

# Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance

[www.mithumbpha.org](http://www.mithumbpha.org)

Huron | Lapeer | Sanilac | Tuscola



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2017

Media Contact: Ann Hepfer, R.N., B.S., Health Officer

Health Department: Huron & Tuscola County Health Department

Phone: (989) 673-8114 Fax: (989) 673-7490 Email: [ahepfer@tchd.us](mailto:ahepfer@tchd.us)

### Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance Receives Grant Funds

In January 2017, the Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance received two grants from the Michigan Department of Community Health. The grants will benefit residents in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties by strengthening the infrastructure and services of local public health departments.

On behalf of a four county Alliance, Tuscola County Health Department will receive \$60,717 to continue and expand collaboration efforts. The mission of the Alliance is to develop, implement, and sustain models of shared public health services that increase capacity, contain costs, maximize assets, and more effectively impact health outcomes. During the nine month grant period, the Alliance will implement a strategic plan, develop new procedures based on shared learning, develop grantwriting tools, research a new electronic medical record system, update tele-conferencing systems, pursue workforce development opportunities, and pilot the sharing of medical director services using tele-health technology. This grant will enable the Alliance to make significant steps in collaboration.

The second grant was awarded to Huron County Health Department on behalf of the Alliance. The \$55,000 grant will be utilized to expand the use of technology to better manage environmental health records and to pilot a new tele-health project. Environmental health departments will be upgrading technology and increasing access to digital records while they are in the field. This will create efficiencies when working with contractors and residents. Funds will also be used to pilot a new WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) tele-health project. In order to meet a workforce need, the Alliance will use this funding to pilot a tele-health project to share a lactation consultant. Across the state of Michigan, it is difficult to find lactation consultants with the required certification from the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE). This project will provide a major resource to women who are seeking to overcome the challenges that can accompany breastfeeding. This is not the Alliance's first project using tele-health. In 2016, Huron and Tuscola County resolved a workforce challenge by using secure tele-communication equipment to provide registered dietician services to WIC clients. This project met an important public health need and was well received by both clients and staff.

For more information about the Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance and its members, visit [www.MiThumbPHA.org](http://www.MiThumbPHA.org) or contact the local health department in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, or Tuscola Counties.

###