

to keep everyone informed, foster transparency, and ensure we're aligned in achieving our goals. Updates from these reports will be shared in upcoming newsletters and synthesized to develop updated [SDOH Hub profiles](#).

The next Learning Community meeting will be held on July 8, 2025.

Spotlight on Region 6: Connecting People to Essential Resources in the Thumb

The Region 6 SDOH Hub, led in part by the Thumb Community Health Partnership, continues to drive innovative, community-centered efforts to address social determinants of health. During a recent partner meeting, partners highlighted ongoing momentum across key priority areas: Community Information Exchange (CIE), Community Health Workers (CHWs), and Health in All Policies (HiAP).

- **CIE: Launch of ThumbCares.org:** One of the region's most exciting recent developments is the launch of [ThumbCares.org](#), a new online resource directory designed in collaboration with local community resource providers and 211. This platform is making it easier than ever for residents to find services, attend local events, and connect to the help they need, when they need it. By offering a centralized, user-friendly interface, ThumbCares.org supports individuals and families in navigating food access, housing support, transportation services, behavioral health resources, and more.



"This initiative underscores our commitment to creating access to essential services for everyone in our community. Thumb Cares is more than a website — it's a bridge to connect people with the help they need when they need it."

- KAY BALCER, THUMB COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR

- **CHWs - Addressing Health-Related Social Needs:** The Community Health Access Program (CHAP) continues to play a critical role in providing direct,

personalized support to residents. With a team of 14 dedicated CHWs, CHAP remains focused on addressing health-related social needs and providing critical links between individuals and local resources. CHWs serve as trusted connectors—often bridging language, trust, and transportation gaps that prevent residents from accessing care and services.

- **HiAP - Embedding Equity in Local Systems:** Region 6 partners continue to explore and implement cross-sector strategies that reflect a Health in All Policies approach. Notably, the Thumb Alliance has begun partnering with the regional Substance Use Coalition to examine how transportation barriers impact access to care, especially for individuals navigating substance use recovery. This work reflects a growing commitment to embedding health equity considerations into policy discussions that traditionally fall outside the health sector. These efforts reinforce a broader strategy to promote sustainable, equity-focused change by elevating the voices of residents and aligning local initiatives with state-level goals.

This year, Thumb partners are leading efforts to implement the Health Equity through Enhancing Literacy (HEEL) project, which aims to strengthen organizational and workforce capacities to increase health literacy and enhance community information exchange (CIE) development and implementation.

The Navigation of Health Services Summit, hosted by Thumb partners, provided a platform to celebrate local accomplishments, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and align around shared priorities for the future. MDHHS had the opportunity to present on the statewide SDOH Strategy. The summit opened the door for deeper engagement with partners in the Thumb region and beyond, showcasing ways to scale promising interventions, including ThumbCares.org. Discussion underscored a shared commitment to sustainability, accountability, and equity in how residents' access and navigate health and social services.

Food Delivery Service Program Expands with New Partnership Opportunities

This month marks month nine of the Food Delivery Service Program (FDSP) for Fiscal Year 2025. The FDSP project seeks to mitigate transportation barriers, increase grocery access, and address food security needs of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in Wayne and Kent counties, whose populations disproportionately experience barriers to food access. Funded partners include the Heart of West Michigan United Way in Kent County, and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan and Wayne County Health Department in Wayne County.

Recently, the Heart of West Michigan United Way and United Way for Southeastern Michigan released a request for proposal (RFP), asking organizations that have experience in delivering food to the public to apply to be a part of the program. Both Wayne and Kent counties value strong public-private partnerships, which are important for tackling dynamic issues like food insecurity, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective results. Applications are currently under review and a final decision on which partners will be selected for this work will be made in July.

SDOH Community Influencers Wrap Up an Impactful Year

SDOH Community Influencers are a diverse group of individuals who contribute to more equitable health outcomes through their lived experience. These individuals, as individuals who have persisted through SDOH challenges, have informed the overall MDHHS SDOH Strategy as well as specific programs and policies. Influencers from seven of the ten prosperity regions in Michigan were represented during this in-person event.

Over the course of the year, individuals from across all ten prosperity regions in Michigan represented the following populations or communities:

- Children and infants
- Youth in foster care, or aging out of foster care
- People who are pregnant and/or parenting
- Older adults
- People with physical and/or mental disabilities
- LGBTQ+
- People experiencing homelessness
- Immigrants and migrant workers
- Refugees
- People who are justice-involved
- People with lower incomes
- People with behavioral addictions and disorders
- People from racial and/or ethnic minority groups

- Tribal communities
- Residents in geographic areas that have been historically underserved
- Veterans
- People with chronic disease(s)

Over the course of the program, Community Influencers have learned about MDHHS' Rural Health Equity work, Community Information Exchange (CIE), Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiatives, food delivery efforts such as our Produce Prescription Pilot Program (P4) and Food Delivery Service Program (FDSP), the aging network (e.g., Older Americans Act (OAA) Services) and physical and developmental disability supports (e.g., Michigan Disability Rights Coalition). Influencers left each session with resources to share within their communities in an effort to support positive social determinants of health. Not only have Influencers shared and developed their own resources to help raise awareness in their communities but they have also uplifted the voices of the individuals they touch everyday.

May 21, 2025, marked the final celebratory event for the SDOH Community Influencer Program's second cohort. Community Influencers were invited to gather at MDHHS to celebrate a year of success, improving awareness and access to resources to support positive social determinants of health.



During this event, Influencers got to hear from their peer, Founder and CEO of Grassroots Giving, Ali Bennett, about the organization's work to improve economic mobility for black business owners. Influencers were also able to provide their feedback on the program and recognized for their incredible work and dedication to health equity through an awards ceremony.

The Community Information Exchange Advisory Committee Convenes for Quarter 2 Meeting

The Community Information Exchange Advisory Committee (CIE AC) is tasked with leveraging existing infrastructure in Michigan to develop statewide governance of CIE. The CIE Advisory Committee has made progress on priority areas and is aligned with activities happening in the broader CIE ecosystem.

On June 10, the CIE Advisory Committee met to discuss priority area updates, including the next steps for the Community Voice Subgroup. The Community Voice Subgroup will convene consumers, caregivers and guardians of services from a CIE, individuals

representing an organization implementing CIE strategies, and other health information and CIE players to center community member experiences in systems-level decision-making and create trustworthy mechanisms by which consumers' feedback can be heard. The Community Voice Subgroup application will open in July 2025 and will begin meeting virtually in October 2025. Stay tuned for more information and an informational webinar in July!

Additionally, the CIE Advisory Committee members discussed and analyzed key findings from the surveys, focus groups and informational interviews from Phase Two of the planning project for the Michigan Technical Assistance for Health Information Exchange (MiTAHIE). Phase Three will focus on finalizing recommendations and developing tailored roadmaps for community-based organizations (CBOs) and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), in partnership with Altarum, the Michigan Public Health Institute and the Center for Health and Research Transformation. Learn more about the Community Information Exchange efforts in Michigan [here](#).



MDHHS Launches Pilot Project with Metro Food Rescue and Sharing Excess at the Detroit Produce Terminal

In partnership with MDHHS, [Metro Food Rescue](#) and Sharing Excess are launching a pilot at the Detroit Produce Terminal to rescue approximately 4 million pounds of fresh produce in the first year, diverting millions of tons of food from ending up in landfills annually. The project will provide more than 6.4 million of nutrition meals annually to Detroit-area individuals and families experiencing food insecurity, helping to close gaps in food access and support overall community well-being. MDHHS is providing additional funding to expand to more distribution sites and deepen the impact across more communities. Built on strong community partnerships, this effort brings together local organizations to ensure food reaches those who need it most. The project advances more equitable access to healthy food by establishing sorting and packing operations at the facility, repackaging donated produce into mixed pallets for local distribution partners, and ensuring a consistent supply of fresh produce through daily donations. Beyond immediate food relief, this partnership aims to build a more resilient and inclusive food system that addresses systemic barriers and supports the health and well-being of Michigan communities. To learn more about how you can rescue food and reduce food waste, [check out this webpage!](#)



SDOH Partner Updates



Celebrating Pride 2025:

Spotlight on

Corktown Health

and Statewide

LGBTQ+ Initiatives

As we celebrate Pride 2025, we would like to spotlight our neighbors at [Corktown Health](#) – Michigan's first LGBTQ Health Center. Corktown Health and their subrecipients continue to make significant progress addressing health inequities for members of the LGBTQ+ community, across all three of [MDHHS Social Determinants of Health Strategy's](#) priority areas.

Below you can see a list of events supported by our Corktown Health Partners and the LGBTQ+ Coalition for Pride 2025. These events could be found across the state, including the Upper Peninsula (UP). The LGBTQ+ Coalition is also supporting two activities regarding sponsorship funding through the LGBTQ+ Commission and a community survey. Click the link below for more detailed information on these events and opportunities.



2025 PRIDE EVENTS

CITIE Spotlight: Hispanic Center of West Michigan Advances Health Equity Through CHW-Led Support

The CHW workforce is a key priority of our SDOH Strategy and our Community Health Worker Integration to Improve Equity (CITIE) initiative establishes partnerships between the Policy and Planning Bureau and multisectoral partners to better serve MDHHS priority populations. CITIE projects focus on training and integrating CHWs into communities disproportionately burdened by health inequities.

To highlight our CITIE partners and elevate the amazing work they are doing, we will be focusing on a different partner each month. For June, we would like to recognize the [Hispanic Center of West Michigan](#), who is using their CITIE funding to improve health and wellness and prevent chronic disease to immigrant and refugee populations in west Michigan.



Hispanic Center
of Western Michigan

Throughout the project period, Hispanic Center CHWs will be receiving training and professional development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge to address the social determinants of health for the individuals they serve. They will also be supporting their population as they navigate the healthcare system and providing health education through *Comprando Rico y Sano* workshops. All CHW services are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community served.

The Hispanic Center's CHWs, in only two short months of their CITIE project, have already:



Stay tuned for next month's newsletter to learn more about our other CITIE projects!



The Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission Announces 2025 Sponsorship Application Opportunity

The [LGBTQ+ Commission of Michigan](#) is now accepting applications for sponsorship requests from organizations whose events and activities align with the Commission's mission to promote and support the well-being, equity, and visibility of Michigan's LGBTQ+ residents.

The [2025 Sponsorship Request Form](#) is now live and available on the Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission website. This opportunity is open to nonprofit organizations, community

groups, and allied institutions that are planning programs, events, or initiatives that uplift and advance LGBTQ+ communities across Michigan.

Application Timeline

- Application Period: Now through June 30, 2025
- Review Period: July 1–11, 2025
- Final Recommendations Presented: July 15, 2025
- Notification of Awards: By August 1, 2025

We invite all eligible organizations to submit a request through the official sponsorship form to be considered for funding. The Commission looks forward to partnering with community organizations to support efforts that advance visibility, justice, and equity for LGBTQ+ Michiganders.

For more information and to apply, please visit the [LGBTQ Commission Sponsorship Page](#).

Help Shape the Future: Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission Launches Community Survey

The Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission in partnership with the LGBTQ+ Coalition is inviting LGBTQ+ individuals and allies across the state to share their voices by participating in their Community **Survey**. Your feedback is anonymous and critical to helping partners better understand the needs, challenges, and priorities of LGBTQ+ Michiganders.

Whether you're a resident, advocate, service provider, or ally, your insights will directly inform strategic planning, policy recommendations, and community initiatives.

Take the Survey Today: Visit the [LGBTQ+ Commission Community Survey Page](#) to complete the survey and make your voice heard.

The survey is open to individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and identities. Participation is anonymous and will take only a few minutes of your time.

Together, we can build a more inclusive, equitable, and affirming Michigan for all.

SDOH Strategy Website

