



Blue Cross
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of Michigan

News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nearly \$500,000 in grants awarded to 4 SUD recovery communities in Upper Peninsula

Funding to address gaps in services for families and individuals facing substance use disorder

DETROIT, Jan. 19, 2022 – Four community organizations dedicated to addressing gaps in service for individuals and families facing substance use disorder (SUD) and supporting the development and growth of recovery communities in the Upper Peninsula will receive \$490,000 in grant funding. Selected members of the Michigan Opioid Partnership (MOP) – Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and Superior Health Foundation – along with community partners, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, and the Upper Peninsula Health Plan, partnered on the grantmaking project.

Recovery communities offer a wide range of services to support people in recovery from SUD and their family members. This includes health and behavioral health care, peer recovery coaching and self-help groups, in addition to reducing barriers to employment, education, and offering whole health services to their families. Ideally, these services are developed in partnership with people in recovery.

Since 2017, the Michigan Opioid Partnership has awarded grants statewide to hospitals, jails, and community organizations to prevent and treat opioid use disorder, including grants to support coalition development, harm reduction, and medication-assisted treatment programs. The MOP partnered with hospitals and community-based organizations to expand access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder in the Upper Peninsula. Through this work and meetings with community leaders, the partnership identified the need to provide additional grant funding to address recovery from substance use disorder, including opioid use disorder.

From 2017 to 2018, per the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#), the average overdose death rate in the Upper Peninsula was 16 deaths per 100,000. Counties that exceeded that rate include Marquette (18.33), Alger (21.4), Iron (26.37) Baraga (27.2) and Dickinson (32.47). Per the [Michigan Inpatient Hospitalization Files dashboard](#), in 2019, the 15 Upper Peninsula counties reported 49 hospitalizations specific to opioid-related overdoses. [Preliminary data from 2020](#) suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated substance use trends.

“Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan joins these grantees in recognizing the public health crisis that is substance and opioid use and abuse,” said Ken Hayward, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan vice president and special assistant to the president for Community Relations. “This grantmaking is essential to improving the health and well-being of Michiganders and their programming will help those in recovery navigate their futures with confidence.”

“The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation joins a motivated collective of partners to make this grant program possible to equip Upper Peninsula residents and families with the tools for a successful recovery,” said Audrey

Harvey, executive director and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation. “Substance use disorder has claimed too many Michiganders’ lives this year alone. Building sustainable, intervention-focused recovery communities is key to helping end this crisis.”

“The Superior Health Foundation is honored to join a robust group of philanthropic supporters to address substance use disorder in the Upper Peninsula,” said Jim LaJoie, executive director of the Superior Health Foundation. “These issues are real. With this incredible collaborative funding, it is our sincere hope that we can play a defining role in prevented overdose deaths in the region. We, the Superior Health Foundation, are pleased to provide matching funding for this initiative and are incredibly thankful for the support of our partners.”

“The Upper Peninsula has long had a need for additional behavioral health resources, especially in the areas of substance use and recovery support,” said Michigan Health & Hospital Association CEO Brian Peters. “These issues are top priorities for the MHA and our member hospitals and health systems. To that end, we are incredibly proud to support the U.P. Supporting Recovery Communities grants, which will help U.P. residents across the region get the support and resources they need, in appropriate settings, to live a healthy life.”

"The opioid crisis affects Michigan families across geographic, economic, and demographic lines," said Neel Hajra, CEO of the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. "Community-driven work like this allows Upper Peninsula health organizations to address the crisis while considering the unique community circumstances that they know so well."

“Upper Peninsula Health Plan is proud to be a partner in this important project, as this initiative aligns perfectly with our plan’s mission of improving the health and well-being of the communities we serve,” said Melissa Holmquist, CEO of the Upper Peninsula Health Plan (UPHP). “Collaboration is key, as we make the biggest difference to our communities when we all work together towards a common goal. Through these shared efforts, this funding will support additional SUD and recovery services that are desperately needed in order to provide healthier futures for all.”

The organizations’ grant programming begins in January 2022 and lasts 24 months. Organizations receiving grants include:

Organization	Program Title	Program Description	Investment Provided	Counties Served
Eastern Upper Peninsula Opioid Response Consortium	Alger-Luce Road to Recovery	Support a peer recovery specialist that will serve inmates, treatment court teams, support behavioral health professionals, and enhance community-wide education that reduces stigma and creates trauma-informed communities	\$150,000	<i>Alger, Luce</i>
Great Lakes Recovery Centers, Inc.	Rebuilding LIVES After Addiction	Provide connections to professional development such as interview skills and resume building, vocational profiling and job readiness reviews, and connecting participants to a network of recovery-friendly employers	\$150,000	<i>Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft</i>
Western Upper Peninsula	Facing Addiction	Reconnect people with SUD to their families and communities by	\$150,000	<i>Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton</i>

Health Department	through Community Engagement - The FACE Project	improving understanding of SUD, reducing stigma, and developing easy access to treatment by bridging gaps in services through family education and support, women's specialty services, and jail-based services		
Superior Housing Solutions	Superior Housing Solutions Recovery Community	Support the workforce development and recovery community organization project manager and submission of Recovery Community Organization applications	\$40,000	Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Iron, Marquette

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About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, a nonprofit mutual insurance company, is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. BCBSM provides health benefits to more than 4.7 million members residing in Michigan in addition to employees of Michigan-headquartered companies residing outside the state. The company has been committed to delivering affordable health care products through a broad variety of plans for businesses, individuals and seniors for over 80 years. Beyond health care coverage, BCBSM supports impactful community initiatives and provides leadership in improving health care. For more information, visit bcbsm.com and MiBluesPerspectives.com.

About the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation

The Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network and is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information about our work and grant programs available, please visit bcbsm.com/foundation.

About the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and older adults. The foundation has five annual grant programs. For more information about the Health Fund and its grantmaking, visit mihealthfund.org.

About Superior Health Foundation

The Superior Health Foundation is a health-centered, grant-giving charitable organization in the Upper Peninsula, with its office in Marquette. The Superior Health Foundation provides grants to address the many health issues and disparities across the 15 counties in the Upper Peninsula. Its mission is to assist with unmet healthcare needs, with health education, and with programs and research on preventing illness and promoting health in the Upper Peninsula.

About Michigan Health & Hospital Association

Based in greater Lansing, the MHA is the statewide leader representing all community hospitals in Michigan. Established in 1919, the MHA represents the interests of its member hospitals and health systems in both the legislative and regulatory arenas on key issues and supports their efforts to provide quality, cost-effective and accessible care. The MHA mission is to advance the health of individuals and communities.

About Upper Peninsula Health Plan

Upper Peninsula Health Plan currently serves nearly 55,000 members across five product lines (Michigan Medicaid, MIChild, Children with Special Health Care Services, Healthy Michigan Plan, MI Health Link, and Medicare Advantage) and its network exceeds 2,300 providers.