

WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

ADVOCATE DEVELOP ENGAGE GROW



March 8, 2023

Mark A. Mone, PhD
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Chapman Hall 202
PO Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Dear Chancellor Mone and Elected Officials,

Please consider this letter of support for UW-Milwaukee's 2023-25 Capital Budget request for \$181M for the Health Science building renovation. This project, which is a top priority identified in the UW System Capital Budget request, is a strategic consolidation and build-out of lab, classroom, and simulation space. It utilizes existing resources to create a state-of-the-art education space within the former Columbia St. Mary's complex acquired by UWM in 2010. It builds on more than a decade of work that the State Legislature began. This investment is critical as it will help produce the healthcare professionals needed to begin to address Wisconsin's workforce shortage. By investing in the Health Sciences renovation, UWM can educate and graduate more nurses and healthcare workers to meet the needs of patients and their families.

UWM offers the most healthcare degrees in Wisconsin, and in 2021-22, UWM granted degrees to 2,093 students in the health and human services fields. But the healthcare field is growing at a rate of 7-25 percent in the next decade. To catch up and keep pace, the state must invest in UWM and the Health Sciences building.

UWM's capital budget request will renovate space that is currently unusable. It will allow UWM's College of Health Sciences to consolidate its five current program locations into one modern facility, which in turn will have at least two important payoffs: 1) increase enrollment capacity by 15 percent, which would yield 3,000 more graduates in a 10-year period, and 2) offer a faster and more efficient path to graduation.

Workforce is the biggest challenge facing our employers and that is particularly true in healthcare. The 98 percent job placement rate for UWM Health Sciences graduates speaks to the high demand for these graduates. And because 82 percent of UWM alums from the last ten years both live and work in Wisconsin, we know that expanding enrollment in UWM's Health Sciences programs is a win for Wisconsin.

We applaud UWM's work to implement new programs, improve existing programs and better support interdisciplinary education and training within the proposed space. Having a single space to educate and train

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health sciences professionals will create efficiencies and streamline the preparation of students who will work in hospitals, clinics, and home care.

Without the requested capital investment, UW-Milwaukee will not be able to complete the renovation started six years ago when the Legislature approved funding to replace and upgrade the aging infrastructure of nearly 132,000 square feet. The building will continue to include empty space, and Wisconsin will lose the opportunity to attract new talent and enroll and graduate more students in healthcare fields.

Healthcare delivery in Wisconsin is a partnership among many, and UW-Milwaukee provides highly skilled professionals that serve our region's health care organizations. We support UWM's request to complete its Health Sciences Renovation, and ask you to do the same. Moving forward with completing the facility will contribute to improved healthcare quality for the people of Wisconsin and increase the state's return on investment.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Kelley
President & CEO
Waukesha County Business Alliance, Inc.

Peter Bacon
Chief Integration and Business Development Officer
ProHealth Care, Inc.

Héctor Colón
President & CEO
Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan

Stephan Gunn, MS, LPC, NCC
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Chief Operating Officer
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Mary Reich, BSN RN
Executive Director
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Jim Tarantino
Founder & Principal
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John Weaver, Psy.D.
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Stress Management & Mental Health Clinic