NORTHERN MICHIGAN PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE

For Immediate Release
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Survey launches to learn residents' priorities for community

A partnership of health, human services, and community organizations have launched a Community Survey to get input from residents of Northern and Central Michigan about their priorities for improving life in their communities.

The partnership, known as MiThrive, is working to improve the health of communities in Northern/Central Michigan through examining data, finding the key issues, and bringing people together for change. MiThrive is working across the 31 counties of Northern Lower Michigan, from Mt. Pleasant to the Mackinac Bridge.

"The survey is a great chance to share what's important to you, and the kind of changes you want to see in your community. To guide our work, we need as many responses as possible,'" said Tanya Janes, manager of community health & volunteer services for McLaren Northern Michigan. "Anyone who lives in Northern/Central Michigan can take the survey. Plus, you can have the chance to win one of five $25 gift cards through a random drawing."

The Community Survey is based on the findings from a 6-month data collection process last year on important issues in the region. The survey will help narrow down the list of issues to the highest priorities, by finding out what is most important to community residents. Examples of these issues include mental health, meeting basic needs of living, access to healthcare, and social isolation.

"It's been incredible to see how this project has grown, and how far-reaching interest in this project has been. It's truly a cross-sector, collaborative endeavor," said Denise Bryan, health officer for District Health Departments #2 and #4, together covering eight counties of Northeast Michigan. "With that kind of regional collaboration, we'll be able to make significant, sustainable progress for our communities."

The MiThrive project began in early 2018 with a steering committee with representatives from Munson Healthcare, McLaren Northern Michigan, MidMichigan Health, the seven health departments of the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, North Country Community Mental Health, Traverse Health Clinic, Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan, and the Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region. Since then, participation in the project has expanded to include all major hospital systems in Northern Lower Michigan, and dozens of other community organizations and stakeholders.

"I'm looking forward to our next steps, after we gain a clear idea of our community members' priorities," said Kevin Hughes, health officer for District Health Department #10, covering ten counties of West Michigan stretching from Oceana to Crawford counties. "Once we have our priorities, we can set both local and regional goals for change. With support from diverse partners, we'll be able to create feasible action plans and work for real change on issues that are important to our community members."

The survey is available now at www.surveymonkey.com/r/MiThrive2019 or on the homepage of www.nwhealth.org. The survey is open through March 14, 2019. To get more information about MiThrive, or learn about ways to participate in the project, contact Carrie Field, MiThrive Coordinator at mithriveproject@gmail.com.

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Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department — Caring for our Communities
Central Michigan District Health Department — Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities
District Health Department No. 2
District Health Dept. #4 — Providing A Healthier Tomorrow Since 1930
District Health Department #10 — Healthy People, Healthy Communities
Grand Traverse County Health Department
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A partnership of seven local health departments dedicated to increasing capacity, maximizing assets, and containing costs to improve public health

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