

Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance

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Huron | Lapeer | Sanilac | Tuscola



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2018

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Poor Health and Poor Finances go Hand in Hand

Research links poverty to negative health outcomes. Many studies illustrate that financial stress along with a lack of access to basic needs such as housing, food, and transportation contribute to poor health. In some cases, being in poverty leads to poor health. In other cases, poor health or illness can limit the ability to work and results in lack of financial resources. In fall of 2017, the Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance received a grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health that included funding to train staff in the national Bridges to Health and Healthcare program. The program is based on the Bridges out of Poverty framework developed by Aha! Process, a Ruby Payne company. Bridges examines the impact of economic class on resources, language, relationships, and services. The Healthcare modules examine how these limitations in turn impact health outcomes. Staff at health departments in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties have been participating in a series of workshops designed to increase the effectiveness of staff who interact and provide services to the community. The project started in November 2017 with a two hour interactive introduction using the Alliance polycom distance learning technology. In February 2018, ninety-six staff members from the four health departments participated in a full day training to build their knowledge and skills for dealing with people of various economic backgrounds. The project is part of building cultural competency for staff related to economic diversity. The full day training is being followed up with three distance learning workshops in the summer of 2018. A recorded series is also being produced to support continued learning and orientation of new staff members. As a result of the training, staff members will have increased skills. Organizational policies and practices will also be adjusted to better serve low income clients.

The mission of the Alliance is to develop, implement, and sustain models of shared public health services to more effectively impact health outcomes. For more information about the Michigan Thumb Public Health Alliance and its members, visit www.MiThumbPHA.org or contact the local health department in Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, or Tuscola Counties.

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