

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Department Awarded Funds to Address Health Disparities by Employing Local Organizations and Community Health Workers Interested Organizations Encouraged to Apply for Associated Grants

Columbia, MD – The Howard County Health Department today announced that they have been awarded a \$463,369 Local Health Department Disparities Funding Opportunity from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The award will be used to reduce health disparities related to chronic disease and COVID-19 infections in Howard County.

Howard County Health Officer, Dr. Maura J. Rossman, remarks that “As a whole, Howard County’s health indicators are strong, but we know health disparities exist. This funding will allow us to support our residents to stay healthy or become healthier.” She continues, “We expect to meet people where they are on their health journey and provide the needed information and resources to help make their journey successful.”

“We are constantly working to improve the health of our neighbors, family, and friends here in Howard County and this funding is an important tool to keep us moving forward,” said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. “Over the past four years, we’ve worked to ensure all our residents can be healthy and thriving – launching new technology to reduce health disparities, investing in health factors like access to healthy foods, and creating a more walkable community. We look forward to working collaboratively with our partners to ensure the health and wellbeing of our residents.”

The Local Health Department Health Disparities Funding Opportunity will also allow the Health Department to fund two categories of grants. The first is for local organizations to identify and recruit 40 community leaders to create a network of certified Community Health Workers (CHW) to aid in chronic disease prevention and management, and to decrease hospital utilization rates in identified communities. The second grant will be awarded to local organizations to provide ongoing support for this CHW network. Dr. Rossman adds, “We encourage local partners to join us in the effort to better the health of our residents.”

CHWs have been shown to improve health in a range of chronic conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and mental health. By developing local community leaders as CHWs, the Health Department will be able to better address health disparities in order to affect long term behavior changes among those at risk for chronic health conditions.



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Organizations interested in either of these grants should visit www.howardcountymd.gov/health/health-disparities-grants for detailed information about the application process. Grants will run from September 1, 2022 to January 15, 2023 or June 30, 2023 respectively. Application deadline is **August 31, 2022**.

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