



Contact

Children's Wisconsin

Name: Justin A. Metzger

Phone: (312) 218-6160

Email: jmetzger@childrenswi.org

Chorus Community Health Plans' Commitment to Tackle the Health Effects of Homelessness Tops \$2 Million

More Than 2,000 Children Have Been Helped

MILWAUKEE — Chorus Community Health Plans (CCHP), an affiliate of Children's Wisconsin, announced its continued commitment to the cause of reducing homelessness and housing instability, and the health effects it brings by continuing its partnership with Milwaukee County Housing Services. CCHP is one of the earliest healthcare organizations to participate in this program, and the \$300,000 committed for 2025 will put CCHP's cumulative contributions to this effort above \$2 million.

"Since 2018, Chorus Community Health Plans has provided more than \$2 million of funding to support our members in Milwaukee County via an innovative partnership with the Milwaukee County Housing Division. We recognize stable, affordable housing is a major barrier for many patients and families accessing the health care they need," said Mark Rakowski, president of CCHP. "The team at Milwaukee County, led by our Housing Navigator, works directly with our members that are living outdoors or in unstable situations to offer them timely solutions that will not only improve their housing situation, but also allow them to focus on their health and well-being.

The County's [Housing First](#) program, initially launched in 2015, closely follows the Housing First method developed by [Sam Tsemberis](#) and his [Pathways Housing First Institute](#). The idea of the program is to get unhoused individuals into stable housing *first*, and *then* get them connected to services like Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) counseling, mental health services, general healthcare and job training. By taking this trauma-informed approach, Milwaukee County Housing Services has historically reported a 99 percent uptake in services, as well as over a 95 percent participant retention rate.

The innovation specific to Milwaukee County is their partnership with health insurance providers like CCHP who operate Medicaid-based plans like BadgerCare Plus, using health insurance dollars to directly reduce the cost of housing (rent) for individuals who are in unstable housing situations.

"During the history of this program, Housing First has been saving County taxpayers approximately \$3.5 million per year while reducing street homelessness by 70 percent, and overall homelessness by more than 46 percent," said James Mathy, administrator of Milwaukee County Housing Services. "The healthcare savings alone are so significant, insurance providers like CCHP came to us with this idea. They realized that, in some cases, the cost of a single trip to an emergency department by an unhoused individual for hypothermia during a cold snap can be higher than helping them pay for rent for an entire year."

"Over 1,300 members and their families have benefited from this partnership and have often shared their disbelief that an insurance company would be involved in efforts such as this," Rakowski added. "My response is that housing is healthcare, as our data clearly shows stable housing leads to both improved health and lower health care spending."

For more information about Chorus Community Health Plans, visit www.ChorusHealthPlans.org.

For more information about Milwaukee County Housing First, visit <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/DHHS/Housing>.

About Chorus Community Health Plans (CCHP)

CCHP is an insurance organization dedicated to providing its members access to the highest quality health care and supportive services in collaboration with providers and community partners. CCHP has more than 120,000 members participating the BadgerCarePlus program, nearly 3,000 youth in foster care through the Care4Kids program and more than 13,000 Individual and Family Plan members both On and Off Exchange. Services provided through CCHP are customized to meet the unique needs of individual adult, children and family members and help empower them to take charge of their health and wellness.

About Children's Wisconsin

Children's Wisconsin is the region's only independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. The hospital, with locations in Milwaukee and Neenah, Wisconsin, is recognized as one of the leading pediatric health care centers in the United States. It is ranked among the top pediatric hospitals in the country by *U.S. News & World Report's* 2023-24 Best Children's Hospitals report. Children's provides primary care, specialty care, urgent care, emergency care, mental and behavioral health care, community health services, foster and adoption services, child and family counseling, child advocacy services and family resource centers. In 2022, Children's invested more than \$171 million in the community to improve the health status of children through medical care, advocacy, education and pediatric medical research. Children's achieves its mission in part through donations from individuals, corporations and foundations and is proud to be a member of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

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