

Meridian in Michigan and the Centene Foundation Announce \$1.1 Million Grant to Wayne Mobile Health Unit - Feb 15, 2024

Grant will address maternal and infant health disparities through deployment of mobile vans to maternal health equity zones

DETROIT, Feb. 15, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- [Meridian in Michigan](#), a leading managed care organization in the state of Michigan and a wholly owned subsidiary of [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: CNC), announced a partnership with the [Wayne Mobile Health Unit \(WMHU\)](#) to improve maternal and infant health and broadly support the WMHU's community outreach efforts to deliver preventative health services directly in neighborhoods, at homes and in workplaces.

The \$1.1 million in funding from [Centene Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation, and Meridian will allow WMHU to deploy mobile vans to low, moderate and high-risk pregnant women living in metro Detroit who have not engaged in routine prevention services and work to connect them to DMC's OB/GYN specialists for follow-up care. The hope is the initiative will reduce maternal health mortality rates, which are disproportionately higher among Black and Hispanic women. Women can participate regardless of whether they are Meridian members.

"Meridian is pleased to collaborate with the Wayne Mobile Health Unit and our other partners to provide targeted services in an efficient way to urban and rural communities across Michigan," said Dr. Kay Judge, Meridian's Chief Medical Officer. "By focusing on proactive outreach to communities that have long suffered health inequities, this partnership will directly address disparities and provide a tangible solution that can be applied not only to maternal health but also a wide range of health conditions and respective outcomes."

In Michigan, Black women were 2.8 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes in 2015-19 than white women with a maternal mortality rate for Black women of 29.8 per 100,000 live births. Among pregnancy-related maternal deaths between 2015 and 2019, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services found more than 63% were preventable. To address racial discrimination and persistent systemic bias that contributes to poor maternal and infant outcomes, the maternal health pilot program will use geospatial analysis from Wayne State University's Population Health Outcomes Information Exchange (PHOENIX) program to identify targeted neighborhoods in Detroit. Eventually, the pilot will be expanded to rural areas.

"The Wayne Mobile Health Unit is incredibly grateful to the Centene Foundation for their substantial financial commitment," said Dr. Phillip Levy, Associate Vice President for Translational Science at Wayne State University and Director of the Wayne Mobile Health Unit. "This support will help sustain our existing outreach efforts while also allowing our expansion into the much-needed realm of maternal health. I look forward to working with Meridian and the Detroit Medical Center on this critically important endeavor and know that together, we will positively impact the communities we serve."

In addition to connecting WMHU patients with DMC follow-up care, the program will provide routine social determinant of health (SDoH) screenings with wraparound community health worker services to guide women through the process and ensure continuity of care. In its first year, the pilot aims to increase attendance at pre- and postnatal appointments by 10-20% in an effort to reduce maternal mortality rates.

The maternal health pilot builds on the WMHU program's success during the pandemic. Funds from Meridian and the Centene Foundation will enable WMHU to hire staff to deliver care and continue to their partnership of providing no cost routine health screenings in communities. Additionally, Meridian and WMHU will partner to deploy mobile units to reach Meridian clients who have not engaged in routine preventative care and will work together to create novel billing codes to enable direct and local access to prevention screening and care management.

About Meridian

Meridian in Michigan provides government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs primarily through Medicaid (Meridian), Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (Wellcare), Medicare-Medicaid Plans (MeridianComplete), and the Health Insurance Marketplace (Ambetter from Meridian). Meridian is a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a leading healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives.

About the Centene Foundation

The Centene Foundation (the "Foundation"), a private nonprofit focused on investing in economically challenged communities, is the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation ("Centene"). The Foundation supports projects and initiatives strategically aligned with Centene's purpose-driven culture and enhances the work Centene is doing to remove the barriers to wellness underserved and low-income populations face. The Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity in three distinct areas of focus: healthcare access, social services, and education.

About Wayne Health

Wayne Health is a non-profit, multi-specialty academic group practice that offers a full spectrum of care, from birth to end-of-life, for individuals and families. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wayne Mobile Health Unit (WMHU) was established in partnership with Wayne State University. The mission of the WMHU is to provide access to high-quality, portable

patient-centric preventative health care to the underserved and underinsured in Southeast Michigan. The WMHU provides screening services and linkage to care for those individuals who are at greater risk of developing long term illnesses.

SOURCE Meridian of Michigan

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