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City of Milwaukee and Meta House, Inc. Awarded Federal Grant ***Funding aimed at addressing health disparities of African-American women***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) in partnership with Meta House, Inc., has been awarded a **\$1.5 million dollar federal grant over three years** to address the disparities in health care of African American women in the community. The grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will expand capacity in the City of Milwaukee by adding to Meta House's nationally recognized treatment program for women addicted to drugs and alcohol. It is estimated that there are more than 5,000 African American women in Milwaukee who are addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, while the current community capacity for treatment is limited to about 550 women.

"This is an important public-private partnership that will support a key Milwaukee community health outcome," said Seth L. Foldy, M.D., Commissioner of Health. The project will serve as a model for treatment programs and public health systems looking to coordinate services in the community for women with substance use disorders and their children. MHD will provide education targeting such health issues as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, cigarette smoking, infant mortality, and low infant birth weight.

Meta House will provide alcohol and drug abuse treatment, a parenting program, mental health assessment and treatment, basic living skills training, a vocational and educational program, child-care and case management. "The factors that influence drug use are similar to those that influence other high-risk behaviors," reports Dr. Francine Feinberg, Executive Director of Meta House. "Risk factors that tend to occur along with alcohol and drug use are communicable diseases, high risk sexual behavior, intentional and unintentional injuries and violence, mental health issues, and tobacco use and exposure."

This partnership will be evaluated for its ability to help the women become economically self-sufficient, develop a drug-free family environment, experience good mental health functioning, make legal and responsible personal decisions, limit unprotected sexual activity, lower tobacco use, avoid injection drug use and improve parenting. "There is a growing awareness in the field that in order to help women reclaim their lives from addiction, an effective approach must address related issues such as health, employment and parenting," said Feinberg.

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