Health Foundation Supports Community Solutions to Help Older People and Those with Health Conditions Stay at Home

Four Maine communities statewide receive $1 million in grants to remain in their homes with better community supports

Augusta, ME (November 14, 2014) The Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) has selected four communities to implement projects in the foundation’s “Thriving in Place (TiP)” grant initiative. The grants are part of MeHAF’s work to promote and enhance patient-centered care that will improve the way health care is delivered, coordinated and experienced by patients. MeHAF’s three-year grants total $1,072,394 for the four projects.

The four TiP grantee communities selected were among eight communities that received initial support from MeHAF to identify resources and needs and then develop plans to keep people with chronic health conditions in their homes and communities, instead of being admitted to hospitals or long-term care institutions. All four communities are working to assist people stay in their communities by coordinating care and expanding access to resources.

“Because Maine has the oldest population and one of the highest rates of disability in the nation, it is critical that Maine communities find efficient ways to support people, particularly those who are older, so they stay healthy and receive needed care and support at home,” said Dr. Wendy Wolf, President and CEO of the foundation.

“Mainers overwhelmingly say that they want to remain living independently in their homes and communities. Through the Thriving in Place initiative, community organizations work together with residents to help people successfully manage chronic conditions so they can stay at home and out of the hospital or nursing home.”

All of the communities include collaboration that engages health care providers and a broad spectrum of community partners, including social service agencies and community support organizations. Some projects will involve over 20 community partner organizations. Working together, these partnerships will identify areas where better coordination of community resources and volunteer networks will make the difference between being hospitalized or institutionalized and “Thriving in Place.”

Dr. Becky Hayes Boober, the MeHAF Senior Program Officer overseeing the grants said, “The Thriving in Place program serves people with chronic health conditions and older adults, so is closely aligned with the statewide Maine Aging Initiative. Tapping into both formal and informal community resources meets the real needs of people at lower cost. One neighbor might need a day center for dementia care, while another might only need someone to shovel snow to be able to remain healthy in the community.”

Grantee communities will participate in monthly calls to share what they are learning, and regular learning opportunities organized by MeHAF that often include national experts. In October, TiP grantees toured the University of Maine to learn about innovative aging-related research and technology projects.

Thriving in Place (TiP) grant recipients:
Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, Inc., Presque Isle $252,250
Contact: Steve Farnham stevefarnham@aroostookaging.org

Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition, Bucksport $220,144
Contact: James Bradney, James.Bradney@bucksportbayhealth.org

Charlotte White Center, Dover-Foxcroft $300,000
Contact: Margaret “Meg” Callaway, meg.callaway@charlottewhite.org

Washington Hancock County Action (Healthy Peninsula), Blue Hill, $300,000
Contact: Janet Lewis, jlewis@healthypeninsula.org

The Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) is Maine’s largest, private, nonprofit health care foundation dedicated to promoting access to quality health care, especially for those who are uninsured and underserved, and improving the health of everyone in Maine. MeHAF uses its grant resources and expertise to identify and move forward key initiatives and issues to improve Maine’s health care system so people across every region of our state have access to quality care for better health. To learn more, go to www.mehaf.org.