



DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO. 2

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For Immediate Release

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2022 ADVANCING MATERNAL HEALTH EQUITY GRANT AWARDED TO DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT NO. 2

District Health Department No. 2 would like to announce that they have received \$50,000 from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) and the BCBSM Foundation to improve maternal and infant health care outcomes in the region. BCBSM Social Mission and BCBSM Foundation are supporting this initiative with a total of \$272,347.50 for 12 months from January-December 2023. District Health Department No. 2 was one of seven organizations that received award funding.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services data illuminates five regions (1, 3, 6, 8, and 10) with higher than the state average for fetio-infant mortality and maternal mortality. Further, the data indicate that the Perinatal Period of Risk for these regions exists during the maternal health/prematurity period and is related to chronic disease, health behaviors, early prenatal care, and maternal stress among pregnant people.

The data mentioned above and conversations with the Michigan Regional Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaboratives, community organizations, health and social services providers, and stakeholders shed light on opportunities to impact disparate maternal health outcomes. Thus, selected Michigan Regional Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaboratives and their partners in priority regions were invited to apply.

DHD2 is fiscally responsible to manage the \$50,000 award fund for the Northern Michigan region. Region 3 includes Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Presque Isle counties. *Improving Maternal & Child Health Outcomes* is a project that will expand on a current program service, the “Healthy Futures Program,” and fund an expanded home visit by a public health nurse.

The “Healthy Futures Program” is a free service for pregnant people. It connects them with essential health information and resources and supports them along their pregnancy journey — from family planning to delivery, postpartum care, and caring for a new baby. Pregnant women will be identified through health department programs, referrals from obstetric provider partners, and self-referral. Upon notification of a pregnant woman, the Healthy Future nurse will make prenatal phone calls

offering prenatal education, support, and resource navigation as needed. A Public Health Nurse will conduct a home visit upon the baby's birth. During this visit, education (immunizations, safe sleep, nutrition, breastfeeding support), a Social Determinates of Health (SDoH) assessment, blood pressure screening, depression screening, substance use assessment, and education regarding post-birth danger signs (hypertension and hemorrhage) will be provided. Referrals to community resources will be offered as appropriate. Abnormal blood pressure values will be reported to their obstetric provider and follow-up with their obstetric provider for blood pressure monitoring will be encouraged. The District Health Department No. 2 nursing director and staff will work with the Region 2 & 3 Regional Perinatal Quality Collaborative coordinator to outreach, educate and support the use of the "High Tech High Touch" screening tool in two obstetric offices (Tawas and West Branch).

For questions on this program or how to apply, please call 1-800-504-2650.