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Health Fund announces $11.2 million in behavioral health and nutrition and healthy lifestyles awards

LANSING, Mich. – Schools, health centers, nonprofits, and health departments across Michigan are among the 35 latest Michigan Health Endowment Fund (Health Fund) grant recipients. Over $11.2 million in awards, with grant sizes ranging from $70,500 to $500,000, will support Michigan residents and communities through behavioral health and nutrition and wellness initiatives. (A full list of grant recipients can be found at the bottom of this release.)

Behavioral health grants strengthen schools and systems
The Health Fund’s Behavioral Health Initiative aims to improve access to high-quality, person-centered mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) healthcare. This year, the Health Fund selected initiatives through five priority areas: school-based mental health capacity, innovative models of care, innovative technology, efficient entry and seamless transitions in care, and racial disparities in follow-up care.

Program Director Becky Cienki emphasizes that the pandemic has only heightened communities’ needs. “As schools prepare for reopening and Michigan residents statewide face the continuing impacts of COVID-19, strengthening behavioral health support continues to be top priority,” she said. “Deep community involvement and strategic partnerships are helping our grant partners not only bounce back, but build stronger, more sustainable programs.”

In one selected initiative, Cherry Health will be working with the Michigan Primary Care Association to integrate evidence-based SUD prevention and treatment practices in five Kent County school clinics. The program will increase the capacity for school-based primary care
providers to support a middle and high school students who are at an increased risk of developing SUD.

In another school-based project, Spectrum Health Foundation and partners will be training thousands of school personnel in a 16-county West Michigan service area in a comprehensive school-based suicide prevention and crisis response program. The initiative, called the Suicide S.A.F.E. Team Response: Blue Envelope Program, is a significant expansion of work that has been in place since 2015.

Other behavioral health organizations chosen for funding are bringing telehealth to libraries, responding to crises, establishing telehealth hubs within emergency departments, and providing targeted responses to racial disparities.

**Supporting equitable food access and physical activity initiatives**

Announced alongside the behavioral health awards, the Health Fund’s Nutrition & Healthy Lifestyles grant program seeks to improve the health of Michigan residents by reducing obesity, increasing access to healthy food and physical activity, and reducing health disparities. The program prioritized proposals in four categories: community-driven work, informing health policy, food system infrastructure, and special populations.

“These initiatives are opening the door for a healthier future for Michigan residents of all ages,” said Program Director Laurie Solotorow. “With broad visions and strong community buy-in, our grant partners are chipping away at disparities in nutrition and physical wellness as well as strengthening the food system infrastructure in key areas around the state.”

Like in the Health Fund’s Behavioral Health cohort, various projects expand support in Michigan schools for the upcoming school year. For example, Wayne State University will expand their Building Healthy Communities work by identifying low-resource school districts statewide and providing interventions and resources that promote healthy eating and healthy living. Results of the project will help determine best practices for school wellness policies.

Other initiatives offer nutritional education and wellness programming for targeted populations. For example, Community Mental Health of Ottawa County will be working to mitigate causes of early mortality and increased life expectancy for people living with intellectual and developmental diseases. Interventions will include individualized wellness consultations, health screenings, nutrition education, and new exercise opportunities.
In Saginaw and Bay County, Michigan Health Improvement Alliance is working to advance the regional food ecosystem by improving food access for the most vulnerable residents and expanding food-related economic opportunities. These interventions aim to improve a region with significant food deserts and high rates of food insecurity.

Other grants in the cohort cover a range of health issues and populations, including expanding nutrition prescription programs, strengthening local food councils, and assessing the viability of an aggregation, distribution, and light food processing facility in the Upper Peninsula.

**About the Health Fund**

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and older adults. The foundation has five annual grant programs. For more information about the Health Fund and its grantmaking, visit [mihealthfund.org](http://mihealthfund.org).

### 2021 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE GRANTS

**AuSable Valley Community Mental Health**

*Ogemaw County No Wrong Door Access Program* | $285,527

To strengthen the behavioral health system of care in rural Ogemaw County by streamlining entry into mental health and substance use disorder treatment and building collaborative care transitions across providers.

**CARE of Southeastern Michigan**

*Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) Teen Vaping Cessation Program* | $146,664

To provide comprehensive substance use disorder treatment to youth needing more intensive therapy, with school staff as trained facilitators.

**Catholic Human Services, Inc.**

*Recovery Resources for Teens and Families* | $492,563

To increase and enhance integrated family and peer recovery coach services in a seven-county area, supporting substance use disorder recovery for adolescents and their families.

**Cherry Health**

*Integrating YSBIRT in School-Based Health Centers* | $293,042

To enhance workforce knowledge of, and ability to treat, substance use disorders in school-based health centers staffed by Cherry Health, a federally qualified health center.

**District Health Department #10**

*Interconnected Mental Health System for Youth* | $500,000
To establish an interconnected service of school-based mental health supports that will streamline communication across agencies, provide a three-tiered approach to accessing mental health supports, and provide greater reach to families and youth in need.

**Eastern Michigan University**  
*School-Based Early Childhood Behavioral Health Program* | $167,002  
To increase access to early childhood mental health services by delivering no-cost psychological assessments and therapy integrated into early learning centers, while creating a sustainable doctoral-level training opportunity for graduate students.

**GFM The Synergy Center**  
*Racial Disparities in Behavioral Health Follow-Up Care* | $200,000  
To explore the root causes of disparities for African Americans in accessing follow-up care through community engagement via community awareness events, monthly community forums, focus groups, informant interviews, surveys, and continued partnership with community leaders.

**Kent Intermediate School District**  
*KISA Student Wellbeing Survey* | $70,500  
To measure students’ perceptions of engagement, social-emotional learning, and diversity, equity, and inclusion with the goal of enabling schools and Kent ISD to identify and utilize effective strategies and interventions.

**LifeWays Community Mental Health**  
*Behavioral Health Beyond Our Front Door* | $78,473  
To expand the reach of behavioral health services by training staff in evidence-based suicide prevention and treatment models, and by embedding 24/7 telehealth therapy services in three community-based organizations, including the Jackson Interfaith Shelter.

**Livingston County Community Mental Health Authority**  
*Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Program* | $343,428  
To train staff in the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Program (EMDR), commonly used to treat trauma, to expand the quality of services offered to children in the community mental health system.

**Michigan Peer Review Organization**  
*Libraries as Mental Health Hubs* | $346,445  
To bring direct mental health services, behavioral health awareness, and prevention training to library staff, as well as social worker-led teletherapy and community engagement events in three underserved rural counties.

**MidMichigan Health Foundation**  
*Expanding Access to Care Thru Technology & Teamwork* | $250,000  
To increase access to behavioral health care for people who are experiencing crisis in a 23-
county service area by providing a connection to telehealth for patients in seven emergency rooms across the area.

**Oakland Family Services**  
*Barrier Busting: Uncovering Disparities in Behavioral Health | $225,000*  
To implement three exploratory methods—key informant interviews, focus groups, and surveys—and uncover the barriers to behavioral health care that cause disparities.

**Self-Help Addiction Recovery (SHAR)**  
*Defining the Barriers to Access Our Needs | $200,000*  
To work with health agencies and networks in Wayne County to uncover the spectrum of barriers to accessing behavioral health follow-up care and corresponding disparities.

**Spectrum Health Foundation**  
*Suicide S.A.F.E. Team Response: Blue Envelope | $485,996*  
To provide a comprehensive, school-based, suicide prevention and crisis response program, including targeted evidence-based interventions and policy and resource guidance.

**The Regents of the University of Michigan**  
*TRAILS: Building a Statewide Student Mental Health Solution | $500,000*  
To promote health and educational success for K-12 students by embedding high quality, evidence-based mental health programming within schools and by investing in local school staff who are trusted by students and familiar with the local culture and social context.

**Trinity Health, Michigan d/b/a Mercy Health Saint Mary’s**  
*Collaborative Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Unit | $500,000*  
To develop and test a new treatment model that will provide immediate behavioral health crisis management, available to all community members regardless of insurance type.

**Upper Peninsula Health Care Solutions**  
*Behavioral Health Tele-ECHO Project | $255,318*  
To provide primary care providers with the knowledge, tools, and referral pathways to optimally treat patients with a mild to moderate behavioral health diagnosis.

**Women of Colors**  
*Racial Disparity in Behavioral Health Project | $200,000*  
To provide and facilitate outreach, discovery sessions, and community forums focused on project goals of understanding underlying causes of racial disparities in behavioral health.

**2021 NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLES GRANTS**

**CATCH Global Foundation**  
*CATCH Michigan: Expanding Whole Child Wellness Statewide | $481,000*  
To expand the evidence-based CATCH Whole Child Wellness Program to schools across the
state and to cement the CATCH coordination model into schools’ practices and environments through the work of collaborative partners and ambassadors.

**Community Action Agency**
*A Systems Approach to Food Security for Black Children* | $499,290
To engage the community to develop solutions to address the root causes of food insecurity among Black children in Jackson by creating long-term sustainable improvements in the health of resource-poor communities.

**Community Mental Health of Ottawa County**
*Healthy Living and Learning Ottawa County* | $155,000
To establish a manageable approach to reducing obesity and chronic illnesses among people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities through nutritional education, physical wellness programming, and individualized wellness consultations.

**Crim Fitness Foundation**
*Growing Resilience: Mind, Body, Community* | $150,000
To initiate a Food Policy Council in Flint, which will create an organizational body that will recruit stakeholders, collect input, facilitate meetings, and create action plans to improve their local food system.

**Detroit Public Schools Foundation**
*DPSCD Horticulture Career Pathways Program Planning* | $159,500
To provide Detroit Public Schools students with a collaborative work-based training model rooted within a farm-to-school-based curriculum, preparing students for higher education and direct career pathways in horticulture, including urban agriculture, food science, and culinary arts, while simultaneously providing free healthy foods.

**Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan**
*Native American Nutrition Prescription Program* | $497,342
To support healthy nutrition behavior change through referrals to a culturally tailored Nutrition Prescription Program, which ensures that the foods and intervention methods are culturally appropriate to promote commitment and engagement from participating individuals.

**Michigan Department of Education**
*Best Food Forward* | $499,696
To build healthy food systems within targeted school communities and establish direct partnerships between schools, health providers, businesses, community action agencies, faith-based communities as well as social service organizations.

**Michigan Health Improvement Alliance**
*Local Food Ecosystem Improvement Project* | $339,648
To advance regional food system improvement intervention by organizing stakeholders and on-
the-ground resources to develop custom, region-based plans to improve food production, distribution, processing, and policies in the region.

**Michigan State University**
*Expansion of Produce Prescriptions: A Prenatal Pilot | $493,400*
To expand evidence-based fruit and vegetable prescription programs to the prenatal population and inform policy conversations specific to the cost benefit of these interventions.

**Michigan State University**
*Food as Medicine for High-Risk Pregnant and Postpartum Women | $500,000*
To establish a Fresh Rx intervention for rural pregnant and postpartum women from 11 counties in northwest Michigan, beginning with screening for food insecurity or other high-risk conditions, such as substance abuse disorder and gestational hypertension.

**Michigan State University**
*Advancing Health & Equity via Michigan’s Local Food Councils | $499,948*
To build capacity among local food council leaders and statewide food and health network leaders through customized, needs-based learning experiences and technical assistance including in-person workshops, webinars, and site visits.

**Northern Michigan University**
*Exploring a Healthy, Sustainable Food Network in MI UP | $194,421*
To increase access to healthy, high-quality food for all residents of the Upper Peninsula through infrastructure improvements, and by determining the feasibility of an aggregation, distribution, and light food processing facility serving Marquette and Alger Counties.

**Sparrow Foundation – Sparrow Health System**
*Feeding Your Growing Family – Addressing Food Insecurity Among At-Risk Mothers | $366,556*
To address food insecurity by increasing nutrition, health and wellness among at-risk mothers and their children by providing access to resources, education, food, and meal preparation supplies.

**Vista Grande Villa**
*Village Garden Venture | $499,998*
To implement a tested intergenerational model to address fresh food-access and social isolation challenges many of Jackson’s older adult and youth populations suffer from through strengthening partnerships, creation of community garden hubs, and the establishment of educational, recreational workshops.

**Wayne State University**
*Citizenship for Health | $198,892*
To create a community-driven program to improve health, specifically diet and physical activity, in one neighborhood in Detroit.
**Wayne State University**

*BHC: Reducing Health Disparities in Schools* | $500,000  
To create a more intensive approach to implementing Building Healthy Communities in low-resource school districts to ensure that healthy behaviors and interventions are provided to children with the potential for high health disparities.

**Wayne State University**

*Functional Aging & Mindfulness for Seniors* | $375,000  
To improve health among seniors through physical activity, meditation, nutrition education, and communities of practice for care providers, enriching the environments where seniors age and establishing an extensive framework to target the disparities underlying Metro-Detroit seniors.