

AMA, West Side United fight for health equity, one community at a time

As part of its goal to leverage strategic partnerships to empower physicians and communities, the AMA is collaborating with West Side United (WSU) in addressing health inequity in 10 neighborhoods on Chicago's west side. WSU's primary goal is to reduce the life expectancy gap between Chicago's downtown and 10 west side neighborhoods, especially considering the decrease in life expectancy across the nation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October 2022, the AMA made an additional \$3 million multi-year investment in Chicago's west side neighborhoods. This investment builds on the AMA's initial \$2 million investment in 2020 to build alliances with organizations, groups and neighborhoods that have experienced historical disinvestment.

This investment leverages AMA's commitment as an anchor mission partner with WSU. Fellow anchor missions partners include: Rush University Medical Center, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, AMITA Health, Cook County Health, Sinai Health System, and University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System, along with the Illinois Medical District and financial partner Northern Trust.

Confronting historical disinvestment

Chief Health Equity Officer Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH, presents the AMA's vision for equity, a nation where all people live in thriving communities, where resource work well, and systems are equitable and create no harm, and everyone has the power to achieve optimal health.

Improving health outcomes

AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, emphasizes that the AMA's multi-million dollar contribution in support of West Side United is an investment in improving the health

outcomes for generations of neighbors.

Partnering with west side communities

- **October 2022:** The AMA makes an additional \$3 million multi-year investment in west side neighborhoods.
- **April 2021:** Project N95, national clearinghouse for personal protective equipment (PPE), approaches the AMA to help facilitate the distribution of 180,000 masks to Chicago-area non-profits, including WSU, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- **November 2020:** The American Medical Association Foundation (AMAF) makes a \$100,000 donation to support patients and care teams working together to manage blood pressure (BP) in west side communities. High BP is an important modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death on the west side.
- **February 2020:** WSU announces a \$6 million investment made by six Chicago hospital systems and partners, including \$2 million from the AMA, the collaborative's newest member. In addition to financial investment, the AMA also commits to other efforts aimed at making a positive impact on the health and well-being of west side residents. This includes working with more local health care institutions and organizations to improve blood pressure control rates, hiring interns from west side neighborhoods to further youth career development, and participating in and sponsoring local volunteer events, such as wellness walks.
- **2017:** WSU forms. Its mission is to improve social, economic and structural determinants of health by improving access to care and community resources, improving mental and behavioral health, and preventing and reducing chronic disease.