

Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau
May 2010 Evaluation of:

Medical Education & Research, and Public Health Grants
Medical College of Wisconsin
UW School of Medicine and Public Health

Briefing Points:

- Since 2007, neither the Wisconsin United for Health Foundation – formed by order of the Commissioner of Insurance to split the \$630 million Blue Cross conversion fund between the state’s two medical schools – nor the Commissioner of Insurance have formal oversight authority over the endowments.
- The Foundation has recast itself as a “forum for public information and comment on the schools’ programs”.
- The Commissioner’s staff indicates 5-year plans and annual reports submitted by the schools, program evaluations required every five years under the order, and financial audits are the principle means of ensuring accountability and compliance with the Commissioner’s order?
- Public Health Grant Funds are overseen by an “Oversight & Advisory Committees” at each school consisting of four “health advocates”, four representatives from the medical school and one appointee by the Commissioner of Insurance.
- Provisions for oversight of Medical Education & Research Grant Funds are not spelled out in the order, though each school has established committees for this purpose.
- The original order by the Commissioner specified 35% of grants should go to Public Health projects, however the oversight & advisory committee is free to increase or decrease this allocation percentage with a two-thirds vote. The oversight committees at each school have consistently voted to perpetuate the 35% cap on Public Health Grants.
- The Commissioner’s order stipulated an “appropriate” portion of Public Health Grants should be for community-based projects to ensure communities has “reasonable” access to funds. From 2004 to 2008, more the a third (\$4.1 million of \$11.6 million) of total Public Health Grants awarded by the Medical College was spent directly by the school to pay academic advisors (required for grant award) on the school faculty, and faculty or school staff assigned as project coordinators. During the same period, \$4.2 million of UW’s Public Health Grants, or 29% for its total \$14.5 in awards, was spent directly by the school. UW also uses Public Health Grants to support the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute – a joint facility the school operates in partnership with the Medical College.