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## Howard County Health Department Awards Tobacco/Vaping, Diabetes and Chronic Disease Prevention Grants

**Columbia, MD** – The Howard County Health Department has awarded five local organizations nearly \$50,000 in grants through the Local Health Department (LHD) Tobacco, Diabetes and Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Initiatives Grant, a new joint initiative from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to advance health equity by identifying and eliminating tobacco, diabetes and chronic disease related inequities and disparities. This grant initiative will provide LHDs with increased capacity to integrate tobacco, diabetes, and chronic disease activities, while also incorporating youth engagement and community partnership strategies. These new funds will enhance existing tobacco control, diabetes, and chronic disease programs to support systems change, as well as community projects in places where residents live, work, learn, play and worship.

“We know there are communities within Howard County disproportionately impacted by diabetes and other chronic diseases as well as by tobacco use,” said Howard County Health Officer Dr. Maura Rossman. “The purpose of these grants is to provide an opportunity to foster partnerships that will reach at-risk individuals and improve the overall health of the community.”

“These grants are vital to keeping all our residents thriving and healthy,” said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. “In 2022, four out of every 100 middle school students and one in six high school students reported a current use of a tobacco product. We must educate and empower our youth to avoid or quit tobacco use, which is still a leading cause of preventable death for so many of our residents. I’m certain that these grantees will continue to ensure all our residents can follow a healthy lifestyle and improve the overall quality of life for all.”

Grantees awarded include:

1. **Accessible Resources for Independence** - *Disability and Health Awareness Campaign* will promote and provide referrals for individuals with disabilities to smoking cessation resources and services and evidence-based health promotion/chronic disease management programs.
2. **Food and Care for All** - *Preventing Chronic-Diseases and Tobacco-Use in Howard County* (P-CAT-Howard) program will provide interactive in-person and online group discussions about access to health services, healthy food choices and weight loss support, and smoking cessation.

3. **JustLiving Advocacy, Inc.** - *CommUNITY Wellness Initiative* will implement social media campaigns and grassroots outreach efforts in Elkridge and surrounding areas to educate community members about heart disease, diabetes, tobacco & smoking cessation.
4. **Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Inc.** - *Chronic Disease Prevention Healthy Eating Program* will prepare and serve diabetes-friendly meals to shelter residents using menus provided by a registered dietician.
5. **LindaBen Foundation, Inc.** - *Wellness Equity through Tobacco, Diabetes, and Chronic Disease Awareness Project* will raise awareness and provide education about diabetes and tobacco through social media posts, family educational sessions, and interactive youth workshops.

*For more information about Howard County resources and services (smoking/vaping cessation, chronic disease self-management programs, etc.), visit the Howard County Health Department website at [www.hchealth.org](http://www.hchealth.org) and/or [CAREAPP](#) (an online directory that connects you to free and reduced cost community programs and services).*

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