



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON  
DIRECTOR

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**CONTACT:** Lynn Sutfin  
517-241-2112  
[SutfinL1@michigan.gov](mailto:SutfinL1@michigan.gov)

## **Hometown Health Heroes and Jean Chabut Policy Champions honored by Michigan Public Health Week Partnership**

**LANSING, Mich.** – As part of National Public Health Week, 15 individuals and organizations will be presented with the 2019 Hometown Health Hero and Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion awards for their contributions to protecting and improving the health of Michigan residents on April 10 at the state Capitol.

The Michigan Public Health Week Partnership is hosting the event to honor those who are helping Michigan achieve its goal of “Creating the Healthiest Nation: For science. For action. For health.” This year’s awards focus on healthy communities, violence prevention, rural health, technology and public health and climate change.

“The work of public health belongs to all of us,” said Robert Gordon, MDHHS director. “Today I’m honored to celebrate a few individuals who have pointed the way. Some are Democrats, some are Republicans. Some are health professionals, some are regular citizens who lives have been touched by tragedy. Some work in Detroit and some work in northern Michigan. All have found a way to make our people healthier and our state stronger.”

### **2019 Jean Chabut Health Policy Champion Awards were presented to: Oakland County Health Division**

To achieve the Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) national recognition, the Oakland County Health Division had to demonstrate preparedness and response capability by meeting a comprehensive set of nationally-recognized standards. PPHR standards focus on three main goals: all-hazards planning, workforce development and demonstrating readiness through exercises and real events aligned with federal government requirements and national best practices.

### **Sen. John Bizon, Edward J. Canfield, Rep. Abdullah Hammoud, Rep. Kevin Hertel, Rep. Jon Hoadley and Rep. Hank Vaupel**

In 2018, this group of legislators worked together to pass a bi-partisan bill package that will decrease stigma, increase access to care, and bring the public health code in line with current science for HIV. HB 6016-HB 6023 will modernize HIV reporting and testing requirements. The key points of the bills include adding a mandatory third trimester test for pregnant women to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B and modifications to Michigan’s HIV disclosure laws.

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**2019 Hometown Health Hero awards were presented to:**

**Lori Bennett – F-Sharp (Family Shelter Health Assessment and Referral program), Ypsilanti**

When shelter agencies in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor need help with youth health services, Bennett is the first person they turn to for assistance. A nurse practitioner at the Corner Health Center, she created the F-Sharp program to provide health assessments to teens and young adults experiencing homelessness. The program also enrolls them with a medical provider so they can manage their own care no matter where they are living at the time. In FY 2018, more than 200 youths were seen with 65 percent of those referred to the Corner showing up for their appointments.

**Ed Benning – Rides to Groceries, Rides to Wellness, Rides for Veterans, Flint**

Whenever there's a need within his community, Benning, general manager/CEO of Mass Transportation Authority (MTA), immediately thinks about how transportation can play a part in serving that need. Benning created the Rides to Groceries program when Flint residents no longer had access to nutritious foods due to the closure of many local grocery stores. During the Flint water crisis, Benning directed the MTA to transport workers and supplies into neighborhoods and turned MTA locations into water storage and distribution centers. Following the success of the program, he created Rides for Wellness and Rides for Veterans to help residents get to and from medical appointments, pharmacies and grocery stores and VA hospitals in Michigan.

**Laura Brott – St. Joseph County Human Service, Centreville**

Brott has found innovative ways to connect service providers with the residents in St. Joseph County in need of their services. She was integral to a website redesign that integrated a community calendar and the development of a comprehensive resource guide for service providers so appropriate referrals could be made beyond their own agencies. Annually, she has been instrumental in coordinating the annual Project Connect/Veterans Stand Down event; putting residents in touch with county services, health screenings, vaccinations and food assistance.

**Ele's Place, Lansing**

Ele's Place has been a longtime haven for grieving families in Greater Lansing to seek programming and support under one roof. Through funding from Delta Dental, Ele's Place was able to expand their services to 34 school districts throughout Michigan. The program supports grieving students, making sure they have on-site, accessible support that allows them to grieve and process loss while not disrupting their normal student activities, routines and lifestyle. School-based groups of students meet for eight weeks during one class period. A school counselor and an Ele's Place staff member coordinate the grief support groups, assuring a safe space for students to talk openly, sometimes for the first time, about their losses. The program has fostered significant improvement of mental and emotional health as well as academic performance for participants.

**Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Hospital School Nurse Program, Charlevoix**

Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Hospital may be small, but that's not stopping them from making a positive impact on the health of nearly 3,200 students annually. In 2011, the hospital began its school nurse program in response to an increase in preventable pediatric cases being seen in the emergency department during school hours. The program places registered nurses in nine school systems and serves students ages 4-18. Many of these students did not have access to healthcare as school nurses had been eliminated from all area school budgets. Soon after the program began, school nurses were able to keep students in school learning, instead of sending them home; decreasing chronic student absenteeism by 32 percent. In addition, nurses provide safety education for any procedures performed by nonmedical school staff including tube feeding administration, urinary catheterization, insulin pumps and even anticonvulsants administration.

**Healthy Dearborn Coalition, Southfield**

Launched by Beaumont Health, Healthy Dearborn is a partnership between Beaumont, City of Dearborn, Dearborn Public Schools and more than 400 community members working together to create a culture of health by ensuring access to healthy eating and active living opportunities. The coalition has numerous accomplishments, including 5,200 residents participating in free community-based health screenings; developing a seed library to encourage community gardening; launching a bike share program; enhancing Dearborn's bike/walk-ability with extensions of rails and paid paths; and providing 1,300 residents with community education programs focusing on diabetes prevention and management, healthy nutrition and healthy cooking. There have also been more than 200,000 after school fitness sessions since 2016.

**Leanna Kermeen – Migrant Farmworker STD Testing/Treatment and Education, Holland**

When Kermeen clocks out of work, she does not go home or run errands, instead she visits migrant communities in Ottawa County to provide sexual health services and education to break down barriers to STD testing and treatment. During the last two years, Kermeen has worked with public health agencies, private farm owners and growers and a multicounty migrant resource council to identify and treat communicable diseases within the camps; primarily in men under the age of 25. Her work to slow or stop the spread of infections, such as chlamydia, has positively impacted migrant farmworkers and the community at large. She also connects with local food pantries to seek donated food, ensuring the workers have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, clothing, toothbrushes and other necessities.

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**Phil Pavona – Families Against Narcotics, Okemos**

Pavona suffered a devastating loss when his son died from an opioid overdose. A retired hospital employee, Pavona had a special level of experience working with systems to create change. He started the second Families Against Narcotics (FAN) Chapter in Ingham County and has driven across the state to help start numerous other chapters across Michigan. FAN brings together local drug court judges, law enforcement and parents who have lost their children to addiction and overdose. Participants work together to raise awareness about the dangers of narcotics as well as support families struggling with the impact of narcotic addiction. The program has increased the number of individuals trained to administer Naloxone, expanded peer recovery support across Michigan and supported people in recovery and families that are court-involved.

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