



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Sarah Wilson
(616) 421-4837
swilson@healthnetwm.org

Health Net of West Michigan named as a CMS Accountable Communities Model grant awardee

Funds to expand local 'hub' linking clinical and community services

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., APRIL 12 – Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that it has selected Health Net of West Michigan as one of its 32 participants for the Assistance and Alignment Tracks of the Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Model. Health Net was the only organization chosen in Michigan to receive this funding; the multimillion dollar grant will be delivered over a five-year period.

The CMS grant awardees will implement and test the three-track AHC model to support local communities in addressing the health-related social needs of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by bridging the gap between clinical and community service providers. Improving the vital link between clinical and social needs, also known as *social determinants of health*, means the external factors that contribute to poor health can be addressed, in addition to the clinical healthcare needs.

“The opportunities the grant provides Kent County are immense,” said Maureen Kirkwood, executive director of Health Net of West Michigan. “The grant will provide much needed funding to bridge gaps in care for those in our community who need it most. As a community, we will have an improved ability to assist individuals and families to navigate community services and align community organizations around the same goals.”

The key intervention track awarded to Health Net provides funding to create a centralized screening and referral system between formal healthcare systems and community organizations addressing social determinants of health. Key areas of focus include housing instability, food insecurity, utility needs, interpersonal violence and transportation. By addressing critical drivers of poor health and high health care costs, the model aims to reduce emergency department visits and avoidable inpatient admissions, impact the cost of health care, and improve health and quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. It is projected that over the five-year grant period 125,000 Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries in Kent County will be screened and more than 11,000 will receive assistance connecting with health-related social needs services.

The grant offers the resources needed to continue to build the infrastructure to expand Health Net as a centralized hub and to foster the growth of established strategic partnerships with the following organizations:

- Arbor Circle
- Catholic Charities West Michigan

- Cherry Health
- Family Outreach Center
- Heart of West Michigan United Way
- Metro Health - University of Michigan Health
- The Salvation Army Turning Point
- Spectrum Health and Helen DeVos Children's Hospital

“Our partnerships allow us to approach barriers to care by addressing gaps strategically at a systemic level,” said Kirkwood. “We are able to connect healthcare services with the social services organizations that directly impact the health of those in our community.”

To view a list of the Assistance and Alignment Tracks bridge organizations in the Accountable Health Communities Model, please visit:
<https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ahcm>

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Please contact Sarah Wilson, Communications Coordinator at swilson@healthnetwm.org to arrange interviews.

About the Accountable Health Communities Model

The Accountable Health Communities Model is authorized under Section 1115A of the Social Security Act, which established the Innovation Center to test innovative payment and service delivery models to reduce Medicare, Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program expenditures while maintaining or enhancing the quality of beneficiaries' care.

For more information about the Accountable Health Communities Model, please visit:
<https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ahcm>.

About Health Net of West Michigan

Health Net bridges gaps in healthcare by connecting individuals with the basic resources that every human being deserves to live a healthier life. We take a holistic approach to health by partnering with healthcare professionals, institutions and community organizations to provide education, accessibility and individualized attention. For more information, visit healthnetwm.org.