



NEWS RELEASE

Jan7Merck Foundation Launches Five-Year Initiative to Improve Diabetes Care for Vulnerable and Underserved U.S. Communities

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The Merck Foundation (the Foundation) has launched a five-year initiative: **Bridging the Gap: Reducing Disparities in Diabetes Care** (Bridging the Gap) to help improve diabetes care and health outcomes for vulnerable and underserved populations in the United States.

With \$16 million in funding from the Foundation over five years, Bridging the Gap aims to foster comprehensive approaches that bring together high-quality medical care with services and resources drawn from outside of the health care system to address the many factors that influence diabetes outcomes, such as access to healthy foods and safe places for physical activity.

The Foundation has selected the following organizations as Bridging the Gap program grantees.

- **Alameda County Public Health Department** (Oakland, Calif.)
- **Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics** (Orofino, Idaho)
- **La Clínica del Pueblo** (Washington, D.C.)
- **Marshall University** (Huntington, W.Va.)
- **Minneapolis Health Department** (Minneapolis, Minn.)
- **Providence St. Joseph Health** (Renton, Wash.)
- **Trenton Health Team** (Trenton, N.J.)
- **Western Maryland Health System** (Cumberland, Md.)

The University of Chicago (Chicago) will serve as the National Program Office for Bridging the Gap. In this capacity, it will support the program grantees' efforts and provide leadership in building a national public-private partnership to help reduce disparities in diabetes care.

"We need to look beyond the usual health care solutions to address the growing burden of diabetes, especially among vulnerable populations in the United States," says Julie L. Gerberding, chief patient officer, Merck and chief executive officer, Merck Foundation. "Through Bridging the Gap, we are pleased to bring together these eight diverse organizations, and look forward to leveraging their expertise to help more people effectively manage their diabetes and improve their overall health."

Bridging the Gap program grantees will implement multifaceted, evidence-based programs to:

- Build sustainable partnerships between the health care sector and other sectors to address the medical and social and environmental factors that influence health
- Redesign health care systems, particularly primary care, to improve the delivery of diabetes care for vulnerable and underserved populations
- Improve health outcomes for individuals with type 2 diabetes through measures such as better blood sugar and lipid control

The Foundation will support a comprehensive evaluation to assess the impact of Bridging the Gap. A key goal will be to identify and promote best practices in primary care transformation and innovative multi-sectoral strategies that help vulnerable and underserved communities gain access to high-quality diabetes care.

Improving Access to Care

Merck is committed to discovering smart, sustainable ways to expand global access to health care and, through the Merck Foundation, supports innovative partnerships and approaches to improve the health of vulnerable and underserved populations. The new Bridging the Gap initiative follows other recent investments by the Foundation to reduce health disparities and improve access to high-quality health care, such as the \$15 million, five-year **Alliance to Advance Patient-Centered Cancer Care** announced earlier this year.

About the Merck Foundation

The Merck Foundation is a U.S.-based, private charitable foundation. Established in 1957 by Merck, a leading global biopharmaceutical company, the Foundation is funded entirely by the company and is Merck's chief source of funding support to qualified non-profit charitable organizations. Since its inception, the Merck Foundation has contributed more than \$870 million to support important initiatives that address societal needs and are consistent

with Merck's overall mission of inventing for life by bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases. For more information, visit www.merckgiving.com.

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