

For Immediate Release

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Advocate Aurora Health gives \$500,000 more in grants to improve Milwaukee

The Better Together Fund's next recipients focus on mental health, resiliency and education

Milwaukee, Wis. – Advocate Aurora Health is awarding grants to three more community organizations from its Better Together Fund. It's part of a \$2,125,000 commitment to Milwaukee projects that address social and economic needs amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next group of grant recipients provide mental health, resiliency and support services to vulnerable people. They are:

- *Sigma Pi Phi Beta Alpha Boulé/Marquette University Center for Peacemaking - Building Resiliency in Classroom Education*
\$250,000 to deliver support services for students struggling with mental health, academic and/or behavioral challenges
- *UMOS – Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Program*
\$125,000 to fund advocacy services for Hispanic sexual assault and domestic violence survivors
- *The Asha Project - Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Program*
\$125,000 to fund advocacy services for African American sexual assault and domestic violence survivors

"We are committed to supporting programs that seek to eliminate racial and social inequities and improve the well-being of our communities. This includes making sure every person in Milwaukee has access to the support they need to live well," said Advocate Aurora Health Chief External Affairs Officer Cristy Garcia-Thomas. "These three programs will make a tangible difference in hundreds of lives."

The Better Together Fund is a one-time funding commitment to develop critical services in Milwaukee. Community groups from across Milwaukee were invited to submit proposals.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to collaborate with Advocate Aurora to help develop a link between victims, health care services and victim services. Advocacy support is a critical need, particularly now," said Antonia Drew Vann,

director of The Asha Project. "On behalf of the survivors we serve, thank you for this opportunity."

"This grant will assist our work to help more than 2,000 people throughout Milwaukee by receiving information on domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking, as well as comprehensive advocacy services available, not just for themselves, but for their families," said Mariana Rodriguez, UMOS program manager. "We are honored to work with Advocate Aurora Health to provide services that rebuild and empower individuals and families for a violence-free life."

"At school, the compromised mental health of students can increase barriers to learning and hurt their relationships with classmates and school staff. Virtual learning has compounded pre-existing education disparities and made it more difficult for students and families to access resources, connect to schools, and manage mental health challenges," said Larry Waters, Sire Archon of Sigma Pi Phi Beta Alpha Boulé. "This grant from the Better Together Fund will provide necessary support for staff and therapists to ensure students are successful."

"The Better Together Fund grant will help develop this important initiative that, in time, can improve social-emotional outcomes and restores relationships by providing strategies that better equip students to become resilient learners while simultaneously building school and family partnerships," said Patrick Kennelly, director of Marquette University Center for Peacemaking.

The first two Better Together Fund recipients were named in October. They included the Hispanic Collaborative's MercadoMKE, which seeks to support Hispanic-owned businesses with an online presence and sales platform and the African American Chamber of Commerce's RISE MKE Entrepreneurial Training Program that supports African American-owned businesses with training and technical support to develop e-commerce business and other strategies. Each organization received \$250,000 in grant funding.

The Better Together Fund is managed by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

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About Advocate Aurora Safe Care Promise

Health and safety is our highest priority. The [Advocate Aurora Safe Care Promise](#) provides additional measures to protect patients and our team members. In person or online, we are here to ensure safe, comfortable and convenient care, and have taken additional measures to protect patients and their families including:

- **Masking** – Ensuring anyone who enters our locations is wearing a mask. If they don't have one, we'll gladly provide it.
- **Screening** – Taking the temperature and asking questions about symptoms and exposure to everyone who enters our locations.

- **Social distancing** – Rearranging our waiting areas and staggering appointment times to reduce traffic and create safe spaces.
- **Virtual check-in** – Facilitating check-ins with digital devices for seamless, low-contact arrivals.
- **Enhanced Cleaning** – Adding additional cleaning precautions in all areas and added handwashing/sanitizer stations.

About Advocate Aurora Health

Advocate Aurora Health is one of the 10 largest not-for-profit, integrated health systems in the United States and a leading employer in the Midwest with more than 70,000 employees, including more than 22,000 nurses and the region's largest employed medical staff and home health organization. A national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, the system serves nearly 3 million patients annually in Illinois and Wisconsin across more than 500 sites of care. Advocate Aurora is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies and is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology and pediatrics. The organization contributed \$2.2 billion in charitable care and services to its communities in 2019. We help people live well.

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