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IHI and Pfizer Announce Funding Awards to Integrate Social Health Needs into Health Care Delivery

Boston, MA – September 28, 2021 – The [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI) and Pfizer Inc., have announced the winners of a competitive grant process to help health systems address the social determinants of health (SDOH) and social health needs of patients. This grant program is the first phase of an initiative convened by IHI and supported by Pfizer to advance the journey of health care organizations seeking to integrate social health into health care delivery in pursuit of improved health, well-being, and equity for their populations.

The winning organizations will join a Learning and Action Network (LAN), led by IHI, that will use improvement science to build and expand systems, processes, and infrastructure for integrating social health into health care delivery. Participants will test social health integration strategies with their patient populations and share their findings to enhance the rate of learning and improvement. These results will facilitate implementation and ultimately, sustainability and scale-up. The LAN kicked off this month and will last for one year.

“Unmet social needs such as homelessness, food insecurity, and economic instability significantly influence a patient’s health outcomes, so it’s incumbent upon all of us in health care to find new and effective ways to address these factors,” said Kedar Mate, MD, President and CEO of IHI. “This program will enable multiple organizations to demonstrate how these challenges can be addressed, and that we can demonstrably improve them and create more health in doing so.”

The total funding for this grant program is \$750,000, made possible through Pfizer Global Medical Grants. The three organizations selected to receive funding and their programs are:

Legacy Health Foundation (Oregon, Washington)

Project Title: Multi-Level Health Care Approach to Address the Social Determinants of Health

The goal of this project is to test strategies to better integrate the social determinants of health (SDOH) within Legacy Health’s delivery systems to improve health and well-being and achieve health equity for its patients and community. Food insecurity was identified as the most prevalent social need, and a multi-level approach was proposed to address it, including: 1) implementation of the Unite Us platform, which connects health and social care, 2) direct food provision and food resource referrals, and 3) training and skill building on the social determinants of health for the internal medicine physician workforce.

Meritus Health (Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia)

Project Title: Eradicating the Loneliness Epidemic

Meritus Health has started to systematically collect SDOH data on its population, and early results identify companionship as a major need. Loneliness and social isolation have significant detrimental impact to health outcomes, similar to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Meritus Health's aim is to reduce by 50 percent self-identified loneliness/social isolation for enrolled program participants by December 31, 2022. To impact this aim, three primary drivers have been identified and will be addressed: 1) better identification of those in need through SDOH screening, 2) lack of companionship, and 3) lack of emotional connection. The social care integration model will be designed to reduce social isolation disparities through creation of targeted social networks that will eradicate loneliness and measure impact to health outcomes; specifically, diabetes and depression.

Northern Light Health (Maine)

Project Title: Improving the Use of Social Determinants of Health Screening and Data to Understand and Address Barriers to Health Equity

As the most rural state in the nation, Maine faces challenges common to other rural areas, including economic and social problems that contribute to health disparities and health care delivery challenges. The aim of Northern Light Health's (NLH) project is to improve the health of its patients and communities by measurably improving screening for SDOH and implementing a referral for meaningful intervention. NLH will also operationalize improved analytics integrating Electronic Medical Record (EMR) health outcome data with CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) with a view to better understand patient populations, implement patient-specific strategies in addition to developing a strategy for ongoing investment and resource deployment in regions/areas with higher prevalence of social vulnerability and health inequity. NLH will utilize learning from IHI's Learning and Action Network to advance its own knowledge and understanding of the various use cases and effective screening and intervention strategies for SDOH.

About the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For 30 years, IHI has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health systems across the world. IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyzes learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths. IHI collaborates with a growing community to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. IHI generates optimism, harvests fresh ideas, and supports anyone, anywhere who wants to profoundly change health and health care for the better. Learn more at [ihi.org](https://www.ihio.org).

About Pfizer Global Medical Grants

The mission of Pfizer Global Medical Grants is to partner with the global healthcare community to improve patient outcomes in areas of mutual interest through support of measurable learning and change strategies. Projects funded by Pfizer are the full

responsibility of the recipient organization. Pfizer has no influence over any aspect of the projects and only asks for reports about the results and the impact of the projects to share them publicly.

About Pfizer Inc.: Breakthroughs that change patients' lives

At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products, including innovative medicines and vaccines. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as one of the world's premier innovative biopharmaceutical companies, we collaborate with health care providers, governments, and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 150 years, we have worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. We routinely post information that may be important to investors on our website at www.pfizer.com. In addition, to learn more, please visit us on www.pfizer.com and follow us on Twitter at @Pfizer and @Pfizer_News, Linked In, YouTube, and like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/Pfizer](https://www.facebook.com/Pfizer).

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