

The Governor's Office of FOUNDATION LIAISON

A partnership between the
State of Michigan and the
Council of Michigan Foundations

Connecting Government and Philanthropy to Improve the Health of Michigan's Families

Michigan's nonpartisan Office of Foundation Liaison (OFL) was created in 2003 at the suggestion of Michigan philanthropic leaders. The Office — the first of its kind in the nation — works to foster partnerships between state government agencies and philanthropic organizations that are likely to result in policy and programmatic reforms to improve the lives of children and families in Michigan. Since its inception, OFL has brokered more than \$150 million in foundation investments for initiatives to increase Michigan's economic competitiveness through reforms in P-20 education, economic and workforce development, health, and land use.

OFL works in three priority issue areas: prenatal to postsecondary education, workforce development, and health. Within health, OFL has made great strides in connecting government and philanthropy to expand access to health services, especially for Michigan's most vulnerable populations.

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Flint Residents during the Water Crisis

Connecting Flint residents to clean water and physical health services were top priorities during the Flint Water Crisis. Yet, amid early crisis relief efforts, mental health services were largely neglected. OFL and the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) were reminded of a conversation with a foundation that worked on Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts. Through this conversation, OFL and CMF learned about the importance of mental health services in helping residents manage stress and trauma following a crisis. OFL and CMF immediately shifted into high gear to identify partners that could come together to fund and bring a mobile mental health unit to Flint.

As CMF worked with New York-based Children's Health Fund to acquire their mobile mental health unit used during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, OFL connected funders,

including the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Health Endowment Fund, the Ruth Mott Foundation, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, and the Flinn Foundation, to the Genesee County Health Department to put the unit into operation.

Since the mobile mental health unit's arrival, the Flint Health Department has seen the great impact it has had on the Flint community. Many locals have expressed deep gratitude for the unit and the well-trained local Flint staff who provide the mental health services.

OFL and CMF's collaboration and their ability to quickly connect philanthropic and governmental partners facilitated the City of Flint's ability to meet the mental health needs of its residents in the wake of the Flint Water Crisis.

OFL's Key Roles in Bringing Mental Health Resources to Flint Residents

- ▶ Engaging in strategic collaboration to identify important public and private partners in providing vital crisis relief resources to Flint residents
- ▶ Bringing public and private sectors together to deliver, restore, and launch the operation of a mobile mental health unit in Flint in the wake of the Water Crisis