

InTouch

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Merry Christmas • Blessed Eid • Happy Kwanzaa Happy Hanukkah • Feliz Navidad

FLINT HEALTHCARE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (FHEO) PROGRAM WINS 2010 BUILDING MICHIGAN'S HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE AWARD FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We are pleased to report that the GFHC's Flint Healthcare Employment Opportunities (FHEO) Program has received the Michigan Health Council's *2010 Building Michigan's Healthcare Workforce Award for Regional Collaboration*. The award was presented at the Michigan Health Council's Annual Symposium and Luncheon on Workforce Challenges held on November 9th.

The Michigan Health Council initiated the *Building Michigan's Healthcare Workforce Award* to recognize Michigan's healthcare organizations and educators who are designing and implementing creative approaches to recruit and retain a skilled and diverse healthcare workforce in Michigan.

The FHEO Program, established in 2002, provides Flint and Genesee County residents with occupational training, essential healthcare industry focused life skills, case management, and supportive services that are needed to obtain future employment in high-demand healthcare industry careers.

The FHEO Program is a shared success story because it assists residents with obtaining sustainable healthcare careers *while* helping meet the workforce needs of local healthcare employers by filling their vacant positions with well-trained, highly screened employees.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition to the GFHC partner organizations that collectively make the FHEO Program's service to the community possible.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER FLINT AWARDS GFHC \$25,000 FOR FLINT HEALTHCARE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (FHEO) PROGRAM

The Arthur L. Tuuri Health Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint has awarded the GFHC with a \$25,000 grant to support the FHEO Program.

The Community Foundation's funding will support the FHEO Program to continue to assist unemployed and low-income residents with completion of healthcare training, leading to employment opportunities and/or advancement in the healthcare industry. The Community Foundation of Greater Flint has supported the FHEO Program and its participants since 2004.

COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS REPORT A CATALYST FOR INCREASED ACTION TO IMPROVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS IN GENESSEE COUNTY

As reported in previous issues of *InTouch*, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings Report was an alarming read for Genesee County, which ranked 78th in health outcomes, 81st in health factors, and 82nd in health behaviors out of 82 Michigan counties. Clearly, this first-of-its-kind report has indicated the strong need for enhanced public health and health improvement initiatives in the Genesee County community, in turn generating a great deal of discussion.

In response to the rankings, a County Health Rankings Ad Hoc Workgroup was initiated by the GFHC Board to facilitate the development of a community-wide strategic action plan to address issues identified in the report. This seven member Workgroup is comprised of Bruce Hill, President & CEO, HealthPlus of Michigan; Peter Levine, Executive Director, Genesee County Medical Society; Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, President & CEO, Mott Children's Health Center; Mark Valacak, Health Officer, Genesee County Health Department; Patrick Wardell, President & CEO, Hurley Medical Center; Keith Edwards, Senior Development Director, Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce; and Kirk Smith, President & CEO, Greater Flint Health Coalition.

Through dialogue of this Workgroup and the GFHC Cost & Resource Planning Committee over the past 90 days, a comprehensive action plan has been developed built on the foundation of our community's existing strengths while emphasizing a community-wide approach to health improvement. With a major emphasis on short-term (1–3 years) and long-term (10–20 years) strategies to promote healthy behaviors and a supportive, healthy environment, the plan provides a business case and multi-part intervention approach that will be used to facilitate community-wide efforts to move Genesee County health behavior rankings in a positive direction. The GFHC's restructured Health Improvement Committee will lead these efforts and engage community leaders, organizations, and residents to participate in these developing education and intervention efforts.

Look for more specifics on these community-wide health improvement efforts in 2011.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE STAFF OF THE GREATER FLINT HEALTH COALITION

Thanks go out to Greater Flint Health Coalition partners and those of you who have been reading the *InTouch* Newsletter throughout 2010. Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and safe holiday season. We're looking forward to another great year in 2011!

AS FOOD ACCESS HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HEALTH, GFHC WORKS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED EFFORTS

For many, it is common knowledge that healthy eating can significantly improve our health status, while poor nutrition habits put us at risk for numerous health issues. But what if eating healthy is not a "choice"? This question is more critical than ever.

For example, the City of Detroit, with 1 million people and 143 square miles of land, lacks a single chain grocery store making it extremely difficult to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and maintain a healthy diet. In San Francisco, disadvantaged communities face transportation barriers due to low car-ownership rates and inadequate public transportation. Healthy and fresh foods also cost more than unhealthy options, severely limiting food options for many families in times of record unemployment and under-employment. The bottom line is that all of these factors can considerably limit the "choices" people have regarding healthy eating.

In the City of Flint, the challenges are just as strong. City resident's grocery store access is limited to one major chain grocery store for a population that exceeds 100,000. In turn, there are 38 liquor and convenience stores serving the same population, and residents often depend on these as sources for the closest available food given transportation limitations. These environmental factors help to explain a component of exceedingly high rates of obesity as well as chronic diseases such as diabetes that our community suffers from. To provide support in the development of strategies, the GFHC has joined conversations with a number of energized, community-based partners to find ways to expand and build up current activities targeted at improving Genesee County's (and the City of Flint's) food system.

Through meeting with local partners, including representatives from the Ruth Mott Foundation, *edible flint*, MSU Extension, the Flint Farmer's Market, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, the Flint Area Reinvestment Office, and the Genesee County Land Bank, opportunities have been discussed to address the needs of community residents in growing and accessing healthy food. One of the most significant identified opportunities to improve local infrastructure to increase food access has been the development of a Food Policy Council in Genesee County. Such a council would bring cross-sector institutions and community elements together to improve food system coordination, address health issues such as healthy food access and nutrition education, and support economic challenges for local growers and farmers.

Via a cooperative process among the noted partners and additional community entities, two collaborative proposals have been submitted to the US Department of Agriculture to support existing community food system activities and aid in the facilitation of a formal Food Policy Council in Genesee County. Updates regarding continued community-based food system efforts and related developments will be forthcoming from this growing partnership.

WELCOME TO THE BOARD!

The GFHC is pleased to announce that Gerard Voland, Ph.D., has been named to the GFHC Board as a Designated Director in the Education sector, representing the University of Michigan – Flint. Dr. Voland serves as Provost and Vice Chancellor as well as Professor of Engineering in the Department of Computer Science, Engineering, and Physics. Before joining the University of Michigan – Flint in 2010, he served in a broad range of administrative and faculty roles at various academic institutions since 1977 including Indiana University – Purdue University at Fort Wayne, the Undergraduate College at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois, and Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts.

**CALL TO PHYSICIANS:
A SPECIAL DINNER MEETING TO DISCUSS IMPROVED
EFFICIENCY, OUTCOMES, AND REIMBURSEMENTS
THROUGH DIABETES GROUP VISITS!**

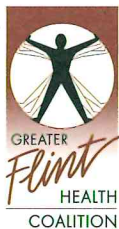
The Greater Flint Health Coalition and the Genesee County Medical Society invite you to learn how Diabetes Group Visits (also known as shared medical appointments) can be conducted in physician practices leading to improved patient outcomes, improved practice efficiency, and better reimbursements.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2011

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

*Genesee County Medical Society
4438 Oak Bridge Drive
Flint, Michigan 48532
(Dinner will be Served)*

**To register, please contact the GFHC via phone
at (810) 232-2228 or email at gfhc@flint.org.**



519 South Saginaw Street, Suite 306

Flint, Michigan 48502-1802

Web site: www.gfhc.org

Telephone: (810) 232-2228

Fax: (810) 232-3332

E-mail: gfhc@flint.org

