



MI Health Link

AUGUST 2023 BULLETIN



Meet the MI Health Link Team: Alisha Conley- Dankert

Hello, I am Alisha Conley-Dankert and have recently joined the MI Health Link team as an enrollment analyst.

I received my Bachelor of Science with a major in marketing from Central Michigan University and my Master of Science in Management from Spring Arbor University. I have been an Eligibility Specialist for programs such as Medicaid, Food Assistance Program, State Emergency Relief, Child Development and Care and Family Independence Program. Most recently I was a supervisor over such programs.

I have two children. My daughter is 22 and my son is 16. I have 4 cats, 2 dogs and a rabbit. I enjoy traveling and being outside.

I look forward to meeting all of you and getting to know everyone. I am excited to learn even more about the programs that are offered in this department.

-Alisha

Program and Policy Notes

MI Health Link Program, Contractual, Policy Requirements and Highlights

MI Health Link Health Equity Report

In 2022, The MI Health Link (MHL) program partnered with Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to develop a project to assess racial and ethnic disparity within the MHL program. Performance data for identified measures have been evaluated for four calendar years – 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2021. Year 2019 was not included due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures were stratified by race and ethnicity

based on information the Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs) gathered from program enrollment forms and any other source the ICO had in place to collect this information. This included care management records, assessments, and other documents. A report was then developed that aggregated the data received from each ICO and established statewide rates for all racial and ethnic populations enrolled in the program. The aim of this report is to track these measures over time to see if racial inequity is improving, getting worse or staying the same. The overall project goal is to continue to improve quality in the MHL program while decreasing overall disparity that may be present. The measures chosen for racial and ethnic stratification were 12 HEDIS based measures and one MI Specific measure. These measures were chosen to align with measures NCQA stratifies by race and ethnicity and those that currently fall under MHL quality withhold criteria.

Trends from the data over the four-year period in general show an increase in measures performing better in 2021 than 2020; and the size of the disparity decreasing over time. However, in the Black/African American population, a decrease in measures performing above the white reference population was seen. Most notably in the Adult Access to Care and Plan All Cause Readmission measures, among others. The Hispanic population also saw an increase in disparity over the time period in several measures including; Breast Cancer Screening, Controlling High Blood Pressure, Comprehensive Diabetes Care – Poor HbA1C Control and Adult Dental Visit. This data indicates that a closer look should be taken in these areas, as well as others, to develop meaningful interventions and policy to impact change in the disparity landscape of the MHL program. We recognize the important role Care Coordinators play in reducing ethnic and racial disparities in access to care and health outcomes. The work continues to develop meaningful interventions and policy in the areas of identified disparity, with 2022 program data being available early 2024.

The 2021 MHL Health Equity Report can be found here [2021 MI Health Link Disparities Report.pdf \(michigan.gov\)](#).



2023 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Flu Vaccine Campaign

Dually eligible individuals face increased risk of adverse outcomes related to the flu, but flu vaccination can help prevent the most severe symptoms. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) is partnering with MI Health Link plans and stakeholders to encourage flu vaccination among dually eligible individuals. As part of this effort, MMCO is planning to send postcards to all MI Health Link enrollees in their preferred language to remind them to get their annual flu vaccination. CMS anticipates they will send postcards to members in September.

Education and Support Opportunities

Aging & Diversity in America

Thursday September 7, 2023 2:00pm-3:15pm

The American older adult population continues to become more and more heterogenous. What does it mean to be an older adult who is part of a diverse group? How do professionals remain culturally competent while meeting the unique needs of the individual older person? Join this interactive program to discuss and uncover what various diverse groups have experienced over time, the impact it has on their aging experience, and how to maintain cultural competence.

This free CE virtual event is sponsored by Oasis Senior Advisors. Click [here](#) to register and for more information.

Case Management Conference 2023: You. Me. Us.

Tuesday October 24th, 2023

The MSU Colleges of Nursing and Social Work proudly present the 23rd Annual Case Management Conference. A full day of engaging learning sessions designed to enhance collaboration and sharing of best practices for care coordination. Please click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Looking for Continuing Education opportunities? Check these programs and websites for upcoming events in 2023:

[Generations Health Education](#)

[Michigan Center for Rural Health](#)



Beneficiary Health and Welfare:

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Suicide is a topic that no one wants to talk about, and for good reason it's an uncomfortable thing to discuss, but it's happening and unfortunately occurs with all ages, including older adults. Older adults can be especially vulnerable to suicide for various reasons. They can range from grief over the passing of a loved one, loss of self-sufficiency, cognitive impairment, financial troubles and chronic illness. Physical, emotional and cognitive struggles older adults face can lead to feelings of depression and, over time, can develop into clinical depression. Clinical depression is a mood disorder characterized by prolonged feelings of sadness, hopelessness and loss of interest in activities. Individuals suffering from clinical depression are at a higher risk of attempting suicide. In a 2020 study, 46,000 suicides took place in the US. Of those, 9,137 were attributed to people aged 65 and up. It was also reported that men 65 and older face the highest overall rate of suicide.

The first step in preventing suicide is to know the warning signs. In addition to an explicit expression of suicidal intent, there are certain behaviors that can indicate an older adult is contemplating self-harm. These include:

- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy.
- Giving away beloved items or changing their will.
- Avoiding social activities.
- Neglecting self-care, medical regimens, and grooming.
- Exhibiting a preoccupation with death.
- Lacking concern for personal safety.

There are five action steps you can take if you know or suspect an older adult is thinking about suicide.

1. **ASK** – Don't be afraid to ask questions, such as “are you thinking about suicide?” Asking this question will not give them the idea or encourage them to do it. Asking this question might help save their life.
2. **BE THERE** – Be physically present with the individual. This can ease the feelings of isolation and provide a sense of connectedness. Work with the older adult to identify others that can be a support to them.
3. **KEEP THEM SAFE** – Ask them if they have made an attempt or if they have a specific plan in place and do they have the means to fulfill plan. These questions can help you understand whether an individual is in immediate danger. These questions can also help determine next steps.
4. **HELP THEM CONNECT** – If an individual is thinking about suicide, it's important for them to establish a support system they can rely on now and in the future. This should include suicide prevention hotlines and local resources within the community.
5. **FOLLOW UP** - Make sure to check in with the vulnerable adult after you have had initial conversations and have established a support network. Studies have shown that following up can reduce suicide related deaths in high-risk populations.

When working with older adults, health care professionals need to be aware of substance abuse and mental health conditions. Evidenced based screening tools can be another prevention strategy to screen for suicide risk in older adults. A universal dialing code launched in July 2022 is broadening access to lifesaving suicide prevention and crisis services. [Dialing or texting 988](#) connects people in crisis (or concerned friends, family, and caregivers) directly to the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, where counselors provide free, unbiased, and confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Resource Link:

Senior Project FRESH/Market FRESH

The Senior Project Fresh/Market Fresh program is aimed at helping older adults eat healthier as they age. The program provides participants free nutrition education and \$25 in coupons that can be exchanged for fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods sold at local farmers' markets and roadside stands. Residents who are aged 60 or older with a total household income of \$26,973 or less for an individual, or \$36,482 for a couple, are eligible to apply for the program. Residents who are aged 55 or older who belong to a Michigan federally recognized tribe or urban tribal group are also eligible. Applicants must live in the county where coupons are obtained. The program runs from May 1 to October 31 each year. MHL Care Coordinators should offer assistance to eligible enrollees that would like to participate in the program, please locate the interested individual's county lead agency by clicking on the Lead Agency Coupon Distribution Sites -County Contacts link [here](#).



Q & A: Your Questions About MI Health Link

If you have a question about the MHL program we want to hear from you. We will work to get you the information you need.

Q: Are suicide and suicide attempts considered critical incidents that are required to be reported through the Critical Incident Management (CIM) system in the MI Health Link Program (MHL)?

A: Yes, effective 9/1/2023 ICOs must report both suicide and suicide attempts in the CIM system. Suicide attempts is a unique category in the CIM system, and incidents of suicide should be reported under the suspicious or unexpected death category. For additional detail on required follow up for these incident types please see the MHL approved 1915c waiver application [here](#) or the MHL Minimum Operating Standards [here](#).

Please send any questions for future bulletins to Integratedcare@michigan.gov

Topic Submission

If you have suggestions for topics to be addressed in future additions of the MI Health Link Bulletin, please send them to Integratedcare@michigan.gov



Quick Links

[MI Health Link Website](#)

[CMS Financial Alignment Website](#)

[MI Health Link Minimum Operating Standards](#)

[MDHHS Medicaid Provider Manual](#)

Previously Released MHL Bulletins

Previously released MI Health Link Bulletins can be found by visiting the [MI Health Link Website](#).



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