

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2022

Media Contact:

Lisa M. de Hernández
Director of Communications & Public
Information
W: 410.313.6353 M: 410.428.7294
lidehernandez@howardcountymd.gov

Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition Awarded CareFirst Grant for National Health Equity to Address Diabetes

Columbia, MD - The Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC) was awarded \$50,000 Howard County by CareFirst BlueCross/BlueShield through their National Health Equity Strategy to address the Diabetes epidemic. This award supports the Strengthening Community Partnerships to Improve Health Equity in Howard County. Using a place-based approach by targeting outreach and education of residents in specifically identified housing and residential complexes in Howard County, the HCLIC will work to improve knowledge and increase access to resources for those at higher risk for diabetes.

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of death for Howard County residents. Approximately 10.8% of Howard County's adult population is estimated to have diagnosed diabetes. The data have shown racial disparity with African Americans having twice the disease rate compared with Caucasians in Howard County. The age of diabetes diagnosis among those under age 30 increased significantly from 9 percent in 2018 to 28 percent in 2021.

"These data underscore the importance of the CareFirst grant award to address this public health issue using a collaborative and multipronged community-based effort" said Howard County Health Officer, Dr. Maura J. Rossman.

As one of the 27 local health organizations working to address the social and environmental factors impacting the severity or likelihood of developing diabetes, this grant will bolster the HCLIC's collaborative efforts in pursuit of health equity and social impact to improve health care access and affordability for all Howard County residents.

"Howard County's incredibly effective Local Health Improvement Coalition has made tremendous strides in addressing the health needs of our community," said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. "That's why the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation named us one of the healthiest communities in the nation. Still, diabetes remains a major concern, and this grant will help with prevention and treatment so our community can lead better lives."

[CareFirst BlueCross/BlueShield have awarded a grand total of \\$1.76 million](#) to different health organizations addressing the diabetes epidemic across the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan area. The funds were distributed to support community organizations addressing the upstream determinants of diabetes including management and preventive care. This round of investments is Phase I of CareFirst's \$10.5 million commitment to addressing diabetes announced last year. During

-more-



Media Release

Page two

February 22, 2022

Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition Awarded CareFirst Grant for National Health Equity to Address Diabetes

this first round of funding, CareFirst prioritized grassroots organizations and local health coalitions addressing root causes of health disparities and diabetes in historically marginalized communities.

For more information about the Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC) visit the website at www.hclhic.org or by contacting LHIC@howardcountymd.gov.

###