

2015 Public Health Award Recipients

Leadership Award

David Gundersen, DDS, MPH Oral Health Coalition of Dane Co. and First Choice Dental

For strategic leadership to improve the oral health of Dane County residents and systems of oral health care.

Dr. Gundersen truly is a man with a mission. David's first career was in education during which he was a health science teacher at an inner-city middle school in Los Angeles. His students often came to him in pain from untreated dental decay, making it difficult to concentrate in school and contributing to low-self-esteem. The lack of dental care dilemma, and the fact that it is an equity issue was embedded in David Gundersen's mind, and he was not going to sit back and accept it. He went on to earn his Master of Public Health degree and later returned to Wisconsin to work at the state level for the Division of Public Health as Director of School Health Programs.

At a point when many people are getting comfortable in their first or even their second career, David decided to begin yet another career when he enrolled in the dental program at Marquette University, to become Dr. Gundersen the dentist. He has shown extraordinary commitment to oral health for all of Dane County, and has led effective interventions on a variety of levels.

In addition to his full-time practice, Dr. Gundersen provides dental care to many vulnerable individuals through his volunteer work at Madison Dental Initiative (MDI), a non-profit, safety-net dental clinic that provides free treatment for those who do not have a dentist of their own and cannot afford dental care. He is also energetically working on a school-based mobile dental program that will provide dental care for children who have limited access, and too many barriers to care.

Dr. Gundersen is an active member of a collaborative group that has formed to deal with the issue of emergency department and urgent care center visits for non-traumatic dental pain. This dental initiative includes representatives from all healthcare organizations, the Oral Health Coalition of Dane County, dental providers and clinics, and Public Health – Madison & Dane County. The standardized treatment and referral protocol that was developed will result in less opioids prescribed and increased access to the dental care needed by these patients. Dr. Gundersen has taken the lead in the development of training sessions to further support this protocol and the medical personnel who are implementing it.

Dr. Gundersen is also the dynamic leader of the Oral Health Coalition of Dane County, a multi-disciplinary group of community partners who are concerned with issues of oral health and its impact on our community. He recently wrote and received a grant for the Coalition to help revise its infrastructure and develop action plans for specific goals that will help strengthen efforts to promote health equity and address the needs of our community. Dr. Gundersen's "nothing is impossible" attitude is a beacon of light that gives hope to all of us.

Advocacy Award

Covering Kids and Families - Wisconsin

For working to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities by connecting people to health insurance coverage and helping them use it effectively.

A healthy community is one in which all residents have access to essential health care. Getting health insurance coverage is a critical first step; knowing how to use it to get needed care is step two. CKF promotes the health of Dane County residents by connecting lower-income and often-marginalized people to health insurance coverage, and helping them bridge the gap between coverage and care. They have done this by working with local partner organizations to plan and deliver effective services to Dane County residents, and by serving as a trusted resource to countless organizations that, in turn, serve and advocate for county residents that have not had good access to health care.

Established in 2003, CKF is a statewide organization affiliated with the Wisconsin School of Human Ecology and UW-Extension. CKF has a long history of providing professionals and organizations with consumer-oriented training, tools, materials, program development, and technical assistance so they can connect Wisconsin residents to health care coverage through BadgerCare, other Medicaid programs, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and other programs.

Its long history of effective partnerships and successful efforts led to CKF receiving a federal Navigator grant for 2014 and 2015, to coordinate and provide outreach, communications and enrollment activities to help residents of southern Wisconsin get health insurance coverage through the ACA Health Insurance Marketplace.

Many people from across Dane County received much needed, very patient, in-person assistance from CKF Navigators to apply through the Marketplace and choose an insurance plan. In addition to smaller sign-up sessions across the county, CKF also worked with United Way of Dane County and other local partners to plan and hold three large enrollment events here. Even now, CKF staff continue to provide enrollment assistance to Dane County residents who are still eligible to sign up for Marketplace plans.

CKF has worked hard to understand who needs to be reached, and how to do it right – with local organizations that the people know and trust. When national studies revealed that many of the remaining uninsured are low-income and Hispanic, CKF re-targeted their outreach, education and enrollment activities to this especially underserved population.

The changing health insurance landscape has meant that consumers need to take a more active role in getting their health care coverage than ever before, and for many, using insurance and navigating the health care system is new. CKF is on top of this emerging community need with a new additional focus on improving consumers' health insurance literacy and ability to effectively enter and use the health care system.

CKF's dedication to improving access to health care coverage and health care is tireless and exemplary. The success of their many efforts can be attributed to their dedicated staff, willingness to listen, and the strong partnerships they have formed in Dane County

Leadership Award

Jason Garlynd, MS Vocational Horticulture Program at Oakhill Correctional Institution

For leadership and vision in connecting restorative justice with healthy food production.

Jason Garlynd recognizes the powerful effect that generosity, mastery and self-determination can have on the future prospects of the men with whom he works. This is particularly effective when incarcerated men connect their work to feeding others, to promoting health and mindfulness through fresh produce, and to the cultivating the land and soil, a new experience for most inmates.

Jason has run the Vocational Horticulture Program at Oakhill Correctional Facility for nearly two decades. All produce grown through the horticulture program at Oakhill goes either to food pantries or back to feed inmates at the facility, offering many of them some of the freshest, healthiest food they have ever had. Each year, Jason's crew distributes more than 12,000 seedlings, grown by inmates at Oakhill, to youth and community gardens across Dane County.

By connecting inmates to healthy foods, to nature and to a setting where they are able to nurture other living things, Jason's public health contribution to a generation of men is invaluable. One of the biggest challenges these men face is finding and maintaining employment upon release. Because his program is accredited by Madison College and meets Department of Workforce Development Horticulture Apprenticeship Program's funding guidelines, inmates are given employment and technical skills they can apply in floriculture, landscaping, community agriculture or indoor plant care. By engaging these men in work and skill-building, and by allowing them to expect more from themselves than most others have in life, Jason's program offers the hope and practical skills that are valuable upon re-entry.

In addition to his work at Oakhill, Jason has built relationships with community organizations around Dane County. His active cooperation with the GROW Coalition, as well as his work supporting Community Groundworks, is recognized locally as a significant contribution to restorative work. Jason's work with local interfaith groups and local nonprofit organizations, including the First United Methodist Church, Grassroots Citizens of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin's Restorative Justice Coalition, has built recognition of his work as a leader and volunteer to initiate, facilitate and support restorative justice approaches in the community. His expertise has also led him to help shape community environments around restorative justice principles, including a victim's memorial circle, a restorative sanctuary on the grounds of Oakhill Correctional Facility.

Jason Garlynd's impact among hundreds of men is often life-changing and long-lasting, impacting their ability to find and maintain jobs, heal from multiple forms of trauma, and re-enter communities where ties have been lost.

Distinguished Service Award

Randall Brown, MD, PhD **UW School of Medicine & Public Health, Department of Family Medicine**

For distinguished service to the community for collaboratively working to prevent addiction and reduce harm and death from opioid use.

Randy Brown has many areas of expertise and roles in our community. He is a Family Practice doctor, with a specialty in Addiction Medicine and has a PhD in Population Health. He is an Associate Professor for UW Department of Family Medicine, Founding Director of UW Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program, Director for UW Hospital's Center for Addictive Disorders, Medical Director for AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin's (ARCW) overdose prevention program and consulting physician at UW, Meriter and Veteran's Hospitals and Access Community Health Center.

Randy works directly with a variety of patients who have substance use disorder and is a provider of medication assisted treatment, with a particular emphasis on treating the most vulnerable populations.

Randy has done extensive research with the Dane County Drug Treatment Court, showing its effectiveness and the impact on the health of its participants, ultimately to find the best way to rehabilitate people with substance use disorder to lead productive lives in the community. He is a member of the Drug Court Advisory Committee and the OWI Court Advisory Committee. Randy was consulted during the redesign and expansion of the County's Alternative Sanction Programs that now provide a more equitable assessment for selection of participants into their programs.

Randy has worked extensively, and with many partners, to educate and provide naloxone to those at high risk to reduce opioid overdose and death. His partnership with ARCW's evidenced-based peer overdose prevention program (since 2005) has resulted in over 4,300 lives saved (1,200 in Dane County). He has also been a strong advocate for legislation to encourage people to call 911 and increase access to naloxone at an overdose scene. He was a member of the State Good Samaritan AdHoc Committee and delivered a powerful testimony on the benefits of naloxone to legislators, which was instrumental in passing the Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) legislation in 2014.

Dr. Brown has also led the charge on educating his colleagues about safe prescribing of opioids to prevent the potential progression to addiction. He is an active member of the Safe Communities Health Care Task Force on Safe Opioid Prescribing and trained over 150 health professionals on safe and effective pain management of chronic pain.

Dr. Brown is a singular physician whose service, dedication and collaborative efforts have made a significant difference to improving the health of both individuals and the community.

Ebola Preparedness and Response Recognition

Marc Rosenthal

Marc Rosenthal volunteered to help contain the Ebola viral disease in West Africa by leaving behind the comforts of home for a risk laden trip into the heart of the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone. As Marc has stated in presentations, “if not me, then who?” Using his skills and knowledge as a Registered Nurse, he was on the front line, providing first-hand care to those who needed it most. By providing his skills to contain the epidemic, Marc helped to increase the survival rate in Port Loko from 10% to 40%. Marc was one the first groups in Port Loko to work in Marforki, a newly established Ebola Treatment Unit that had little in terms of infrastructure and supplies. Marc also used his experience to travel to other Ebola “Holding” units and help to set them up on a path to becoming Ebola “Treatment” Units.

Marc was the first healthcare worker to return to Wisconsin that directly served patients with Ebola. Marc has shared his experience through interviews and presentations creating an awareness of the challenges of this global emergency. It takes a special person to recognize a need on the other side of the World and act on that need. Mr. Rosenthal’s compassion brought needed comfort to the patients he served, and his selfless actions will help bring this outbreak to a quicker end.

Madison Fire Department Emergency Medical Services

Madison Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services Division is an essential partner in Ebola response and transport. The MFD EMS Division provides support for all of Dane County, with the willingness to assist other EMS agencies in the transport of persons with symptoms of possible Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

Madison Fire Department immediately began planning and training for a possible EVD patient when the Ebola outbreak in West Africa was increasing in the fall of 2014. Protocols were developed following CDC guidelines to protect EMS staff with personal protective equipment, insure good patient care during transport, disinfect the ambulance and medical equipment, and dispose of medical waste.

The plans were activated in early February when a possible EVD patient required transport to a hospital for evaluation. The Madison Fire Department EMS seamlessly provided service according to plan, using their developed protocols that insured the safety of all involved, and protected the community.

Meriter Hospital

Meriter Hospital was the first Ebola assessment hospital in Dane County. As an Ebola assessment hospital, Meriter facilities and staff are prepared to receive, isolate and care for a suspected Ebola patient until a diagnosis of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) can be confirmed or ruled out, and until discharge or transfer to an Ebola Treatment Hospital is completed. Meriter trained extensively and set up an enhanced isolation unit in case they were called upon to provide “rule out” patient services. They worked with many different agencies to drill their plans and to insure that staff were safe and comfortable using personal protective equipment. The training and drills paid off when their services were called upon in early February to “rule out” a person who had recently traveled from an Ebola affected country and had developed symptoms that required assessment.

Once contacted about the incoming patient, within 90 minutes they had the necessary staff at the hospital and the isolation unit ready to receive the patient. The logistics surrounding the ramp up to receive the patient involved many moving pieces and Meriter was able to use the procedures they had set in place and trained for, to complete the process efficiently and expediently. They treated the patient following all CDC protocols and guidelines and provided samples to the State Lab of Hygiene for immediate testing. Meriter also excelled in the public information arena, providing information to assure the public that they were not at risk, while maintaining patient confidentiality.

UW Hospital and Clinics

University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics is one of three designated Ebola treatment centers in Wisconsin. Ebola treatment centers are facilities that plan to care for and manage a patient with confirmed Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) for the duration of the patient’s illness. In order to be a CDC designated Ebola hospital, CDC assesses patient care standards, staff training, infection control protocols, usage of personal protective equipment, and plans for proper removal of medical waste. This designation requires hours of training and practice to insure safety of staff and the patient. The time and resources committed by the UW Hospital went significantly above and beyond normal operations in order to be able to serve the State of Wisconsin as an Ebola Treatment Center.

Fortunately, to date, there has not been a need for UW Hospital to treat an Ebola patient, but we can rest assured their health care professionals are prepared to care for patients with Ebola, and to maintain the safety of health care staff and the public.