team’s goal, the team developed concrete objectives around improved processes, training, and communication.

## ACTION STEPS

### Short-Term

- Develop the “Let’s Stay Connected” MCH Pipeline trainee transition form and process
- Re-establish structured communication and shared training across the 3 training programs

### Medium-Term

- Develop a MCH Training in Wisconsin 1-page flyer

### Long-Term

- Achieve a Wisconsin MCH Training Program brand on UW system websites and social media including a coordinated special events calendar

## IMPACT OF DHEC PARTICIPATION

At the conclusion of the collaborative, the UW team has accomplished both short-term action steps. The “Let’s Stay Connected” form and process were developed as a bridge to support an intentional and informed pathway between undergraduate and graduate MCH Training Programs in Wisconsin. This form, along with a personal follow-up, will be given to those Pipeline trainees matriculating to graduate programs in order to determine how best to stay engaged with MCH training opportunities and activities even before they are eligible to apply to be LEND or PPC trainees. The UW team was also able to enhance communication between MCH training program partners, strengthen connections between the MCH Training Programs and the Office of Diversity on each campus, and increase awareness of diversity supports within the UW system.

At the start of UW’s participation in the DHEC, the team challenged their own concepts of what defines a trainee as part of an MCH training program. Through their work with the DHEC, the team shifted their perception to support a broader continuum of training. They have determined that future outreach should include students that are not solely long-term trainees and that additional financial and staff support may be needed to keep students engaged in MCH during their first 1 to 2 years of graduate school. The team noted that this could provide an opportunity for current LEND trainees to mentor first year grad students.

Frequency of contact among DHEC teams and a shared commitment to diversity and health equity have strengthened the team's resolve to come together as one UW team to work on these issues, rather than three separate training programs. Team members worked diligently to overcome communication challenges that arose between the UW system and MCH Training Programs and made a commitment to share schedules, opportunities, and resources.

Participating in the DHEC allowed the UW team to strengthen their commitment to cultural and linguistic competence and diversity and health equity across the UW system. The team built a solid foundation for future work stating, *"We have momentum, commitments to each other, and commitments to this process."* The team has already begun to discuss next steps for achieving the medium- and long-term action steps identified at the beginning of this process.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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