

Missouri Foundation for Health

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Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) was formed as a health conversion foundation in 2000, following Blue Cross Blue Shield's transformation from a nonprofit to a for-profit company. The independent foundation, which is governed by a board of directors, was charged with identifying and filling the gaps in public and private health services available to the uninsured and underinsured in the 84 counties (plus the city of St. Louis) comprising the former service area of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Missouri. Now in its second decade, MFH has cumulatively issued more than \$500 million in grants and awards. Recently MFH staff and the board of directors refined and updated the foundation's strategic plan and vision.

Program Information: MFH identifies and funds health program opportunities that can maximize limited resources for the greatest effect. The foundation identifies and addresses unmet health needs in underserved populations where it can have significant and objectively verifiable impact.

MFH has shifted its focus to better serve the community and address health disparities in the areas identified within the Targeted, Responsive, and Policy portfolios. The Targeted Portfolio creates visible and measurable improvements through 5- to 10-year financial and staff investments related to preventing childhood obesity, expanding access to health insurance coverage, improving oral health, and reducing infant mortality. MFH's Responsive Portfolio supports self-identified community health priorities, while the Policy Portfolio advocates for increasing health equity.

► Financial Information:

Total Assets: \$1.1 billion (FY 2013)
 Amount Dedicated to Health-Related Grants: \$37.8 million (FY 2013)

► Special Initiatives and/or Representative Health and Human Services Grants:

- **Expanding Coverage Initiative** – Funding is part of a multi-year initiative and will allow 18 organizations to provide crucial in-person support for consumers through the next two open enrollment periods in the Missouri Health Insurance Marketplace. They will offer information and enrollment assistance to individuals, families, and small businesses, and will also help consumers understand and know how to use their health insurance. These organizations are part of a statewide collaborative—the Cover Missouri Coalition—launched in 2013 by MFH with a goal to reduce the rate of uninsured Missourians to less than 5 percent in five years (\$4.5 million).

- **The Emergency Food Access Project** – This project expands the ability of Missouri's food banks and their community-based partners to distribute fresh, healthy food to needy Missourians. Each of the four food banks provides food to more than 1,000 partners. They have collectively increased their food distribution by 28 percent in 2013, or 23.4 million pounds of food. This includes a 44 percent increase in fresh food distributed (\$1 million to each food bank over two years).
- **Show Me Healthy Housing** – MFH identified the lack of affordable housing for vulnerable populations with complex health concerns as an emerging community need. In response, MFH created the Show Me Healthy Housing program within the Responsive Portfolio as there is evidence that safe, affordable housing serves as a nexus to education, employment, and positive health outcomes. MFH will provide predevelopment funding and gap funding to construct affordable, supportive, and healthy housing for individuals with significant health needs (\$3 million).
- **General Support for Advocacy (GSA) Program** – GSA is intended to build the field and capacity of health advocates. Since its inception, there has been a substantial increase in the number of health advocates, as well as improvements in their skills, capacities, and coordination. MFH is one of the few foundations in the country with an unrestricted program centered on advocacy. To date, 198 awards have been granted totaling more than \$22 million, with more than \$2.8 million and 21 awards granted in 2013.

Most Pressing Health and Human Services Issues in the Community You Serve:

"I see firsthand the overall integration of the health care system and the current state of social services being a challenge for our targeted communities. At a time when our country's health care system is experiencing tremendous change and non-profits in the social sector are undergoing budget constraints, it is difficult to assist those who have traditionally been underserved."

Robert Hughes, Ph.D.
 President and CEO

