A YEAR IN REVIEW: JULY 2017- JUNE 2018

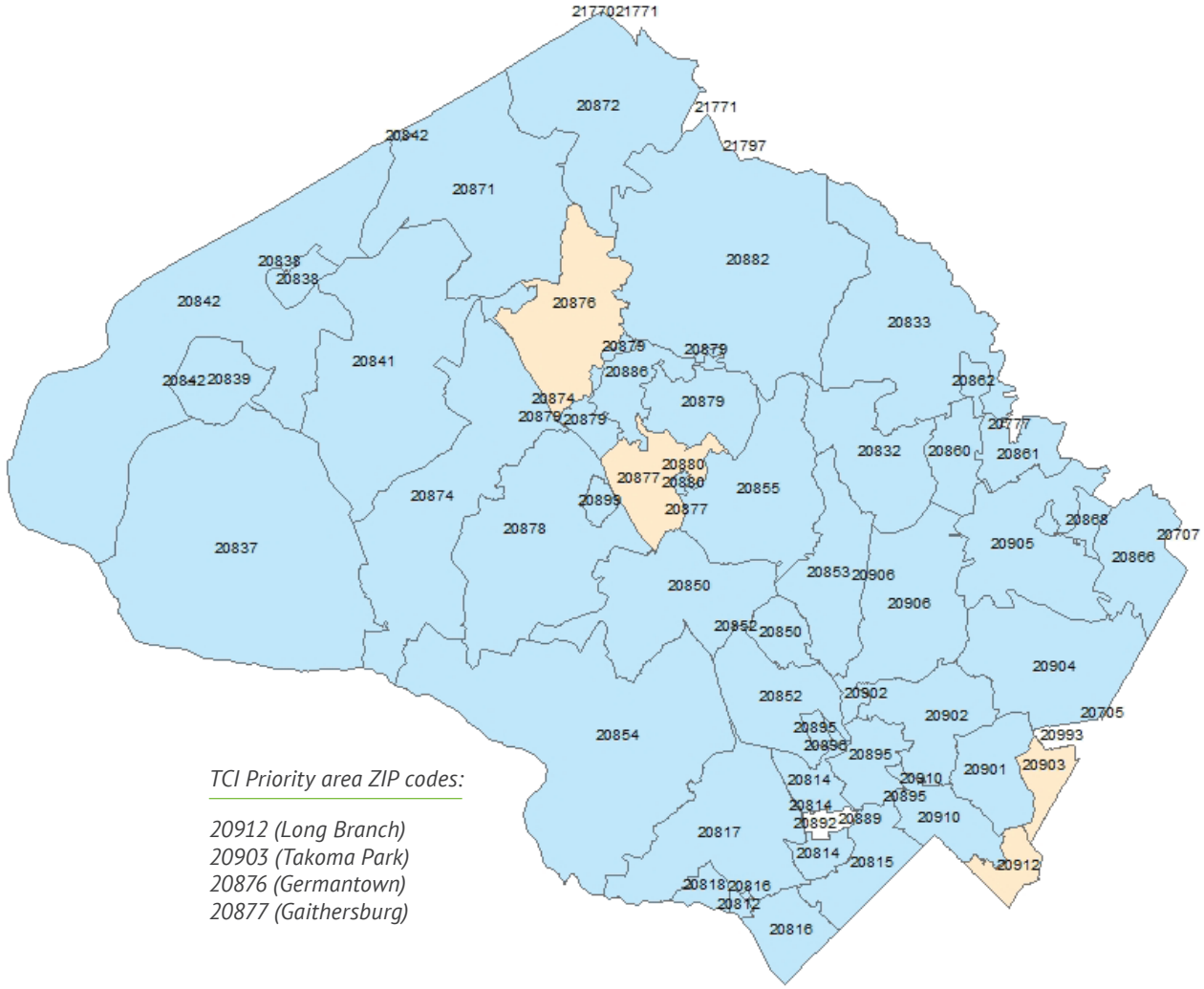
HEALTHY MONTGOMERY TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

healthy montgomery
Transforming Communities Initiative

2016 MARKED THE LAUNCH OF AN EXCITING NEW FUNDING MODEL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE – HEALTHY MONTGOMERY TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (TCI). DESIGNED TO ADVANCE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOCUSED ON HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, TCI AIMS TO IMPACT CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND TOBACCO-FREE LIVING THROUGH POLICY, SYSTEM, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE STRATEGIES.

TCI is a collaborative between the Institute for Public Health Innovation, Trinity Health member Holy Cross Health, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee, and the Eat Well Be Active (EWBA) Partnership. It is funded nationally by Trinity Health, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic healthcare delivery systems in the nation.

Since its inception, TCI has hosted working groups with members of the EWBA Partnership and issued a Request for Proposals to support the implementation of several key strategies which include school wellness, tobacco prevention, community food access, safe routes to schools, and early childcare nutrition standards in four priority areas in the state of Maryland: GAITHERSBURG, GERMANTOWN, LONG BRANCH AND TAKOMA PARK.



TCI Priority area ZIP codes:

20912 (Long Branch)
20903 (Takoma Park)
20876 (Germantown)
20877 (Gaithersburg)

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY HEALTH

1

In 2016, Trinity Health selected Montgomery County, Maryland to receive TCI funding to support policy, system, and environmental change strategies aimed at reducing obesity, promoting tobacco-free living, and improving community health. The initiative is supported by a local coalition, the Eat Well Be Active (EWBA) Coordinating Committee. EWBA was formed in 2014 and is part of a broader community health improvement project in Montgomery County, called Healthy Montgomery. TCI funding supports the implementation of the Healthy Montgomery Community Health Improvement Plan and the EWBA coalition serves as its primary collaborative working group.

2 HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

GOAL

Reduce food insecurity in Montgomery County, Maryland by creating system-level changes in the coordination and delivery of food assistance resources, and by increasing access to healthy food for our most vulnerable communities.

"BY COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, WE'RE ABLE TO CONNECT THOSE SEEKING FOOD ASSISTANCE WITH RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS THAT CAN SUPPORT THEM, AS WELL AS STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION AND RESOURCE SHARING AMONG THE PROVIDERS THEMSELVES. THE RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS HAVE BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF THIS WORK."

Heather Bruskin
Executive Director at Montgomery County Food Council

COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS: IMPLEMENTING THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD SECURITY PLAN

The Montgomery County Food Council is addressing food insecurity and obesity in Montgomery County through the implementation of the Montgomery County Food Security Plan (FSP). The FSP outlines strategies and recommendations for reducing food insecure individuals in the County through coordinated efforts of community nonprofits, businesses, and agency partners. Since joining the TCI partnership in July 2017, the Montgomery County Food Council has:

- Convened, collaborated, and surveyed 88 partners representing 56 organizations through the Food Recovery and Access and Working Group and its initiatives to improve the accessibility of food assistance resources; identify gaps in services; and build the capacity of the food assistance providers through technical training and best practice exchange.
- Increased outreach, awareness and information sharing of the availability of Federal, State and County food assistance benefits.
- Established system-wide metrics to enhance data collection, monitoring, and tracking of the County's food security resources.
- Collaborated with Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and CountyStat to launch FoodStat, a new online platform compiling over 80 datasets to quantify and visually display food access and correlated data in the County.
- Partnered with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services on the FSP Year One Update and presented findings to the County Council to sustain and expand budget allocations for hunger relief efforts in the County, including a new $30,000 capacity building County mini-grant program for food assistance providers in FY19.
- Created the Food Assistance Resource Directory, which provides service information for 77 food assistance programs in the County, better connects people seeking food assistance services with appropriate County resources, and facilitates cross-sector client referrals to housing, healthcare and workforce development providers to organizations providing food assistance.

COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS: REDUCING BARRIERS TO HEALTHY FOOD THROUGH FOOD IS MEDICINE

TCI funded the Primary Care Coalition and a group of community partners to implement the "Food is Medicine Program," a systems approach to food security screening and referral between safety-net health care clinics and food and nutrition service providers. Accomplishments include:

- Implemented food security screening and referral among all newly enrolled Care for Kids families and Montgomery Cares patients at three participating clinics in Montgomery County.
- Facilitated culturally competent and linguistically appropriate care coordination to all patients screened as food insecure. Integrated food assistance and nutrition education providers with safety-net health care providers through community-based care coordination.
- Developed system change with buy-in and funding commitments from the Business Leaders Fighting Hunger initiative to expand the program to additional participating clinics.
- By June 2018, 76% of patients screened as food insecure in the targeted geographic areas were receiving follow-up and care coordination to food assistance and nutrition education.
- The program is showing positive results for improving client's healthy eating habits:
  - 42% of participants receiving care coordination report eating more fruits or vegetables.
  - Participants who previously reported eating fast food more than once a week dropped from 40% to 15%.
  - The percentage of participants who reported regularly drinking soda or sweet tea declined from 26% to 9%.

"FOOD IS MEDICINE IS GETTING A LOT OF BUY-IN AND INTEREST FROM OTHER PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS. IT'S APPARENT THAT THIS MODEL IS A CATALYST FOR HOW SAFETY NET HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS CAN EMBED FOOD INSECURITY SCREENING QUESTIONS INTO MEDICAL RECORDS AND REFERRAL PROCESSES."

Ben Turner
Director of Coverage & Connections, Primary Care Coalition

3 TOBACCO-FREE LIVING

GOAL

Increase the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21 to reduce tobacco use among youth and young adults.

"TOBACCO 21 MARYLAND SAW SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF A NETWORK OF PARTNERS AND ENGAGED YOUTH. YOUTH ACTIVISM HAS HAD SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DUE TO THE STUDENT'S VISIBILITY AND ABILITY TO ARTICULATE THE CAMPAIGN GOALS TO THE PUBLIC AND KEY LEGISLATORS."

Laura Hale
Director of Government Relations at the American Lung Association

Through the TCI, the American Lung Association is promoting tobacco-free living in Maryland. The American Lung Association is working with partners from American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and the American Heart Association, among other local and national organizations, to form the Maryland Tobacco 21 campaign. The campaign aims to increase the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21 to reduce tobacco use among youth and young adults.

Accomplishments included:

- Launched in-person and web-based training, education, and outreach for youth and adult Tobacco 21 advocacy.
- Led a strategic communications campaign through coordinated alerts, op-eds, and social media.
- Received local and national media attention through online and print publications.
- Engaged and trained 61 youth to advocate for Tobacco 21, including 10 high school youth testimonies at six Senate Hearings and four House Hearings.
- Obtained support from key political advocates and including a sponsor in the House and Senate.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL 4

GOAL

Increase the number of students in priority communities who walk or bike to school.

"WE'RE EXCITED TO BE PART OF THIS GROWING PARTNERSHIP THAT IS HELPING CONNECT INITIATIVES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY - WE'VE CONTINUED TO EXPAND OUR NETWORKS AND CONNECT TO PARTNERS AT MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHO HOLD A SIMILAR MISSION TO CREATE HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES."

John Hoober
Capital Projects Manager at Montgomery County Department of Transportation

The Safe Routes to School strategy seeks to increase the number of students in Montgomery County who walk or bike to school. Through a partnership with The Montgomery County Department of Transportation, TCI is conducting an assessment on Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) within the County. Additionally, TCI is collaborating with the Department of Transportation to: develop and promote user-friendly SRTS maps for schools, increase the number of SRTS bicycle and pedestrian educational and safety trainings in priority ZIP codes, and increase collaboration for sustainability between Montgomery County Public Schools and the Department of Transportation for future SRTS programming. Accomplishments include:

- Completed seven assessments, three within TCI priority area schools.
- Developed a SRTS map template to expand assessment and maps of SRTS in all TCI priority areas.
- Coordinated with Montgomery County Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, and other key stakeholders and community members to expand these efforts across the county.

5 SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

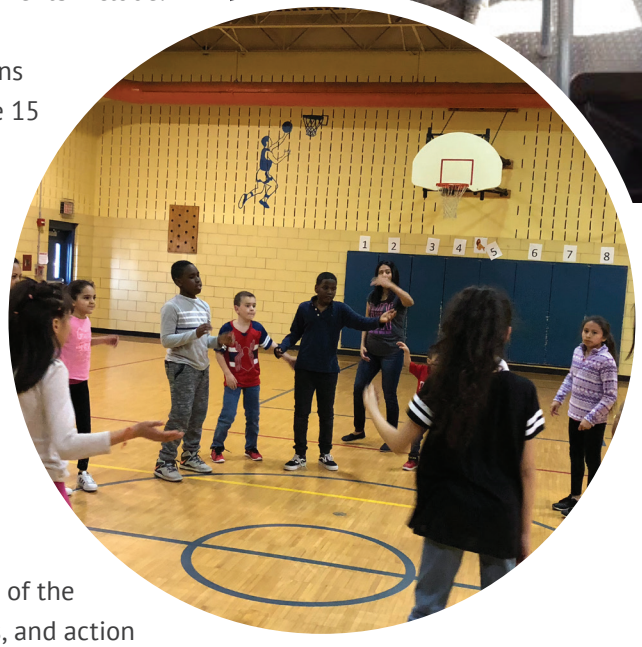
GOAL

Create and maintain healthy school environments by increasing school wellness policy implementation through the formation of local school wellness councils.

"THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TCI HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MORE WIDESPREAD IMPLEMENTATION AND ADOPTION OF SCHOOL WELLNESS COUNCILS THROUGHOUT MONTGOMERY COUNTY. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BOTH ENHANCE HEALTHIER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE COUNTY WHILE ALSO ESTABLISHING BEST PRACTICES THAT CAN BE SHARED THROUGHOUT OUR NATION."

Marla Caplon
Director of Student Wellness at Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are working with TCI to implement Local School Wellness Councils (LSWCs). The pilot program kicked off during the 2017-2018 school year at 15 elementary schools within TCI priority communities. These schools were provided with resources on school wellness policy implementation, including promising practices and lessons learned. Accomplishments include:



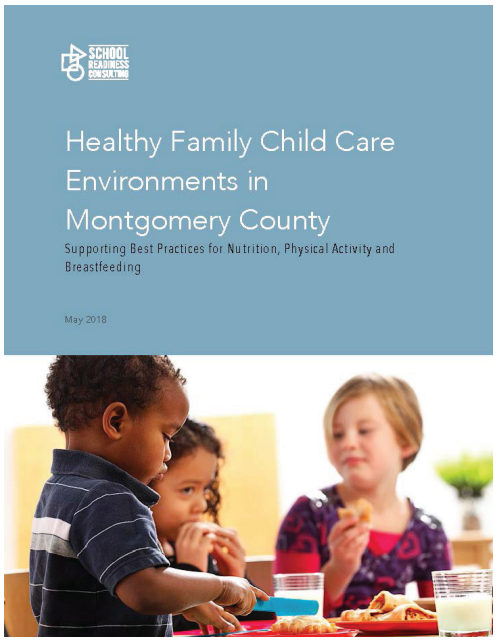
- Trained 51 Wellness Champions and LSWC personnel from the 15 pilot schools.
- Supported the development of MCPS Wellness Webpage.
- Created a monthly newsletter for LSWCs highlighting relevant information, best practices, and available resources to schools.
- Funded implementation activities at 15 pilot schools based on the identified needs of the school, a goal-setting process, and action planning. School-based implementation activities were related to mindfulness, organized recess, garden development, increased physical activity, increased water consumption, attention to nutrition, and restorative justice.
- Successfully implemented healthy eating and physical activity projects such as snack bins, healthy tastings, exercise initiatives, mindfulness exercises, and organized play.
- With the support of the TCI funded School Wellness Coordinator, six schools applied for and received $1,000 in mini-grant funding from the Action for Healthy Kids.
- Leveraged match funding from the Healthcare Initiative Foundation and Maryland Community Health Resources Commission.

6 NUTRITION STANDARDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

GOAL

Ensure that child care centers in TCI priority areas promote proper nutrition and developmentally appropriate practices.

IPHI and School Readiness Consulting conducted a formative assessment among family child care providers, County leadership, and nonprofits to identify the appropriate policy, system and environmental change needed to support compliance with Maryland's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Act. The six-month assessment included a landscape analysis, key informant interviews, and focus groups among family child care providers, County leaders, policymakers and non-profit organizations supporting the local child care system. Findings of the assessment were published in *"Healthy Family Child Care Environments in Montgomery County: Supporting Best Practices for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Breastfeeding."* The report contains recommendations and promising practices to support family child care providers in improving the conditions in which they work to establish healthy environments for young children. The assessment builds upon the aim of the 2015 strategic plan developed by the Child Care Workgroup of the EWBA Partnership. The goal of the strategic plan was to leverage and provide resources that assist childcare centers to adhere to the Maryland Child Care Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Act, which requires licensed child care facilities in Maryland to limit sugary beverages, support breastfeeding mothers, and limit screen time for children in their care. The strategic plan was developed as part of the County's Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) process through which obesity and chronic disease prevention are priority areas of focus.



"THE REPORT WAS A FIRST STEP TO UNDERSTAND RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROMISING PRACTICES TO SUPPORT FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THEY WORK TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. THESE FINDINGS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE THESE CONVERSATIONS AND DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES TO CREATE SAFER AND HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENTS FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHILDREN."

Evelyn Kelly
Program Director, Healthy Montgomery TCI

7 IN CLOSING

Thanks to our many community partners, this has been a pivotal year for launching and implementing a number of TCI strategies. We look forward to building on these successes to reduce childhood obesity, encourage tobacco-free living and shine a spotlight on efforts to promote health and well-being in our communities.

THIS SUMMARY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT OF
TRINITY HEALTH'S TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE AND HOLY CROSS HEATH.

HOLY CROSS HEALTH
A Member of Trinity Health

Trinity Health
Livonia, MI

Institute for Public Health Innovation

healthy montgomery
Transforming Communities Initiative

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
17 76
MARYLAND

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD COUNCIL

primary care coalition

MCDOT
Montgomery County Department of Transportation

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.

THE HEALTHY MONTGOMERY TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Healthy Montgomery Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI) is a partnership between the Institute for Public Health Innovation, Holy Cross Health, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee, the Eat Well Be Active Partnership, and numerous other community and government partners. It is a multi-year effort focused on numerous public health strategies, including obesity prevention. TCI is funded nationally by Trinity Health, one of the country's largest healthcare systems. Funding is also provided by the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, and the Healthcare Initiative Foundation.

For more information on the Healthy Montgomery Transforming Communities Initiative, please visit us online at **www.institutephi.org/healthymontgomerytci** or email **Evelyn Kelly** at **Ekelly@institutephi.org**.

healthy montgomery
Transforming Communities Initiative