

## Fundable Needs

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**Coordinator: Adam Martin**

Fundable Need: Enhancing Mental Health Services and Support at AWAMC  
Site/Facility: Aurora West Allis Medical Center  
2017 Approved Capital:  
2017 Fundraising Priority: YES

**Aurora West Allis Medical Center's Call to Action: Enhancing Access to Mental Health Services at the AWAMC Primary Care Clinics – Supporting Family Nurse Practitioners to Specialize in Psychiatric Care at UW Madison and Professional Support Group Services to Family/Friends of Opioid/Heroin Overdose Victims**

“Good mental health is a foundation for overall well-being and allows people to realize their full potential and contribute to society. In contrast, mental illness is a leading cause of disability and can be devastating to families and communities. It is also associated with an increase in physical illness. According to Healthiest Wisconsin 2020, mental health disorders are closely linked to chronic health problems and risk factors such as smoking, inactivity, obesity, and substance abuse. In 2015, 16% of West Allis and West Milwaukee residents reported having a mental health condition and 4% reported feeling so overwhelmed in the past year that they considered suicide”<sup>1</sup> with increasing rates of high school students reporting depressive symptoms or suicidal thoughts. Rates of alcohol misuse, alcohol-impaired driving, and misuse and addiction to legal and illegal drugs such as prescription pain killers and heroin continue to increase. In 2015, the West Allis Fire Department gave NARCAN to treat opioid overdose for 106 patients (average age of 39.9 years, 60% male, 92% white) with 29 drug-related deaths. Community Health Assessment Survey respondents reported alcohol and drug use (65%) and mental health and depression (36%) as top health issues in the community.

Wisconsin has an ongoing critical shortage of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals (WHA, 2017)<sup>2</sup>. The state has been designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area and needs approximately 214 psychiatrists to meet the national standards (1:30,000 people) to address mental health and substance abuse need for treatment (Wheeler, 2016)<sup>3</sup>.

Our 2017 project looks to address two important needs for the community: increasing access to mental health services within our Primary Care Clinics and providing support services for families who have experienced a death as a result of opioid/heroin substance abuse. This project would fund a current West Allis-based Family Nurse Practitioner to complete the Psychiatric Nursing Certificate program at UW Madison. The program prepares advanced practice nurses to complete extensive training and board certification to provide mental health professional and prescription services across the lifespan (WI DHS Chapter 36)<sup>4</sup>.

We are also proposing to provide a meeting place and funding for a licensed therapist to facilitate a weekly support group for family members and friends who have had a loved one who died as a result of opioid/heroin substance abuse. The support group would meet at AWAMC with a professional facilitator for two years. The facilitator will train a volunteer to take over as facilitator after the two year funding is complete. This type of resource doesn't exist at this time.

**Funding Needs:**

In 2017, Aurora Health Care Foundation will reach out to area businesses, foundations and individuals in the West Allis and surrounding areas to raise a total of \$75,000 to help the Enhancing Mental Health Services at AWAMC

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<sup>1</sup>West Allis Health Dept: West Allis-West Milwaukee Community Health Improvement Plan 2016-2020, p. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup>Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc. "Opportunities and solutions to reform Wisconsin's mental health service delivery model. (2017) <http://www.wha.org/Data/Sites/1/pdf/Testimony-AssemblyMentalHealth1-17-17.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Wheeler, E. Digging Deeper: Mental Health Care Shortage plagues Wisconsin (2016). Accessed from: <http://www.wqow.com/story/33786795/2016/11/Thursday/mental-health-care-shortage-plagues-wisconsin>

<sup>4</sup>Wisconsin Department of Health Services Regulation Chapter 36.10 (2)(g) 8a. Comprehensive Community Services for Persons with Mental Disorders and Substance Use Disorders  
[https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin\\_code/dhs/030/36/IV/10](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dhs/030/36/IV/10)