



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

ELIZABETH HERTEL  
DIRECTOR

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Bob Wheaton  
517-241-2112  
[WheatonB@michigan.gov](mailto:WheatonB@michigan.gov)

**MDHHS director, other health leaders talk about how  
budget signed by Gov. Whitmer improves access to care**

***Detroit's Community Health and Social Services Center, Inc., provides setting that  
shows the impact of investments in health care***

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Elizabeth Hertel joined other health leaders today at [Community Health and Social Services \(CHASS\) Center, Inc.](#) in Detroit to discuss how access to health care is improved by the fiscal year 2023 budget signed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and through federally qualified health centers.

In addition to the impact of the budget, today's roundtable discussion focused on issues such as the effect on Michigan families of Whitmer administration efforts to lower prescription drug prices.

The Community Health and Social Services Center is a federally qualified health center that develops, promotes and provide comprehensive, accessible and affordable quality primary health care and support services to all residents of the community, with special emphasis on the underserved African-American and Latino population.

"Community Health and Social Services Center and not-for-profit organizations like it throughout Michigan epitomize our vision of delivering health and opportunity to all Michiganders, reducing intergenerational poverty and promoting health equity," Hertel said. "As Gov. Whitmer's budget provides the dollars needed to improve access to health care, these local organizations are working every day in their communities to deliver these services to Michigan residents to keep them healthy."

Improving access to health care is a priority in the budget signed by Gov. Whitmer, who also has focused on lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

The fiscal year 2023 budget includes:

- \$132.5 million in new resources to improve Medicaid reimbursement for several critical services, including vaccine administration, primary care, community health workers, neonatal services, and private duty nursing.

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- \$85.1 million to improve access to dental care for Michiganders enrolled in Medicaid.
- \$181.6 million to expand behavioral health community capacity and increase the number of psychiatric beds for children and adults.
- Funding for health equity across the lifespan including:
  - \$1.2 million for expansion of Healthy Moms Healthy Babies maternal and infant health and support programs to provide professional doula care services for pregnant women, new mothers and their families and address disparities.
  - \$555,700 to place migrant family independence specialists at federally qualified health centers.
- Funding for initiatives to address racial disparities including:
  - Funding for outreach to women disproportionately at risk of or impacted by uterine fibroid disease.
  - \$2.5 million for a Sickle Cell Center of Excellence to address sickle cell disease, a medical condition that disproportionately impacts people of color.
- \$28.3 million to allow Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers.
- \$3.4 million in one-time funding for an alternative payment model pilot program which will include a health care provider working with a health plan and a federally qualified health center to implement a pathway hub in Muskegon to support the social and medical needs of the community.

As the largest network of affordable primary health care providers in the nation, Community Health Centers improve the health and well-being of underserved communities and empower people to actively take part in solving issues unique to them and their communities.

“We understand the impact of social drivers of health and work tirelessly to help mitigate them in effective care delivery,” said Dr. Felix Valbuena Jr., CEO of CHASS Center. “Continued support for the mission and work of health centers significantly impacts our ability to help community members be the best version of themselves.”

In Michigan, 40 community health centers provide affordable, quality behavioral and physical health care to more than 720,000 people, including more than 200,000 children. They work in coordination with MDHHS, local health departments and other partners to implement programs at the community level including health education, vaccination administration and social service referrals.

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“MPCA is grateful for the efforts of Gov. Whitmer’s administration to formulate a budget that will positively impact the health of communities across the state,” said Phillip Bergquist, chief executive officer of the Michigan Primary Care Association. “These critical investments will improve service delivery and assist in greater access to health care, especially for vulnerable populations.”

In addition to providing funding to improve access to health care, Gov. Whitmer has acted to make prescription drugs affordable. Earlier this year she [signed bipartisan legislation](#) to lower the costs of prescription drugs for Michiganders, ensure that pharmacists can provide honest advice to patients about treatment options, and hold pharmacy benefit managers accountable. The governor’s [Prescription Drug Task Force, housed within MDHHS, had recommended those actions.](#)

Also participating in the roundtable discussion were representatives from Community Health and Social Services Center, including Valbuena; patients at the center; Bergquist; and Joslyn Pettway, chief executive officer of Covenant Community Care. Hertel and others toured the center following the discussion.

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