

2022 Third Quarter Health Equity Report

1. Please provide a brief update (no more than three paragraphs) on your grant award, including progress made on the goals and objectives you outline in your proposal.

Advisory Committee meetings were held with Wayne County on July 26, 2022, and September 21, 2022. Kalamazoo County meetings started on July 29, 2022 and the Statewide Advisory Committee started on September 26, 2022. Discussion focused on sharing county and state demographic data, identifying stakeholders for the focus groups, discussing questions for community researchers and open discussion about their ideas for health equity work. Due to the difficulty in finding participants for Grand Traverse and Chippewa Counties, MDHHS has decided to combine these counties into one Advisory Committee. The first meeting is scheduled to be held on November 16, 2022.

Onboarding for the community researcher for Wayne and Kalamazoo counties has been completed. MDHHS is working with the researchers to establish contact lists for six stakeholder groups that will include beneficiaries, guardians, family/individual caregivers, case managers, and providers doing home and community-based services. In addition, work has begun to develop focus group protocols, research questions, surveys, and the approach to analysis.

Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Michigan (U-M) continue to work on the quantitative data analysis. MSU has provided baseline race/ethnicity data for target programs for years 2019-2021. U-M has analyzed data to support baseline race/ethnicity demographic comparisons for MI Choice and Nursing Homes. To estimate individuals who are Medicaid eligible, U-M is now analyzing population data for the State of Michigan and four counties of interest using the Area Health Resource File (AHRF) data and the American Community Survey (ACS).

2. Is the project proceeding on-schedule, as anticipated in your work plan? If not, comment on the circumstances affecting your grant.

Phase 1 was scheduled to be completed by April 30, 2022, and included three activities. The project coordinator was hired in May. University partners have begun quantitative data analysis as noted above, but this activity is taking longer than anticipated and will be ongoing through Phase 2. As noted previously, we have struggled to locate community researchers. We have a resource for Wayne and Kalamazoo but were unable to find someone for Chippewa and Grand Traverse Counties.

Despite these delays, we have already started activities for Phase 2. Due to delays in completing the quantitative research, we have planned two phases of community research. The first phase will focus on questions identified by MDHHS and the Advisory Committees. The goal is to have that data, along with data from the University Partners, available by summer 2023 and a second shorter round of community research will be completed based on the data analysis.

3. Have you run into any unexpected challenges? Would you like technical assistance?

We experienced challenges solidifying community researchers for Grand Traverse and Chippewa Counties. The plan now, with the approval of the Health Endowment Fund, is to transfer the remaining unallocated funds for Community Research to the Project Coordinator. We would like to move her from part-time to full-time so she can complete the research up north using the tools that are developed by the community researcher for Wayne and Kalamazoo counties. In addition, Michigan State University has offered their intern for assistance with the Grand Traverse County community research. He is available for 10 hours per week and will assist with stakeholder meetings and focus groups. Michigan State University will cover his travel expenses.

Another challenge has been the lack of beneficiaries for each County Advisory Committee. MDHHS has decided to leave spots open on the Advisory Committees and hopefully gain beneficiary participation through the focus groups.

4. Please share any additional comments, insights, and lessons learned.

We continue to learn the work needed in this area and strategies for outreach to beneficiaries and community partners. Having the project coordinator conduct the community research, with assistance from the MSU intern, for Grand Traverse and Chippewa counties will help move this project forward. The Advisory Committee meetings have also helped with topics to address through the community research.