

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE


Improving Health
for All in
Howard County



HORIZON FOUNDATION



2018 - 2023

A photograph of three women of different ages and ethnicities hugging each other outdoors. The woman on the left has short grey hair and is wearing a yellow shirt. The woman in the middle has dark skin and braided hair, wearing a maroon shirt. The woman on the right has short grey hair, wears glasses and an orange jacket. They are all smiling and laughing. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a fence.

**Our mission is to improve the health and wellness of
people who live or work in Howard County.**



**Our vision is for all people in Howard County
to live long, healthy lives.**

Our core values

The Horizon Foundation fosters healthy systems, environments and behaviors to **help people thrive** in complete physical, mental and social well-being.



The Horizon Foundation **promotes fair and equitable opportunities** for everyone in our community to live a long, healthy life.



The Horizon Foundation **leverages research, evaluation and diverse community partnerships** to maximize our impact.



The Horizon Foundation leads independently to **address public health challenges.**

A Note From Nikki

It's hard to believe that the Horizon Foundation turns 25 years old this year. It has been a privilege to serve the Howard County community for so long, and together with our community partners, we've achieved some incredible wins that have moved the needle toward a healthier Howard County for all. We are YOUR community health foundation, and we will continue to work to make good health achievable for everyone in Howard County.

Addressing public health challenges is not easy. It's about helping people make healthy choices; and it's also about creating an environment that allows people to have healthy choices to make in the first place. That's why the Horizon Foundation goes after long-lasting, systemic change. We tackle problems and work to scale up solutions across the community. Through engaging the public, community and coalition building, strategic grantmaking and advocacy and policy change, we work to make it easier for all people in Howard County to be healthy.

Though we have much to be proud of, there is still work to do. Howard County faces deep health inequities, particularly in areas like chronic disease, mental health and access to quality, affordable health care. Disparities are also stark in areas like education, transportation, wealth attainment and affordable housing – all of which affect people's ability to live long, healthy lives. And because of our nation's history of systemic racism – of which Howard County is not immune – we know that those barriers are typically stacked highest against people and communities of color.

This report shows how we've gone about leading systemic change over the past six years across a number of key priority areas – always with racial equity as our guiding principle. Moving forward, we intend to continue that progress with the goal of closing health disparities and building trusting, authentic partnerships with members of our community – many of whom have been ignored for far too long.

Big, systemic change is hard - but together, we can ensure that all people in Howard County can live long, healthy lives. Onward to the next 25 years!

Nikki Highsmith Vernick

President and CEO

Through our strategic planning process, we worked with our partners and engaged in deep community listening to determine the public health needs that our community sees as priorities – and backed it up using both local and state sources of data.

Here are our key ingredients for creating long-lasting, systemic change:



Engaging the Public



Community and Coalition Building



Strategic Grantmaking



Advocacy and Policy Change

In following this "recipe" with all of our programs and initiatives, we helped improve health in Howard County in a number of important ways – by improving opportunities for residents to bike and walk, reducing sales of sugary drinks, improving access to mental health services and reducing stigma around supporting others with mental health struggles, increasing the number of residents who have named a health care agent and completed an advance directive and passing equity-driven public policies.

Photo credit: R. Scott Kramer, Howard County Government



For the first time in two centuries, researchers predict today's children will live shorter lives than their parents. Chronic illnesses like heart disease and diabetes – already among the leading causes of death in Howard County – disproportionately affect children of color and threaten all of our children's health and well-being. We strive to help children and families achieve a healthier future by making our community a place where healthy choices are easy choices.

"To break this cycle, it must be a collective effort. Howard County is ranked as one of the nation's healthiest communities, but there are still big disparities when it comes to chronic diseases like diabetes. We need to make this a priority for ALL of Howard County." ALICE HARRIS, Advancing Community Advocacy Fellow

Engaging the Public

Learn More at www.thehorizonfoundation.org/our-initiatives



Community and Coalition Building



Advocacy & Policy Change

\$20+ MILLION FOR COMPLETE STREETS OVER 4 YEARS



\$9M more than previous four-year cycle, and record levels in the last two years

2019

Complete streets policy to **make Howard County safer and easier** for residents to walk, bike and access public transportation

2022

\$500,000 in county funding to launch a new mobile produce market making fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables available to lower-income residents

Strategic Grantmaking

\$1.33 million SINCE 2018

Other Big Wins

Hosted Open Streets events and walk audits highlighting needs for bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements

Nearly 40 miles of shared roads, bike lanes and bike paths installed or repaired (with more on the way!)

NEARLY 30% DROP IN SODA SALES






RACIAL EQUITY IN PRACTICE




"True equity comes along with diversity, inclusion and solidarity. Discrimination and hatred against any racial group undermines equity foundations. An inclusive curriculum is a key step toward cultivating a more inclusive and vibrant Howard County." MING LI, HOWARD COUNTY CHINESE SCHOOL



Data proves that many of our communities of color face barriers to living long, healthy lives. Deep rooted economic, social and health inequities mean our Black and Brown friends and neighbors face the most significant health disparities, but all communities of color, including Asian Americans, experience health disparities.

Today, improving health and wellness for all people in Howard County means advancing racial equity. We must rebuild community structures and systems so they are rooted in equity, equality and fairness.



Internally, the Foundation has made racial equity central to how we operate. Over 50% of our staff and board are people of color, and we continue to engage with vendors who are also committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. All Foundation staff and board receive ongoing racial equity and anti-racism training as well.

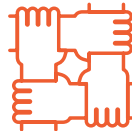
Engaging the Public



Hosted a Racial Equity Summit with **over 600 residents** and **launched racial equity workshops** to develop common language related to diversity, inclusion and equity

Partnered with the Howard County Library System to **host three speaker series** and **three community engagement panels** on systemic racism in health, education and housing

Community and Coalition Building



HOWARD COUNTY EQUITY COLLABORATIVE

Two cohorts comprised of 60 leaders from 9 organizations (representing over 4000 community members) committed to **intensive racial equity training, coaching and organizational development** to help them better **advance equity and fight systemic racism**

Strategic Grantmaking



\$2.65 million SINCE 2018



Advocacy & Policy Change

2020

HCPSS Policy 1080 to **address disparities in educational equity** for Howard County students

County legislation to establish its **first ever Racial Equity Task Force**

2021



SUPPORTED \$16 PER HOUR MINIMUM WAGE IN HOWARD COUNTY

2022

\$1.3 million in county funding for a transformational maternal health program to ensure vital prenatal and postpartum care for uninsured and underinsured women

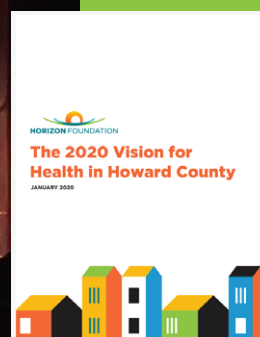
Healthy Babies Equity Act (state legislation)



TO EXPAND MEDICAID PRENATAL AND POSTPARTUM CARE REGARDLESS OF MOTHERS' IMMIGRATION STATUS

Other Big Wins

Released the **"The 2020 Vision for Health in Howard County"** report, highlighting persistent racial disparities in health

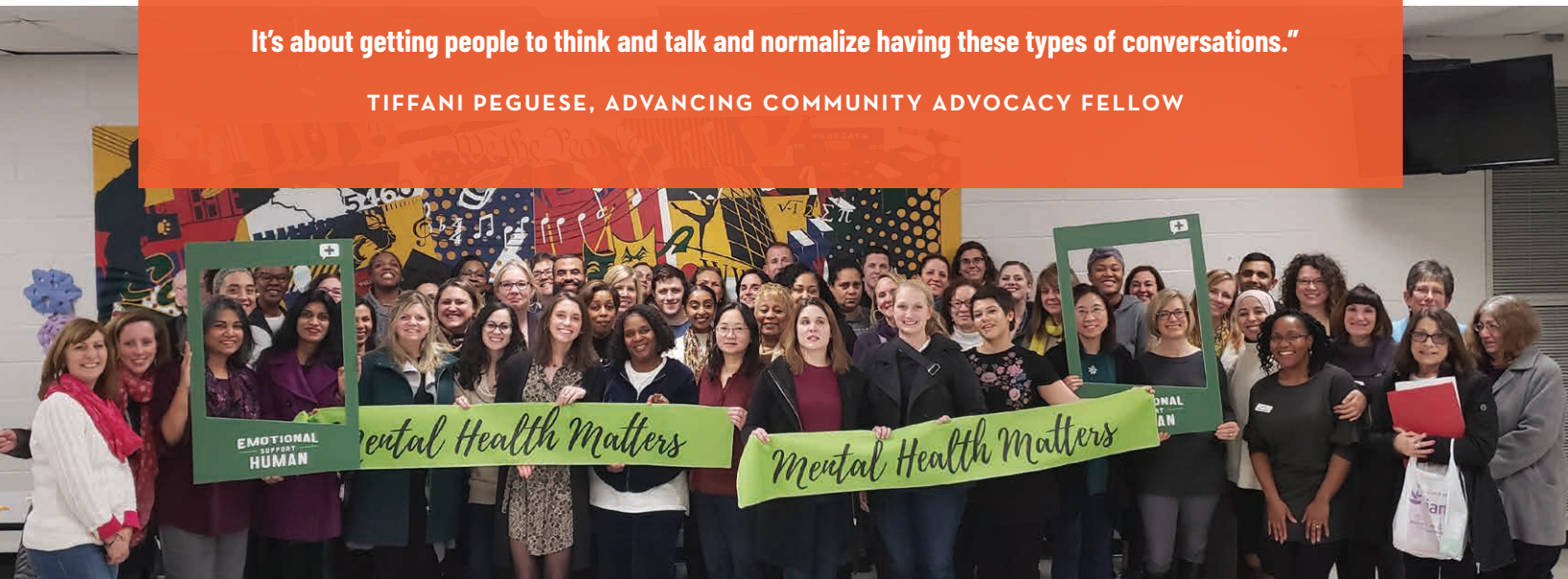


Mental health challenges are on the rise in our community. We work to fight the stigma around mental health struggles, coordinate better mental health and primary care and improve access to mental health services for youth and adults. Alongside our partners, we are also bolstering crisis services so residents get the behavioral health care they need rather than going through emergency rooms or police interactions.

"We need to be intentional in the way in which mental health care is delivered.

It's about getting people to think and talk and normalize having these types of conversations."

TIFFANI PEGUESE, ADVANCING COMMUNITY ADVOCACY FELLOW



Engaging the Public



 **Emotional
Support Human**

ENGAGING
OVER 3,500
RESIDENTS



Community and Coalition Building



This coalition includes 57 organizations and individuals who have conducted **over 1,000 advocacy actions**

GBRICS PARTNERSHIP

GREATER BALTIMORE REGIONAL INTEGRATED CRISIS SYSTEM

The Foundation is a key partner and funder of this collaboration of 17 hospitals, 4 local behavioral health authorities, and behavioral health leaders in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County and Howard County – **aims to help divert behavioral health crises** from emergency rooms and police interactions

Strategic Grantmaking



\$3.56 million since 2018

Includes \$450,000 grant to support Sheppard Pratt's new walk-in behavioral health urgent care clinic in ElkrIDGE (funds in partnership with United Way of Central Maryland)



Advocacy & Policy Change



Helped expand enhanced school based mental health supports from just 3 schools to all 77 public schools in the county. **Over 1500 students have received individual counseling during the school day.**

Helped launch student well-being checks in the 7th grade **to ensure students receive the help they need to thrive.**

Successfully advocated for a \$45 million grant from the state **to help implement GBRICS.**

Supported state legislation that established and funded 988 as **THE NEW 24/7 FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL LIFELINE FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**



Other Big Wins



Co-hosted a series on grief and loss with Gilchrist and the Wendt Center, **reaching over 400 educators**

Behavioral health integration in three pediatric practices **reaching 2,000 patients and families**

School-based mental health supports in four Head Start centers **serving 362 low-income children and families**

Increased from 19% to 77% the percentage of residents' comfort with offering help to someone struggling with mental health issues



HELPED DECREASE FROM 22% TO 11% ADULT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS

that resulted in an inpatient admission

Helped reduce mobile dispatches to schools that result in emergency petition referrals by 22%

In the near future Howard County expects an unprecedented growth in its population of older adults.

By 2035, those aged 65 and older will make up 21.63% of residents, compared to 10.12% in 2010. The Foundation works to address critical health challenges as our residents age, before they face disability or disease, including ensuring that residents have the highest quality of health care right up to the end of their lives. This work focuses on helping all residents with advance care planning so they can express and document their end-of-life health care wishes and have those wishes respected by the health care system.



"It's really important to have that conversation with your family well before anything goes wrong. And you never know when something is going to happen, so, the time to have that conversation is now."

DAVID BARRETT, ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INC.

Engaging the Public



SPEAK (easy)
— HOWARD —

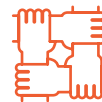
Speak(easy) On Tour events to **promote advance care planning** among communities of color

4 EVENTS WITH COLUMBIA FESTIVAL FOR THE ARTS REACHING OVER 800 RESIDENTS



Speaking Easy Over Dinner event to **help families discuss what matters most**, reaching 350 residents

Community and Coalition Building



MARYLAND
**honoring
choices**
COALITION

Includes statewide anchor institutions like MedChi, Maryland Hospital Association and AARP

Advocacy & Policy Change



State legislation to make electronic advance directives easier for residents to complete and for providers to coordinate

Strategic Grantmaking



\$259,760 SINCE 2018

Other Big Wins

Increased number of residents naming a health care agent (30% to 37%), particularly among Black (22% to 32%) and Hispanic (15% to 41%) residents

2022



Best practices report to provide a roadmap for health care providers, nonprofits and foundations to implement a health care agent initiative in their organizations



The COVID-19 pandemic drastically upended all of our lives.

Not only did the virus directly impact our residents and their families, but it also laid bare many of the health inequities we face. People of color who were more likely to suffer from chronic diseases like diabetes were more at risk for severe cases of COVID-19. Our elderly population was also especially vulnerable. And the isolation and uncertainty each of us faced for so long exacerbated mental health concerns.

The pandemic shows us why our work to combat systemic health inequities is so important. And it turns out the ingredients of how we make that change – engaging the public, building coalitions and partnerships, grantmaking and advocacy – were the tactics we needed to respond to the crisis and work to make our community more resilient against future pandemics.

Thank you to all of our frontline workers, including those at Howard County General Hospital and the Howard County Health Department, for their incredible work throughout this crisis to keep our community safe.



Engaging the Public

Partnered with the County to create a social marketing campaign and online resource system for those who were **COVID-vaccine hesitant** in order to answer questions and direct residents to vaccination centers for appointments once they felt ready

Launched the **Equity Voices** campaign elevating **African American leaders** in Howard County and highlighting disparities exacerbated by COVID-19



Community and Coalition Building

HoCoRespond partnership funder collaborative that includes the Horizon Foundation, the Community Foundation of Howard County, United Way of Central Maryland and the Women's Giving Circle of Howard County

Strategic Grantmaking

Over \$600,000 in funds granted to local nonprofits through HoCo Respond partnership

\$1.08 million in emergency grants by Horizon for COVID relief to community organizations on the front lines

Advocacy & Policy Change

Helped successfully advocate for utilizing Howard County's pandemic relief funding from the federal government to improve health and mental health

Advocated for disaggregating COVID-19 data (cases, death rates, vaccines, etc.) by race and ethnicity



Changemaker Challenge

Co-Hosted 2 Changemaker Challenge events, a “Shark Tank for social good” competition, in partnership with United Way of Central Maryland, the Community Foundation of Howard County and the Women’s Giving Circle of Howard County



A total of \$120K was awarded to 8 winners

FOR THEIR INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

“We are so proud of the partnership between the Women’s Giving Circle of Howard County, Horizon Foundation, United Way of Central Maryland and Community Foundation of Howard County that has grown the Changemaker Challenge into the powerful opportunity that it is today for social innovators to bring their ideas to life in Howard County.

We are strong believers in partnerships that inspire innovation for social good!”

BUFFY BEAUDOIN-SCHWARTZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN’S GIVING CIRCLE OF HOWARD COUNTY

Howard County Awards

2021

HOWARD COUNTY RECOGNIZED AS THE 8TH HEALTHIEST COMMUNITY IN THE COUNTRY

by U.S. News and World Report



2021

Howard County received the **coveted Culture of Health prize** from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation





2023 Staff

Nikki Highsmith Vernick, President & CEO
Stephanie Blades, Administrative Associate
Anne Brinker, Chief Operating Officer
Kerry Darragh, Senior Communications Officer
Tiffany Erbelding, Senior Program Director
Kenitra Fokwa, Senior Program Officer
Cat Harmon, Director of Communications
D'Paul Nibber, Senior Policy & Community Engagement Officer
Janet Olajide, Fiscal Officer
Glenn Schneider, Chief Program Officer
Jennifer White, Program Director

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Gopi Suri, Secretary
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Stacie Hunt
Tracy Miller
Sekou Murphy
Yvette Rooks
Celián Valero-Colón
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Lanlan Xu

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Dou Alvin Zhang
Robin Steele
Michael Barr
Janet Currie
Larry Appel
Jeanne Kennedy
Greg Olaniran
Yvette Oquendo
Jeffrey Rivest

Thank you to all of our grantees

Accessible Resources for Independence	Ellicott City Soccer Club
Active Minds Reservoir High School	Equity4HC
African American Community Roundtable of Howard County	ETEP Consulting LLC
Alpha Foundation of Howard County	Every Kid Can Cook
American Association of University of Women	Fulton Elementary School PTA
American Red Cross Central Maryland Chapter	First Presbyterian Church of Howard County
A-OK Mentoring - Tutoring, Inc.	Folly Quarter Middle School PTA
Asian American Healthcare Center Inc.	Free Bikes 4 Kidz Maryland
Association of Community Services	Georgetown University
Behavioral Health System Baltimore	Gilchrist Hospice Care
Bet Chaverim Congregation	Girls on the Run of Central Maryland
Bethel Senior Academy	Glen Mar Church
Black Student Achievement Program Stevens Forest Elementary	Grantmakers In Health
Black Student Achievement Program Swansfield Elementary	Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Inc.
Bollman Bridge Elementary School	Guilford Elementary School
Bonnie Branch Middle School PTA	Hammond Elementary School PTA
Bridges to Housing Stability	Hammond Middle School PTA
Bridgeway Community Church	HC DrugFree
Bright Minds Foundation	HFAM Foundation for Education & Research, Inc.
Bryant Woods Elementary	Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA
Building Families for Children Inc.	HopeWorks of Howard County, Inc.
CASA	Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland
Celebration Church	Howard County Arts Council
Center for Creative Life and Learning, Inc. Girls on Fire Mentoring and Enrichment Program	Howard County Autism Society
Channing Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist	Howard County Branch NAACP
Chase Brexton Health Care	Howard County Chinese School
Chesapeake Down Syndrome Parent Group	Howard County Conservancy
Chin Integration and Advocacy Network USA	Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks
Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County	Howard County Health Department
Clarksville Middle School PTA	Howard County Housing Commission
Clemens Crossing Elementary School PTA	Howard County Library System
Coalition for Compassion	Howard County Office of Children and Families/ Department of Community Resources and Services
Columbia Festival of the Arts	Howard County Police Department
Columbia Housing Center	Howard County Police Department Youth Advisory Council
Community Action Council of Howard County	Howard County Public School System
Community Foundation of Howard County	Howard County Public Schools - Hanover Hills ES
Conexiones of Howard County	Howard County Sponsoring Committee/People Acting Together in Howard (PATH)
Continental Societies Inc Columbia Chapter	Howard EcoWorks
Courageous Conversations about Race and Religion	Howard High School
Cradlerock Elementary School	Howard Hospital Foundation
Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission	Humanim, Inc.
Dunloggin Middle School PTA	Immune Recovery Foundation, Inc
Ellicott City Historic Partnership	Indian Cultural Association of Howard County
	Institute for Healthcare Improvement
	Islamic Leadership Institute of America

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of
Public Health
Junior Achievement of Central Maryland
JustLiving Advocacy, Inc.
Korean American senior association
Korean-American Senior Association of
Howard County (kasa)
L3M Global
Laurel Woods Elementary School/HCPSS
Leadership Howard County
LeCheval Stable
Let Me Run
Life Change AME Church
Lindaben Foundation Inc
Lisbon Elementary PTA
Locust United Methodist Church
LUMINUS NETWORK, INC
Manor Woods Elementary PTA
Marriotts Ridge High School PTSA
Maryland Chapter- American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Coalition of Families
Maryland Hospital Association, Inc.
Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League
Maryland Matters
Maryland Nonprofits
Maryland Philanthropy Network
Maryland Turkish American Inhabitants Inc.
Mayfield Woods Middle School PTA
MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society
Mediation and Conflict Resolution Center, Inc.
MedStar Health
Mental Health Association of Maryland
Mt. Hebron High School PTSA
Murray Hill Middle School
My Covenant Place
My Life Foundation, Inc.
NAMI Howard County
National Family Resiliency Center
NeighborRide
Oakland Mills High School
Oakland Mills Interfaith, Inc
Oakland Mills Middle School PTSA
Oakland Mills Online
Ohana of Howard County
Oakland Mills High School PTSA
On Our Own of Maryland, Inc.

Oneness Center for Spiritual Living Columbia
Patapsco Middle School PTA
Patuxent Valley Middle School PTA
Pearl Foundation Inc
Peiyong Chinese School
PFLAG Howard County Columbia
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Zeta Alpha Sigma
Chapter, Inc.
Players Philanthropy Fund (Fiscal Sponsor):
Alston for Athletes
Pointers Run Elementary School PTa
Running Brook Elementary School
Sheppard Pratt
Sobar
Springboard Community Services
St John Baptist Church
St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church
Stevens Forest Elementary School PTA
Stillborn And Infant Loss Support-SAILS
Temple Isaiah
Temple Isaiah Sisterhood
The Arc of Howard County
The Columbia (MD) Chapter of The Links, Inc.
The Columbia Orchestra of Howard County, Inc.
The Community Ecology Institute
The Ed Lally Foundation
The Healthy Church
The Village in Howard County
Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Center
This Point Forward
Thomas Viaduct PTSA President
Tridelphia Ridge Elementary School
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia
United Way of Central Maryland
Upcycled Inc.
Volunteers of America Chesapeake Inc
Wendt Center for Loss and Healing
Wilde Lake High School PTSA
Wilde Lake Interfaith Religious Center, Inc
Women's Giving Circle of Howard County
Work Play Obsession All In Foundation
(Fiscal Sponsor)
Young Queens In Training Inc
Zeta Alpha Sigma Chapter-Phi Beta Sigma
Fraternity, Inc.



HORIZON FOUNDATION

Leading community change so everyone in Howard County can live a longer, better life.



thehorizonfoundation.org