Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation
Sponsor Profile:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation’s Commitment to West Michigan Addresses Social Determinants of Health

Over the past 44 years, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) Foundation’s ongoing grant-making efforts have improved the community’s capacity to conduct research and implement and evaluate community-inspired programs to improve health. This increased capacity is key to discovering innovations to improve health outcomes across Michigan and access to quality, high-value care for all.

The Foundation's history speaks to BCBSM’s historic social mission—to increase access to affordable health care, enhance the quality of care patients receive, and improve the health of Michigan’s citizens and communities. Grants support both creative solutions in health care and efforts to ensure access to care for Michiganders.

Specific to West Michigan, the BCBSM Foundation has helped to fund grant projects of various scopes and sizes yet held together by a common thread to address the social determinants of health or conditions in the environment where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks.

In 2023, the BCBSM Foundation provided $209,600 in grants to West Michigan. Thus far, in 2024, $42,000 has been granted to West Michigan organizations.

ADVANCING MATERNAL HEALTH EQUITY

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the BCBSM Foundation have partnered to provide funding through the Advancing Maternal Health Equity grant program to support Michigan community-based organizations implementing sustainable initiatives that advance health equity and reduce a birthing person’s risk of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity. Michigan Regional Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaboratives, including Region 8 in Southwest Michigan, were invited to apply.

2024 Region 8 grantees include:

**Bronson Health Foundation Inc. (Southwest Michigan Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative)**
$50,000
Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, Saint Joseph, and Van Buren Counties
SWMPQIC Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Initiative

**Young Women’s Christian Association of Kalamazoo (Cradle Kalamazoo)**
$50,000
Kalamazoo County
YWCA Kalamazoo Resource Hub: Addressing Maternal and Infant Mortality

With maternal health concerns a key priority, the BCBSM Foundation granted additional funds to West Michigan organizations to support maternal health research and improvement efforts.
Hope College Department of Nursing (Anita Esquerra-Zwiers, Ph.D.)
$50,000
Ottawa and Calhoun Counties
Implement and evaluate the My Mother’s Milk for Michigan Infants Lactation Coach program

Public Health-Muskegon County (Kathy Moors)
$20,000
Muskegon County
Address Infant Mortality by Expanding “Mom Mentoring” and “Safe Sleep” programs

Michigan State University College of Human Medicine (Keerat Bains)
$3,000
Kent County
Lived Experiences of Birth Doulas of Color

**BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](https://nami.org) (NAMI), 39.9% of adults in Michigan reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in February 2021. Unfortunately, 27% of those adults were unable to get the proper counseling or therapy they needed.

Blue Cross recognizes the vast need for mental and behavioral health services in Michigan. Committed to whole-person health and services benefitting body and mind, the BCBSM Foundation awarded the following grants in 2023 through April 2024.

**AYA Youth Collective (Lauren VanKeulen)**
$30,000
Kent County
Provide low-barrier, trauma-informed, relational, physical, and behavioral health care and Medicaid enrollment

**Safe Haven (Rachel VerWys, MSW)**
$2,700
Kent County
Support for programs that enhance physical and behavioral health outcomes

**Michigan State University College of Nursing (Arienne Patano)**
$3,000
Kent County
Impacts of social determinants of health on mental health outcomes among family caregivers providing hospice and palliative care in Michigan’s rural areas

**Western Michigan University College of Education and Human Development (Winifred Wilson)**
$3,000
Kalamazoo County
African American adolescent's biopsychosocial reactions to racial trauma
INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

BCBSM is dedicated to increasing access to affordable health care, enhancing the quality of care patients receive, and improving the health of Michigan’s citizens and communities. The BCBSM Foundation has distributed the following grants to expand health care access in West Michigan and advocate for the vulnerable.

The Avenue Family Network (Barbara Payne)
$30,000
Berrien County
Nursing advocacy for persons with disabilities

Baxter Community Center (Sonja Forte)
$1,500
Kent County
Support to increase health care access, services, and programs

StoreHouse of Community Resources (Jessica Johns)
$1,200
Kent County
Address the social determinants of health needs of community members

ABOUT THE BCBSM FOUNDATION

The BCBSM Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the philanthropic affiliate of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Blue Care Network and is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information about our work and grant programs, please visit bcbsm.com/foundation.