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# LOCAL WELLNESS FUNDS

The Georgia Health Policy Center, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), is working to advance the practice of establishing and using local wellness funds to improve community health and well-being. The two-year, national effort will expand understanding and dissemination of tools to establish these funds and successfully grow and implement them.

This work is driven by learnings from the recently completed Bridging for Health: Improving Community Health Through Innovations in Financing, also funded by RWJF.

Population health recognizes factors outside of the traditional health care delivery system that influence health, including housing, education, poverty, food availability, and access to safe recreational areas. Addressing these upstream drivers of well-being provides an opportunity for involvement of a broader group of stakeholders to jointly address health outcomes.

Bringing together the right people is an important first step. But communities must also figure out how to fund these initiatives targeting the upstream drivers of health and wellness. Experts increasingly see the ability to tap into and coordinate various funding streams as a key strategy for financial sustainability of community health improvement efforts.<sup>1</sup>

## Pooling Streams of Resources

Communities around the nation are thinking innovatively about aligning streams of resources to sustainably support initiatives of shared interest and importance. They are blending and braiding resources from a mix of philanthropic grants; revenue from a tax or other state-funded source; hospital community benefits dollars; and contributions from businesses, insurers, and community banks. Potential benefits from these funds will be seen across sectors.

Through a two-year innovation process, seven Bridging for Health communities expanded the capacity of their collaboration, explored innovative financing mechanisms, and decided upon strategies for improving population health. While varying in composition, purpose, and scope, all seven sites developed a local wellness fund to address primary prevention of chronic conditions or an upstream driver of health.

In order to make real progress in developing local wellness fund, three critical questions must be answered:



Sources: Where does the money come from?



Uses: What will funds be used for?



Structure: How do we manage, administer, and provide stewardship for these funds?

What follows is a brief summary of how the seven Bridging for Health sites have constructed their sources, uses, and structure of their local wellness fund.

<sup>1</sup> Trust for America's Health. (2016). Sustainable Funding for Healthy Communities Local Health Trusts: Structures to Support Local Coordination of Funds Accessed at <http://healthyamericans.org/health-issues/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Local-Health-Trusts-Convening-Summary-FINAL-1.pdf>

<p><b>ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> The pooled funds from local foundations reached \$600,000 for each two-year funding cycle.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> The established fund expanded its focus from supporting infrastructure and professional capacity for the county health department to also include public health interventions guided by the priorities of the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny County.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> The current distribution fund is coordinated by the Pittsburgh Foundation, with proposals presented by the director of the health department.</p>	<p><b>INLAND EMPIRE</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Operational support for the Prosperity Fund came from grants (\$10,000-\$15,000) from Kaiser Permanente, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and two hospitals. The collaborative tried to secure innovation support for the fund.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> The Prosperity Fund planned to initially support an enhanced diabetes prevention program initiative within an accountable community for health structure.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> The Riverside Community Health Foundation planned to manage the Prosperity Fund.</p>
<p><b>THE HEALTH COLLABORATIVE IN BEXAR COUNTY</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> The Pathways HUB was created by the Health Collaborative in partnership with 20 care coordination agencies that serve at-risk populations across the county. To date, \$3.5 million has been secured through blending and braiding of sources, including contracts, revenue, and board member contributions.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> The Pathways HUB launched in July 2018. The shared resources will improve care coordination among individuals at highest risk for poor health outcomes. Funds will be used to pay for program operations (e.g., stipends for community health workers), as well as provider payments for outcomes. <u>Structure:</u> The Health Collaborative board of directors will manage and distribute funds, with input from the impact investing subcommittee.</p>	<p><b>NEK PROSPER! (FORMERLY CALEDONIA + SOUTHERN ESSEX ACCOUNTABLE HEALTH COMMUNITY)</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> During the pilot phase for the Prosperity Fund, \$13,000 was raised from a community bank, health and social organizations, and community members. These funds were invested to allow four women-owned, micro-businesses to expand. The goal is to raise \$2 million within 2 years for a pooled income fund from the same sources plus other accredited and non-accredited investors.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> Investments will be made in NEK-based businesses with the goal of creating jobs and reducing poverty.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> The Northern Community Investment Corp., a community development financial institution, will house the fund. The NEK Prosper! Finance team will make recommendations.</p>
<p><b>MICHIGAN HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ALLIANCE</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> The Health &amp; Well-Being Fund is one mechanism used to bring innovative, evidence-based, preventative programming to mid and Central Michigan. This includes advancing progress of the THRIVE regional initiative. Generation 1 of the fund launched with ~\$100,000 of investments from community benefit dollars and foundations.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> The fund will support prevention and wellness interventions that align with the Quadruple Aim, including the priorities within the regional health improvement plan and THRIVE initiative. In the initial phase, the prevention fund will be used for a virtual diabetes prevention program among young adults in Central Michigan, as well addressing those with access barriers. Generation 2 efforts will focus on prenatal, infant, and maternal health.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> MiHIA is the acting fiduciary, with options being explored as the fund matures.</p>	<p><b>SPARTANBURG'S WELLVILLE EXCHANGE</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Support comes from the local health system (telemedicine in the next phase), United Way (community resource coordinator), the Chamber of Commerce (housing the whole project), the Mary Black Foundation and the Way to Wellville core team (incubated the exchange and handed off to the Chamber), and employers' memberships, with four large employers and 10 small employers targeted to be on board at launch.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> Telemedicine, transportation discounts to and from work for medical appointments, discounted direct primary care, behavioral health services and Employee Assistance Programs, financial stability case management, and care coordination are planned offerings under the Exchange.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> The Exchange was incubated at the Way to Wellville, but administrative decisions and management of the Exchange were transferred to the Commerce after prototyping.</p>
<p><b>YAMHILL COMMUNITY CARE ORGANIZATION (CCO)</b></p> <p><u>Sources:</u> Yamhill has a 3-year-old wellness fund resourced with money designated from CCO incentive payments that are reinvested into community prevention and wellness activities.</p> <p><u>Uses:</u> The fund will initially support expansion of the Good Behavior Game Initiative, an evidence-based, behavioral classroom management strategy that could ultimately benefit mental health, substance use, chronic conditions, third-grade reading scores, social-emotional skills, and social determinants of health.</p> <p><u>Structure:</u> Yamhill is amending its charter, as needed, for new activities. For now, the fund and its management will stay within the CCO as part of its community prevention and wellness work.</p>	