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Ohio Department of Health awards \$6.89 million to address community conditions that impact health

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, today announced that ODH and its Office of Health Opportunity has awarded \$6.89 million to 26 organizations to fund projects designed to address community conditions that impact health and improve the lives of residents in Ohio Health Improvement Zones.

The Ohio Health Improvement Zones are neighborhoods dealing with socioeconomic and demographic factors that affect the resilience of individuals and communities. Organizations who were awarded funding will either establish or expand initiatives that will build local capacity to help remove barriers to health in some of Ohio’s communities facing the greatest risk of poor health outcomes.

“As part of our commitment to ensure that every Ohioan has an opportunity to achieve their optimal health, the Ohio Department of Health is focused on elevating the voice of communities across the state who consistently experience health disparities,” Dr. Vanderhoff said. “We want to hear from community members about their biggest barriers to health, and we want to empower them to develop and implement the changes they wish to see in their communities.”

Many Ohioans experience poorer health outcomes and live shorter lives because of the community conditions in which they live. Traditionally, public health funding has been largely limited to addressing gaps in quality healthcare and health education.

This project seeks to address those community conditions beyond healthcare access and health education alone, to include options for making positive health decisions, and systems that shape the conditions of daily life. These systems include a community’s economic vitality, and access to quality education, safe neighborhoods, and quality housing.

The funded projects will seek to develop community-led, sustainable community improvements that create a model for scalable and lasting change in the lives of the people with the greatest barriers to health.

“We aren’t just funding initiatives based on abstract data,” said Jamie Carmichael, Chief Health Opportunity Advisor of ODH’s Health Opportunity Office. “We want to engage communities and include them in the development of solutions to the problems they feel are most important. Community members are the experts on how to best improve the conditions that impact their health.”

Here are the 26 organizations that were awarded funding:

- Athens City-County Health Department
- City of Columbus, Mayor’s Office
- Community Action Organization of Scioto County, Inc.
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Dayton Children’s Hospital
- Erie County Health Department
- Famicos Foundation Inc. (Cuyahoga County)
- Food Rescue US (Franklin County)
- Huron County Public Health
- IKRON Corporation (Hamilton County)
- Licking County Health Department
- Marion Public Health
- Mercy Health St. Rita’s Medical Center (Allen County)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, Franklin County

- Nehemiah Foundation of Springfield-Clark County
- Perry County Health Department
- ProMedica Health Systems (Lucas County)
- Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital (Franklin County)
- Safety Council of Southwestern Ohio (Butler County)
- Summit County Combined General Health District.
- The Breathing Association (Franklin County)
- The Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio (Lucas County)
- The MetroHealth System (Cuyahoga County)
- United Way Greater Cleveland
- Youngstown City Health District
- Zanesville Muskingum County Health Department

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About the Ohio Department of Health and Office of Health Opportunity

The Ohio Department of Health’s mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state’s public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.

The Office of Health Opportunity focuses on systems changes to eliminate population level disparities in Ohio.