



## Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation

860 Winter Street, Waltham, MA 02451-1411 [www.mmsfoundation.org](http://www.mmsfoundation.org)

(800) 322-2303, ext. 7044 / (781) 893-4610 / (781) 434-7455 fax

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### Fiscal Year 2020 Grants

*Grants were recently awarded to the following organizations, many of which have shifted their operations to support their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

#### **Amherst Survival Center, North Amherst — \$15,000**

During this pandemic the free medical clinic operations are temporarily suspended, and patients are referred to the community health center. The Health Needs Fund continues to cover the cost of rides to appointments as needed. Food and nutrition programs are continuing and have expanded to meet the increased demand. Hot lunches as well as bags of produce and bread are available daily at the tent in the parking lot. Demand for lunch has increased more than 50% since before the crisis. Bagged lunches now include snacks and an additional to-go sandwich, wrap, or salad for homeless participants to take for dinner. The Food Pantry has seen a 4x increase in new families registering and the monthly grocery allocations for families with school-age children have increased. The number of senior receiving food delivery has doubled, and plans are in place to expand to two more towns.

#### **Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP) — \$25,000**

Given the current public health crisis and the need for an urgent response, BHCHP has transformed a significant amount of practice to mobilize this response and launch several new services to protect the health of people experiencing homelessness. BHCHP and its health care teams are mobilizing to be on the frontlines in confronting the COVID-19 pandemic in Boston and its impact on those who lack the safe home in which to isolate themselves and follow guidance for social distancing.

#### **Boston University Outreach Van Project (OVP) — \$10,000**

The OVP aims to provide the medically under-served communities of the Greater Boston Area with clothing, food, and medical services, while offering an opportunity for future physicians to learn skills in community outreach. In March the OVP suspended its normal operations, pivoting its work in the wake of COVID-19 and volunteer members have used the van to deliver groceries and have assisted with other essential errands for medical personnel at Boston Medical Center. Currently, volunteers are coordinating the delivery of groceries to families in need who have been identified by the East Boston Neighborhood Healthcare Center.

#### **Family Health Center of Worcester — \$24,500**

Through a new Community Recovery Outreach Worker (CROW) service, homeless individuals will have increased access to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services. The CROW connects patients-in-need to appropriate services and provides ongoing peer support. A portion of these funds will be reallocated to purchase personal protective equipment to allow for the CROW to be protected while performing their work to increase SUD services for low-income, culturally diverse residents in Worcester and South Worcester County.

#### **Father Bill's & MainSpring, Brockton and Quincy — \$15,000**

The MainSpring Outreach Project utilizes a Triage Outreach Worker to connect men and women living outdoors in Brockton to health care and wraparound services, improving health outcomes, and helping this vulnerable population exit homelessness. A portion of these funds will be reallocated to cover costs related to the additional staff and supplies needed to deal with the current public health crisis. This includes staffing new temporary shelter sites, providing meals that typically are donated by the community, and purchasing essentials like hand soap, sanitizer, cleaning, and hygiene products.

### **[Interfaith Social Services](#), Quincy — \$10,000**

The New Directions Counselling Center addresses the mental health needs of impoverished people without health insurance or with inadequate coverage. As a result of the current pandemic, mental health counseling has temporarily transitioned to a telemedicine model. Some clients have chosen to wait until after the crisis ends before continuing treatment. However, this has been balanced by an increase in clients reaching out for therapy to cope with the severe anxiety and emotional trauma brought on by the crisis.

### **[MetroWest Free Medical Program \(MWFMP\)](#), Sudbury and Framingham — \$15,000**

MWFMP serves as an entry point to the health care system for those in MetroWest who are uninsured/insufficiently insured by providing general medical and specialty care to meet immediate health care needs; connecting patients with social services, health insurance, and a medical home; and advocating for policies that assure good health for all people. This care is provided by a dedicated team of more than 250 volunteers including highly skilled physicians, nurses, social workers, and health educators. While in-person services are currently suspended, a portion of these funds will be used to provide telehealth services in light of the current pandemic.

### **[South Middlesex Opportunity Council](#), Framingham — \$15,000**

The Food Security & Nutrition Education Program educates MetroWest-area families living in SMOC's congregate housing for the homeless in nutrition, meal planning, and food preparation, while partnering with other regional anti-hunger organizations. Part of these funds will be allocated to the agency's COVID-19-related emergency response needs, including distribution of emergency food and household items.

### **[The Family Van](#), Boston — \$10,000**

Project Adelante to Healthier Roads will help to expand mental health services focusing on the Latinx community. Staff training is instrumental to the success of the program and due to the COVID-19 pandemic this training is currently on hold. Normal operations have pivoted in response and working with a group of students at Harvard Medical School, The Family Van have been preparing and distributing educational and safety information about COVID-19, which are available in [37 languages](#). Having been in the community for 28 years, The Family Van is able to connect with vulnerable and hard to reach individuals and educate them about the coronavirus in words they understand and in their native language.

### **[The Open Door](#), Gloucester — \$10,000**

Given this unprecedented health care crisis, food pantry and meal programs have shifted to a Curbside No Contact Trunk-Drop Pick-Up model and groceries and/or meals are delivered to the elderly or families who are quarantined or are unable to venture out. As a designated essential service, we continue to maintain our core services so those most vulnerable have access to good nutrition. With unemployment increasing, demand for our service continues to increase. Food rescue operations have ceased, and food costs have increased. Meals are provided seven days a week. The Open Door is not only providing food to families and individuals through its core programs, but it has stepped up to provide additional grocery service to several other sites.

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### **[Boston Children's Hospital, Pediatric Dermatology Student-Run Collaborative](#) — \$6,653**

The project seeks to increase specialist health care access for pediatric patients while equipping future physicians with the leadership skills to organize health care delivery for diverse, underserved patients. Patients up to 18 years of age who have limited or no insurance will be eligible for clinic services. The clinic will operate once a month on Tuesday evenings, 4:30–6:30 p.m. The clinic personnel will consist of four medical students (two first- or second-year students and two third- or fourth-year students), two dermatology residents, and two pediatric dermatologists.

### **[Boys & Girls Clubs of MetroWest](#), Framingham — \$10,000**

Many youths view the Club as a second home and a safe place to turn. As mental health becomes more of a focus in society, the Mental Health Awareness in At-Risk Youth program will train staff how to identify various mental health needs of youth and either work to address those needs or recommend additional services. The Club will implement more focused teen health workshops to open lines of communication and encourage positive dialogue.

**[Children’s Friend, Worcester](#) — \$10,000**

The Gender Wellness Initiative provides access to mental health services for transgender and gender nonconforming youth through counseling, support groups and family resources, and training of school personnel, health care providers, and others.

**[Health Imperatives, Brockton](#) — \$20,000**

Funding will support the implementation of a pilot project in Brockton that will increase health insurance coverage and access to sexual and reproductive health services for low-income, disenfranchised, and at-risk individuals. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic this project has become even more crucial as many individuals have lost health insurance due to unemployment; and the fact that the city of Brockton has the second highest rate of cases in the state.

**[Our Neighbors’ Table, Amesbury](#) — \$10,000**

Funding supports year two of a three-year pilot project (Creating Food Access for all Children: Screening and Prescription to Food Resources) to implement health care practice-based food insecurity screening.

**[St. Peter’s Free Medical Program, Worcester](#) - \$22,000**

Over the last 5 years, St. Anne’s Free Medical Program has seen its volume increase and has had to turn patients away several months of the year and running at capacity for most other times. St. Peter’s will augment the services provided by St. Anne’s and is located in the zip code of where about 30% of St. Anne’s patients live. Funding will be used to purchase the necessary medical and office supplies needed to open St. Peter’s Free Medical Program to provide additional health care to those most in need in the Worcester area.

**[Worcester Evening Free Medical Service Program](#) — \$10,000**

The [Worcester Free Clinic Coalition](#) (WFCC) is a group of six free medical programs that provides free health care services to those who are uninsured or underinsured in the greater Worcester area. The Worcester Evening Free Medical Service Program is piloting a program to improve communication between the programs and community partners and improve data collection efforts by implementing an electronic medical record. The pilot will be implemented at two additional sites.