Michigan Health Endowment Fund Announces nearly $2M in Local Impact Grants Program to improve health of communities

LANSING, Mich. – Recently, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (MHEF) awarded nearly $2 million through the Local Impact Grants Program to 27 non-profit organizations across the state. The funds are assisting local communities improve the health and wellness of children and senior residents which in turn will help reduce the cost of health care.

Non-profit organizations across the state were invited to apply for the Local Impact Grants through the Fund’s Fall 2015 grant application process. The grant requests were awarded to organizations focused on areas such as: wellness and fitness programs; healthy food access; behavioral health services; health-related transportation services; foster and adopted children health services; and technology enhancements.

Family Futures was granted $100,000 to expand Connections, a program that would include partnering with three additional foster care agency providers. The goal is to ensure more Kent County children under five in foster care have access to regular developmental and social-emotional screening. Additionally, it will create a circle of support; provide appropriate referrals; parent coaching and data tracking/analysis; support the new statewide trauma care support and screening efforts; and implement a Foster Care Liaison.

Greater Flint Health Coalition was awarded $97,500 to implement the Commit to Fit and Prescription for Health Programs through its various partners to combat health consequences of sedentary lifestyles and obesity for people in Flint and Genesee County. Through this effort, residents will be provided with disease-specific activity plans and linkages to community-based physical activity, health maintenance, and wellness resources such as opportunities to practice
physical activity in safe, affordable locations. Additionally, the project will incorporate a nutrition education component for at-risk Flint children and their families to provide them with nutrition and lead education, lead mitigating recipes, access to healthy food and support with securing food assistance resources in Genesee County such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double-Up Food Bucks. Other awards range from $11K to $100K. (A detailed list of grant recipients is included at the conclusion of the release and online.)

“The Michigan Health Endowment Fund is proud to invest in organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children and seniors in our communities,” said Rob Fowler, board chairman. “We’re excited to collaborate with such a variety of community and non-profit organizations as they harness these grants to enhance their programs and services.”

Most of the grants awarded will be for a one-year period, and in some cases a two-year duration.

“We are pleased to partner with these local organizations who are doing great work to impact the health of their communities,” said Paul Hillegonds, chief executive officer of the Michigan Health Endowment Fund.

The Fund was created as part of 2013 state legislation that allowed Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to become a non-profit mutual health insurer. Nearly $38 million in grants were awarded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund in 2014; $8.5 million awarded in December of 2015 to 29 Michigan community health foundations; and an additional $4.2 million to the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards earlier this year.

For more information on the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, please visit healthendowmentfund.org.

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