

Meridian Health Plan of Illinois Awards \$528,000 in Health Happens Here Grants™ in the Second Half of 2024 - Jan 28, 2025

More than \$1.3 million has been given in 2024 to organizations to promote health equity in communities throughout Illinois

CHICAGO, Jan. 28, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Meridian Health Plan of Illinois, Inc.](#) (Meridian), a provider of government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs and a [Centene](#) company, today announced it has awarded \$528,916 in *Health Happens Here Grants™* to 11 organizations in the second half of 2024. *Health Happens Here Grants* provide funds for local organizations throughout Illinois to close care gaps and address the health-related social needs of Meridian members and the community. These grants for 2024 now total \$1,386,416 awarded to 25 organizations.

"At Meridian, we strongly believe in caring for our members where they live and work," said Cristal Gary, Meridian Plan President and CEO. "These grants are part of our mission to transform the health of the communities we serve. The funding we are providing to these community partners will support behavioral health and wellness programs, help for young mothers, professional and career development, mobile health units, and non-emergency transport services, all of which are critical to the health of these communities."

These grants provide funds to local organizations throughout Illinois to help Meridian members and their neighbors access high quality, culturally sensitive services. In addition to the \$857,500 in [Health Happens Here grants announced in August of 2024](#), the organizations funded in the second half of 2024 include:

[Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago](#) – \$100,000

The grant will be used to assist in the purchase of furnishings for the expansion and remodel of the existing Behavioral Health department, safer restrooms, and other remodeling updates. Annually, Lurie sees approximately 1,500 Behavioral Health patients in the Emergency Department (ED); with the ED expansion Lurie Children's is creating additional beds on the inpatient psychiatric unit, increasing safety for the evaluation and care of behavioral health and psychiatry patients.

[Chicago Integrated Health](#) - \$20,000

Chicago Integrated Health in Matteson, Illinois, is a lifestyle management practice that integrates nutrition, mental health therapies, massage therapies and fitness to combat anxiety, depression, and lifestyle diseases. Funding will support its "Project Thrive Program," which is dedicated to promoting the health and wellbeing of pre-teens and teens, ages 11 to 19. The grant will help cover program activities, resources and operational costs for one year, helping ensure participants have access to educational, social and wellness opportunities that foster personal growth and community connection.

[Humboldt Park Health](#) – \$100,000

Meridian's funding will support programs at Humboldt Park Health's new Wellness Center in its first year, including the chronic disease management programs, mental health and wellness initiatives, nutrition and fitness programs, preventative health screenings, and community outreach and education. From its start in 1894, Humboldt Park Health, formerly Norwegian American Hospital, has been deeply committed to serving the Humboldt Park community. As a 200-bed, acute care facility, it provides healthcare treatment that's patient-centered and focused on quality of care, ranging from everyday care to treatment for their patients' most critical needs.

[M.E.A.N Girls Empowerment](#) - \$15,000

Serving the Chicagoland area, M.E.A.N (Manage Emotions Avoid Negativity) Girls Empowerment will support its Girls Health Matters initiative, which is designed to empower young girls by addressing critical health topics and enhance their personal and professional development. Funding will cover expenses related to its summit on April 5, 2025, including materials for interactive workshops, soft skill development sessions, and logistical support for a community resource van that conducts community pop-up events. The pop-up events provide mental health support and essential resources to participants in underserved communities, extending the impact of the summit.

[Midwest Career Source](#) - \$23,950

Midwest Career Source in Belleville, Illinois, provides free healthcare apprenticeship job training to low-income individuals in partnership with Memorial Hospital Belleville - BJC HealthCare, St. Elizabeth Hospital - Hospital Sisters Health System, Gateway Regional Hospital and a host of nursing homes. This program provides training opportunities for individuals who cannot afford education post high school, replenishing the healthcare talent pipeline. Funding will support job training tuition for 10 Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) students.

[New Moms](#) - \$5,000

Partnering with young moms as they progress towards housing stability, economic mobility and family well-being, New Moms programs service over 350 young families annually, providing housing, job-readiness training and paid transitional jobs, home-based parent coaching and doula services, and mental health support for young families. The grant to New Moms will help support operational expenses.

Posen-Robbins School District 143.5 - \$83,600

Funding will assist Posen-Robbins' middle and intermediate schools to provide individual and group counseling services, including trauma-informed practices. Their goal is to obtain psychoeducational and mental health services, including evidence-based group counseling (Tier II) and individual behavioral interventions (Tier III) to students, restorative justice practices to change the culture and climate of the school, and improve student behavior by coaching educators, conducting professional staff developments, and holding student peace circles at their schools.

Rosalind Franklin University Health Clinics - \$100,000

Funding provided to Rosalind Franklin University Health Clinic will be used to expand the work of the Community Care Connection, a highly collaborative, free, mobile health program that is breaking down barriers of cost, cultural, transportation, insurance and language for underserved, uninsured and underinsured people in Lake County. Services are provided on a 40-foot customer mobile unit that is equipped with two exam rooms. The grant will help fund professional health services offered, purchase medical supplies, provide vaccines and point-of-care testing, underwrite laboratory fees, and generally support the Community Care Connection.

St. Bernard Hospital - \$25,000

The grant will assist St. Bernard Hospital in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood with the hiring of a part-time Medical Assistant for their Adult Mobile Health Unit (AMHU) team. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the AMHU slowed significantly due to the lockdown and the community's fear regarding the pandemic. Currently operating only on the weekend, the AMHU would be able to operate 3 days per week with medical staff providing healthcare screening services and education to community residents two days per week, with the third day reserved for the medical assistant to make follow-up calls and complete any necessary administrative tasks.

Seabreeze, Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT) - \$50,366

The grant will support hiring and training costs for eight new employees in Rockford, Illinois, at Seabreeze, Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT), a certified women minority-owned business. These employees will be specialized drivers who assist with transporting patients in wheelchairs and stretchers. Seabreeze, NEMT will increase their service capacity to transport an additional 800 members per month who require wheelchair or stretcher transport.

Southern Community Table Food Pantry, Zion Temple Church of God in Christ - \$6,000

Funds will help the Southern Community Table Food Pantry by Zion Temple Church of God in Christ to purchase a commercial freezer, commercial refrigerator and shelving. This will allow them to serve cold and frozen items to the community along with the non-perishable items that are currently being distributed. Newly started in the Southern Illinois area, the organization hosted a successful first food distribution providing over 71 families in the community.

About Meridian Health Plan of Illinois

Meridian Health Plan of Illinois, Inc. and its family of health plans provide government-sponsored managed care services to families, children, seniors, and individuals with complex medical needs. This includes Meridian's Medicaid and Medicare-Medicaid plans, and YouthCare HealthChoice Illinois. YouthCare is a specialized program designed to address the healthcare needs of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) youth in out-of-home placement and former foster youth. Meridian connects members to care and offers comprehensive services to support lifelong health and wellness. Meridian is a Centene company. Learn more at [ILmeridian.com](https://www.ilmeridian.com).

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<https://investors.centene.com/2025-01-28-Meridian-Health-Plan-of-Illinois-Awards-528,000-in-Health-Happens-Here-Grants-TM-in-the-Second-Half-of-2024>