

Leveraging Opportunities with Health Care

The passage and on-going implementation of the Affordable Care Act introduces meaningful changes to the health care environment nationwide. Because of New Mexico's socioeconomic circumstances, the people of the state are positioned to benefit significantly from some of these changes. Two key barriers to these opportunities being realized are a) lack of education about the availability of these opportunities and b) lack of health care practitioners to meet the growing needs. To take advantage of this structural opportunity to improve the health of New Mexicans, the Foundation supports programs and groups seeking to mitigate these barriers.

Negative health outcomes in New Mexico are often driven by a lack of access to preventive medical care and lack of information among large segments of the population about options for healthy living. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity affect New Mexicans at among the highest rates in the country, with behavioral health, substance abuse and issues such as teen pregnancy also negatively impacting large portions of our population. The rural nature of our state, as well as language and cultural barriers, introduce additional challenges in building and maintaining robust health across our communities.

The McCune Foundation acknowledges that the scope of our state's public health challenges is vast, impacts hundreds of thousands of people and would require far more resources than the Foundation can access to address. Consequently, the Foundation is focusing its funding in this area to relatively limited areas.

The following specific leverage points have been identified to help focus and drive our grant making within this priority area:

Key Leverage Points

Frontline Healthcare Worker workforce development. Community Health Workers (CHWs) and the use of other lay service providers represent a proven model for positively affecting health in New Mexican communities. In an influential study, New Mexico CHWs working with a group of 448 high risk, high cost Medicaid managed care clients produced substantial cost reductions in emergency department, inpatient and prescription drugs totaling over \$2 million in two years. Cost savings attributable to the New Mexico program exceeded program costs by four fold. In addition, CHW employment is expected to increase by 21 percent between 2012 and 2022, an employment growth rate almost twice the national average. Demand for direct caregivers in New Mexico is expected to increase 53 percent by 2020. The Foundation prioritizes programs that seek to develop the CHW workforce and support the profession as a driver for economic development and job growth.

Innovative approaches to access. Geography, language and cultural barriers, and cost often hamper access to health care in New Mexico. Programs or organizations that use technology or other innovative approaches to mitigate these barriers and connect communities (including rural, tribal and other marginalized populations) to effective and relevant health services are supported by this Foundation priority.

Integrated approaches to addressing social determinants. Addressing social determinants (such as access to clear air and water, safe neighborhoods and healthy food, among others) in the health of New Mexicans continues to grow as a priority strategy in generating better health outcomes. The Foundation prioritizes efforts that seek to address various social determinants in an integrated manner, either by connecting multiple initiatives or integrating health factors into other, unrelated programs.