



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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MDHHS forms 11 Regional Health Equity Advisory Councils to combat health disparities among high-risk and underserved communities

LANSING, Mich. -- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is announcing the formation of 11 Regional Health Advisory Councils designed to help combat health disparities in underserved and rural areas across the state. These councils will provide a network of trusted community partners that will help improve structural gaps in current and emerging health emergencies including policies, practices and resource flow related to data.

“I am proud of the proactive measures we have taken to make health care more accessible to all Michiganders, especially those we know have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19,” said Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist. “We know the work to address racial disparities is continuous and the creation of the Regional Health Advisory Councils will bring together federal, state and local public health organizations to meaningfully address disparities related to COVID-19 through strengthening local community organizations that serve these populations.”

This spring, a Request for Applications was sent to organizations to oversee the councils in 14 identified regional areas to function as a backbone organization (BBO) to support the formation of each council. Of the 14 areas identified, 11 Regional Health Equity Councils will be established, which are composed of community organizations serving populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. BBOs are expected to begin serving their respective regions in August. The councils are being funded through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support grant. Councils will be established in the following regions:

- Genesee County
- Ingham County
- Kent County
- Oakland County
- Ottawa County
- Macomb County
- Muskegon County
- Saginaw County
- Washtenaw County

- Wayne County
- City of Detroit

BBOs will support their Regional Health Equity Council in accomplishing five key goals:

- A reduction in COVID-19 disparities in impacted communities specifically among Michigan's five racial ethnic minority populations:
 - African Americans.
 - American Indians/Alaska Natives.
 - Arab and Chaldean Americans.
 - Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
 - Hispanics/Latinos.
- Planned reduction of community identified priority risk factors.
- Development and implementation of practices and policies to promote equity and reduce health disparities.
- Equitable distribution and efficient use of resources to support affected communities including organizations and community leaders – both existing and emerging.
- Community driven, not agency driven, decision making and priority setting.

“It’s critical that we do everything possible at MDHHS to combat disparities,” said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “By working together with community leaders, tribal governments, local government officials and others on the ground of impacted communities we can better understand and serve affected populations. All these efforts make Michigan a better and more equitable place to live.”

Grants began distribution in July and funded activities will complete by May 31, 2023.

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