

HCWP
Bridging the Gap – WESTCO News Release
1st Draft

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTHCARE COUNCIL OF WESTERN PA ANNOUNCES GRANT AWARD FROM THE RICHARD KING MELLON FOUNDATION TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Bridging the Gap: Westmoreland County aims to enhance the health of Westmoreland County communities by addressing food security, overall health of community members

WARRENDALE, PA – April 15, 2022 – The Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania (HCWP) announces a new initiative, partnering with Excela Health, Greensburg PA – Bridging the Gap: Westmoreland County – an initiative to enhance the health of communities in Westmoreland County by implementing and sustaining a community health worker model addressing food insecurity and other social determinants of health (SDOH).

The initiative is being made possible by a \$250,000 grant provided by the Pittsburgh-based Richard King Mellon Foundation.

Taking place over an 18-month period, the project will hire Community Health Workers (CHWs) from the area. Beginning in Jeannette, PA, the program will continue to expand to communities of-need as identified in Excela Health’s Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

The CHWs will be hired from the Jeannette community who will then participate in a 100-hour accredited training program through Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center (AHEC). The CHWs will also be trained to become certified Pennie-assisters to help individuals choose the right health insurance plan that fit their needs.

The CHWs will then be deployed in their respective communities to assist adults, children and families with food insecurity, healthcare, physical activity, housing, and other needs, which address the SDOH. The effort will serve any community member, and it is not limited to a specific population.

The CHW model addresses healthcare and SDOH needs through partnerships with local and community-based organizations. Some of the partner organizations include Westmoreland County Food Bank, Excela Health, Excela Health’s Well-Being Center, Mosaic Community Church, City of Jeannette School District, and the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

The CHWs will build trusting and meaningful relationships with the members of the community, which will then allow the CHWs to identify resources that fit the community members' specific needs.

Additionally, Excela Health's Well-Being Center will address healthy eating, nutrition and other health concerns through educational activities and screenings. "The improved health of our communities will always remain an important outcome of our efforts with member companies. Offering health assessments, biometric screenings, and lessons on nutrition and physical activity, a healthier Westmoreland County is on its way, and we couldn't be more thrilled to work with the R.K. Mellon Foundation, Excela Health and others," (Name, Title, Affiliation), said.

The CHW will be housed in the Mosaic Community Church and will work closely with after-school programs, ensuring all members of the community have access to the Bridging the Gap initiative.

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About Healthcare Council:

Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania is a regional association representing a continuum of healthcare facilities, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, long-term acute care providers, and specialty hospitals. In addition, we partner with more than 30 sponsors and business associates that support the region's healthcare providers.

We are the strategic partner and neutral convener for our membership to work collaboratively and address common concerns and share best practices while enabling them to help improve the health of our communities and maintain their status as economically viable entities.

The Healthcare Council prepares regular financial and workforce reports to help decision-makers in their planning processes, provides up-to-date educational and training materials on best practices and compliance, and serves as a hub for connecting members to relevant industry resources.