



**For Immediate Release**

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## **UW Health Wins Prominent Economic Development Award**

**Madison, WI** – UW Health’s Health Occupations and Professions Exploration (HOPE) program won the Talent Development Award at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Community and Economic Development Awards (CEDA) banquet, held September 12, 2018, at The Edgewater Hotel in Madison. The CEDA Awards program was established by the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) to recognize businesses, projects, and organizations that are making significant contributions to Wisconsin’s economy.

The Talent Development award honors initiatives or programs that have driven successful talent development efforts to strengthen the Wisconsin workforce.

“I’m honored to accept this award on behalf of UW Health and the HOPE Program. Building HOPE has truly taken a village, involving the efforts of the UW Health Career Pathways team as well as hundreds of other UW Health and UW School of Medicine and Public Health employees and community members,” said Bridgett Willey, founder of HOPE and Director of the Allied Health Education and Career Pathways Department at UW Health. “The program has had an incredible impact on young people, and it has been a truly rewarding experience watching so many successfully complete their education and move into health care careers.”

The HOPE Program was founded by Dr. Bridgett Willey at UW Health in 2013 to bolster the healthcare workforce by providing high school and college students from underrepresented backgrounds the opportunity to explore healthcare careers through a one-day seminar that includes interactive curriculum, networking opportunities and hands-on experiences. Students who participate in the program are eligible to apply for summer internships at UW Health. To date, over 2,000 students have participated in HOPE, with more than 250 completing a summer internship and 77 gaining employment at UW Health.

“WEDA is excited to partner with the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to present the CEDA Awards and celebrate the dedicated efforts of business and organizations across the state to advance Wisconsin’s economy,” said WEDA Executive Director Brian Doudna.

Awards were given in the following six categories at the CEDA Awards banquet: Business Retention and Expansion; Economic Development Initiative; Economic Driver; Public-Private Partnership; Real Estate Development and Reuse; and Talent Attraction.

CEDA Award sponsors include the American Transmission Company; Alliant Energy; Bachmann Construction; Green Bay Packers; Insight Publications; J.H. Findorff & Son; Madison Gas & Electric; Wisconsin Public Service; and Xcel Energy.

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