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ALIGNING IN ACTION: MICHIGAN HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ALLIANCE

- Lead organization: Michigan Health Improvement Alliance (MiHIA)
- Lead sector: Healthcare
- Location: 14-county region of Central Michigan
- Year founded: 2007
- Interview with: Beth Roszatycki, CEO of MiHIA

Health is impacted by factors outside of the health care delivery system, including housing, education, poverty, employment, food availability, transportation, and safety. Recognizing that addressing these socioeconomic determinants of health is needed to meaningfully impact health inequities, a national policy shift is taking place.

Government agencies, payers, and providers are all adopting a social determinants perspective. To effectively address these nonclinical needs, partners must work across sectors. Now, the question is how — what are the best practices for effectively aligning systems?

[Aligning Systems for Health: Health Care + Public Health + Social Services](#), sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and managed by the Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC), is focused on learning from

stakeholders across the nation about effective ways to align these three sectors to better meet people's goals and needs.

Given variance in the local context, there is no single model or formula to align systems. However, *Aligning Systems for Health* seeks to understand commonalities that drive successful efforts to align sectors. This series examines how communities that describe their work as aligning systems are doing it around four core components of a [theory of change](#) that RWJF and GHPC are testing: purpose, governance, data, and sustainable financing mechanisms.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The Michigan Health Improvement Alliance (MiHIA) is a formal, multistakeholder, 501(c)(3) nonprofit community collaboration working to achieve a community of health excellence for the 14-county region it serves in central Michigan. MiHIA's mission is fulfilled by focusing on the Quadruple Aim — population health, patient experience, cost of care, and provider well-being.

MiHIA was formed in 2007 to act as a neutral convening organization for the region, initially prompted by a federal and statewide grant application. However, the experience led to the realization that, individually, the 14 counties in Central Michigan were too small to be effective alone, but by coming together as a region, across sectors, it was possible to collectively impact health.

MiHIA remains an integrator organization and plays a unique role in outlining shared prevention goals, identifying evidence-based interventions, and coordinating funding streams in the pursuit of system-level improvements in population health, and health care quality and value.

More recently, MiHIA and the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance joined forces to co-create and co-lead the THRIVE initiative, recognizing that transforming health regionally requires a vibrant economy.

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PURPOSE

As the backbone organization for regional efforts, MiHIA establishes shared goals and objectives and sets collective targets with partners. Direction is set by the MiHIA board of directors but heavily relies on both its shared data platform and a regional community health needs assessment. The standardized needs assessment and performance measures are used throughout the region. In addition to data collection and analysis, the regional effort enabled asset mapping, community input, prioritization of issues, an evidence-based action plan, and an ongoing measurement and evaluation process.



DATA

In its early years, MiHIA was awarded funding through a partnership on a federal Community Transformation Grant to be the regional entity supporting data collection, aggregation, and dissemination. This formed the basis for what became MiHIA's online regional Health Dashboard 4.0, a visual analysis tool that helps people in the MiHIA region monitor their communities' health and well-being, provides resources to improve their health outcomes, and provides a platform for sharing best practices.

[Health Dashboard 4.0](#) provides high-quality, publicly available community health assessment data and health indicator tracking for more than 300 measures. It is powered and supported by Conduit (formerly Healthy Communities Institute).

FINANCING

MiHIA's operational costs are largely funded by three-year contributions from corporations and affiliate organizations. The expenses cover daily functions including core Quadruple Aim initiatives, information technology support, communications, and marketing. Individual initiatives are typically funded through grants and foundation support. To sustainably fund regional initiatives, particularly those that align with the THRIVE's portfolio, the regional community health needs assessment, and the regional community health improvement plan, MiHIA is working to fill the most critical need, which is to design, build, test, and secure sustainability through a comprehensive funding and financing system, including a variety of unique methodologies and approaches to support the portfolio of interventions. One component of this is the Regional Health & Well-Being Fund.

This fund will blend multiple funding streams, including funding from area community foundations, public health department employee health plans, regional health plans, and hospital employee benefits programs and hospital community benefit dollars. The fund will be distributed to fund evidence-informed and practice-based community prevention activities for health improvement.

GOVERNANCE

MiHIA has a formal structure, including a 23-person board of directors with three-year terms and steering teams for specific initiatives.

The board of directors serves as the primary authority of MiHIA and includes representatives of hospital systems, independent providers, universities, public health agencies, mental health organizations, consumers, health plans, and employers. This group is responsible for the management oversight of affairs and business of the organization. Broad multisector representation is most visible at the steering team level and attracts participants based on topic-specific interest.

INSIGHTS FROM THE COLLABORATIVE

MiHIA attributes its success to building good will, gaining trust, articulating the value proposition, and establishing a unifying process for all stakeholders. Open, bidirectional communication has been very important to building transparency and helping people see the larger picture and how that they can contribute to the collective effort.

“It is all about buy-in — they are a part of this, that they are helping shape this, and that this is theirs just as much as it is the person’s sitting next to them in the room,” says Beth Roszatycki, MiHIA’s CEO. “The other part of getting buy-in is really laying out that business case and the value proposition for them to be involved. And that’s going to be different for every sector. It boils down to conversations to learn about their strategies and goals — coming to their table and building relationships.”

INSIGHTS FOR ALIGNING

- MiHIA has been deliberate in building infrastructure to support the core mechanisms of the collaborative.
- The organization recognizes the importance of data in building partner commitment, bringing focus to programming, and securing funder commitment. They invested effort and resources into building a data platform that is a tool for both the collaborative and the public.
- The tiered approach to governance facilitates strategic input and direction from leaders across sectors, as well as opportunities for local actors to participate in steering committees of interest that drive key programming across the region.

ALIGNING IN ACTION

In 2016, recognizing the inseparable link between economic success and health, MiHIA and the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance agreed to co-lead the THRIVE initiative to transform health in the region through building a vibrant economy. THRIVE believes the region’s health will be much greater with a strong regional economy, which, in turn, is only possible with a healthy population.

THRIVE bases its work on foundational principles that include a commitment to regional impact, multisector participation, investment in upstream efforts that target the drivers of health, and economic success.

THRIVE is currently working to implement Phase 1 of its portfolio of interventions. The initial eight include attracting new industries and markets for business to relocate to the region; providing comprehensive mental health screening, referral, and placement; developing a regional health educational hub; enhancing technology to achieve coordinated health care services; advancing patient safety; improving prenatal, infant, and maternal health; reducing risky behaviors from adverse childhood experiences and enhancing trauma-informed care; and developing a regional opioid strategy.

ALIGNING SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH

Health Care + Public Health + Social Services

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