



news release

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The Wellmark Foundation Funds 10 Health Improvement Projects in Iowa and South Dakota

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Wellmark Foundation funded 10 health improvement grants in Iowa and South Dakota totaling \$574,147 at its recent board of directors meeting. Organizations receiving grants in the designated health priority areas include:

Depression

- The National Catholic Rural Life Conference in Des Moines received a \$28,660 grant to develop a depression education program in rural central Iowa. A mini-grant from the Foundation in 2006 funded the planning process for the program, which will equip individuals to identify depression, intervene when needed and access services in their community.
- The University of Iowa Foundation received \$88,410 in grant funds to develop a depression training program for nurses working with older adults in Iowa. The program seeks to improve the quality of life of older adults through improved education of nurses who care for them.

Diabetes

- The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Foundation in Cedar Falls will use a \$45,788 grant to pilot a diabetes education and prevention program in Black Hawk County. The program will work to improve the health-related behaviors and health status of residents with diabetes or at risk for developing the disease.
- Van Buren County in Keosauqua received a \$46,143 grant to develop a community-wide diabetes education, prevention and support program. The program will strive to educate residents about the signs and symptoms of diabetes and to establish a free health screening program.
- A \$35,300 grant will allow the YMCA of Greater Des Moines to expand a diabetes education and prevention program for children to the South Suburban YMCA. The program, which was funded in part through a previous Wellmark Foundation mini-grant, has been successful at the Riverfront YMCA and John R. Grubb YMCA in Des Moines.

Health Literacy

- The Iowa Health Foundation in Des Moines will use \$87,200 in grant funds to create a health literacy staff development guidebook for health care organizations. Various health care professionals will use the guidebook in efforts to increase the health literacy of their clients.
- Black Hills State University in Spearfish, S.D., received a \$62,381 grant to implement a health literacy assessment and improvement project for members of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. The project will strive to improve health outcomes among tribal members with diabetes.
- A \$67,250 grant will allow Sanford Health Foundation in Sioux Falls, S.D., to create a coordinated health education curriculum for use in South Dakota schools. The curriculum will be piloted in cooperation with the Brandon Valley School District at Valley Spring Elementary School.
- The Sioux Falls School District in Sioux Falls, S.D., received a \$65,000 grant to implement a health literacy education project to improve the health literacy of 450 elementary students and their families. The project will pilot the curriculum, which focuses on nutrition, oral health, mental health, immunizations and safety, at Hawthorne Elementary School.
- A \$48,015 grant will allow the University of South Dakota to implement a nutrition education project for individuals with developmental disabilities who have diabetes or are at risk for developing the disease. The project will develop nutrition education materials with appropriate readability and literacy levels to enable these individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided nearly \$12 million to fund 350 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$574,147 this cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation collaborates with non-profit and governmental organizations in Iowa and South Dakota to build healthier communities,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “We are happy to support these comprehensive projects that will positively impact the health outcomes of many individuals and communities in Iowa and South Dakota,” says McGarvey.

The Wellmark Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation created by Wellmark, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Visit The Wellmark Foundation's Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation for a list of grant recipients and grant application instructions. Applications for the next round of community responsive grants are due June 19, 2007. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and The Wellmark Foundation are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.