

**Military veterans and first responders are tasked with going into situations that can not only be extremely dangerous but can commonly result in brain injury, trauma, and great distress.**

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury that affects how the brain works. TBIs can be caused by a jolt, bump, or blow to the head or a penetrating injury, such as a gunshot. These injuries can cause a range of symptoms, such as confusion, cognitive impairment, speech impairment, sensory challenges, memory problems, and mood changes.

**Since 2001, approximately 1 of every 3 veterans have returned home from war with symptoms of TBI or posttraumatic stress disorder, a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event.** With these invisible wounds and other challenges, 20 U.S. veterans die every day by suicide.<sup>1</sup>

Once home, many veterans serve in the first responder and public safety fields, where they face a parallel epidemic of personal and professional struggles. One study found that more than 60 percent of firefighters have experienced symptoms of TBI at some point in their careers.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the symptoms and signs of these invisible wounds are interrelated and often difficult to diagnose. **That's where the Avalon Action Alliance steps in.**

The Avalon Action Alliance provides veterans and first responders services at no cost for three connected post-trauma impacts: TBI, depression and PTSD, and substance abuse. Blending leading scientific advances, age-old techniques, and data-driven programming, Avalon's results are advancing innovations to redefine the standard of care for our nation's military and first responder communities.



## Transformative Partnership for Neurotrauma

When the Avalon Action Alliance began looking for a new partner to build out their veteran alliance, the **Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin team** immediately stood out among the global field.

Under the leadership of Founding Director Shekar Kurpad, MD, PhD, our Neuroscience Institute has an international reputation for research and specialized clinical care for neurotrauma. In particular, our Brain Injury Research Program, led by Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP, has prestigious partnerships with the U.S. Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, National Collegiate Athletic Association, and more.

**In collaboration with the Neuroscience Institute, the Avalon Action Alliance recently announced a \$12.5 million investment to establish the BRAVE (Building Resilience through Action in Veterans and First Responders for Life) program in Milwaukee.**

This multi-week, intensive outpatient program will be the **first program in the Midwest** designed specifically to treat mild traumatic brain injury in veterans and first responders. This new program builds upon Avalon's national TBI network, which includes five similar programs across the country.

## The BRAVE program includes:



Our team will train veteran peer consultants (veterans experienced at recognizing symptoms of TBI) who will perform outreach and help connect veterans who report TBI symptoms.



Individuals referred to the BRAVE program will undergo a phone assessment. Those with symptoms of mild TBI will further receive an intense, three-day evaluation to gauge the degree of injury and treatment needs. Selected patients will then be referred to the three-week outpatient program.



The BRAVE team will develop customized treatment plans that target each patient's unique needs and how to best support their recovery. Treatments and therapies could include TBI and psychological diagnostics, physical and vestibular therapy, psychiatric and psychological care, and speech and language therapy.

The BRAVE program is expected to welcome its first patient by September 1, 2023. Programming will be located at the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Greenfield Highlands Health Center.



## Make a Difference Today

Across the country, many of our nation's defenders are suffering from invisible wounds without access to specialized, evidence-based care.

Building on the unprecedented investment by the Avalon Action Alliance, the generosity of philanthropic partners is essential for sustaining and expanding this life-changing program for veterans and first responders across the Midwest.

Together, we can create positive transformations following trauma for our nation's bravest heroes.

**To learn more about how you can  
make a difference, please contact:**

**Sylvia Ameen**, Managing Senior Director of Philanthropy  
sameen@mcw.edu  
414-955-4767

<sup>1</sup> Avalon Action Alliance, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Torres VA, Strack JE, Dolan S, Kruse MI, Pennington ML, Synett SJ, Kimbrel N, Gulliver SB. Identifying Frequency of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in Firefighters. *Workplace Health Saf.* 2020 Oct;68(10):468-475. doi: 10.1177/2165079920922576. Epub 2020 Jun 11. PMID: 32525463.



## AVALON ACTION ALLIANCE

is the one collaborative resource providing veterans and first responders services at no cost for the three interrelated post-trauma impacts: depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and substance abuse.

For three years, Avalon Action Alliance has proven results by aligning the groundbreaking work of the Marcus Institute for Brain Health and the Boulder Crest Foundation for Posttraumatic Growth programs, a scientific framework that explains the positive transformation that can occur following trauma.

Blending leading scientific advances, age-old techniques, and data-driven programming, Avalon's results are driving innovation we expect to become the standard of care for our nation's military and first responder communities.

[www.avalonactionalliance.org](http://www.avalonactionalliance.org)



Shekar N. Kurpad, MD, PhD  
The Sanford J. Larson MD, PhD,  
Professor Chair, Department of Neurosurgery  
Founding Director, Neuroscience Institute

&

Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP  
The Shekar N. Kurpad, MD, PhD  
Chair in Neurosurgery

Cordially invite you  
to celebrate a transformational investment by the

## AVALON ACTION ALLIANCE

in the Neuroscience Institute, positioning Froedtert  
& the Medical College of Wisconsin as the first Avalon Center  
in the Midwest to provide world-class care for veterans  
and first responders impacted by traumatic brain injury  
and posttraumatic stress disorder

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023 | 10:30AM

Live Stream via MCW YouTube Channel  
[https://youtube.com/live/QNfPJowz\\_YA](https://youtube.com/live/QNfPJowz_YA)



Froedtert Hospital

# WELCOME

## AVALON ACTION ALLIANCE



## AVALON ACTION ALLIANCE TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT ANNOUNCEMENT

APRIL 27, 2023 | 10:30 AM

MCW Hub for Collaborative Medicine  
Innovation Center

### **Welcome Remarks**

Sylvia Ameen  
Managing Senior Director of Philanthropy, MCW  
Executive Director, Froedtert Hospital Foundation

### **Welcome from Leadership**

John R. Raymond, Sr., MD  
President and CEO, Medical College of Wisconsin

Eric L. Conley  
Executive Vice President, Froedtert Health  
President, Froedtert Hospital

### **Gift Impact**

Shekar N. Kurpad, MD, PhD  
The Sanford J. Larson, MD, PhD, Professor  
Chair, Department of Neurosurgery  
Founding Director, Neuroscience Institute

Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP  
The Shekar N. Kurpad, MD, PhD, Chair in Neurosurgery

### **Avalon Action Alliance Remarks**

James P. Kelly, MA, MD, FAAN, FANA  
Executive Director, Marcus Institute for Brain Health

Joe Brennan  
CEO, Avalon Action Alliance

### **Community Acknowledgement**

Aaron D. Lipski  
Fire Chief, City of Milwaukee

### **Closing Remarks**

Joseph E. Kerschner, MD  
Provost and Executive Vice President  
The Julia A. Uihlein, MA, Dean of the School of Medicine

EVENT CONCLUDES | 11:00 AM