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***Black Men's Health Clinic & Harvard's Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation Empower
Rural Communities with Local Health Unit Resource***

MEDIA: COORDINATING COMMUNITY RESOURCES TO ADDRESS HEALTH DISPARITIES
Seven Key Questions for Advancing an Initiative with Local Government

MANOR, TX (AUSTIN AREA METROPLEX) – The Black Men's Health Clinic® (BMHC) and Harvard's Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI), with the support of the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, have published a guide focused on empowering rural communities to obtain the tailored health resources most needed from their local government entities.

With rural governments often relying on larger city or county health departments for publicly funded medical and non-medical determinants of health services. Therefore, BMHC created resources like the [Coordinating Resources to Address Health Disparities—Seven Key Questions for Advancing an Initiative with Local Government](#) and [Guide for Health Unit Ordinance Considerations](#) to serve as a framework for local health initiatives to organize officially under a rural municipality and effectively advance on goals when health department funding requirements by state and federal law are not sustainable. “There is so much potential power in collaboration,” said Rachel Landauer, Clinical Instructor at the Harvard Law School (HLS) Health Law and Policy Clinic, where she works with partners to advocate for health care policy and practice reform. “We developed this resource with an eye on harnessing that potential: What are the key legal, policy, and operational elements of an effective initiative? How can we nudge conversations between stakeholders in a productive direction? And what other resources exist for folks to leverage and build on? The final product addresses each of these spheres.”

This guide is a resource from the overarching project launched in October of 2023 through funding by the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation. “At the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, we envision a world where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their optimal health,” shared Catharine Grimes, President of the BMS Foundation. “We strive through our grantee partnerships to improve access to healthcare for underserved populations in the geographies where we are focused. Through their local health unit resource initiative, The Black Men's Health Clinic and Harvard's Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation have shown a strong commitment to communities lacking adequate resources, education, and healthcare access. We are proud to provide support for their impactful work as they seek to bring out lasting change in areas that need it most.” Having discussed focusing the grant's effort on the City of Manor, BMHC talks led by Dr. Larry Wallace Jr., BMHC Senior Director of Operations, resulted in the following [City of Manor Approved Agenda Item – In Support of Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Project](#).

Through the support of University of Texas at Austin (UT) research students, Rishit Yokananth and En-Yu Li, throughout 2024 the Black Men's Health Clinic produced three City of Manor-specific reports focusing on the community's (a) health rates per published reports; (b) health programs and services per allocated resources; and (c) health policies and agreements established by City Council to provide greater awareness on the historical actions, funding, and placement of public health-oriented resources and services throughout the Manor area. View the [Combined Manor Community Health Reports](#) at the link. As part of this project, Austin Community College District (ACC) worked with the Black Men's Health Clinic on a

Community Health Survey focused on understanding medical service needs (primary, specialty, and behavioral health) from the community members’ perspective.

"These experiences are crucial to our students’ learning journeys. They’re embedded in our community, working hands-on with patients and learning directly from our healthcare community partners. By the time they finish the program, they have a deeper understanding of health resources, community engagement, and essential health services,” says Dr. Nina Almasy, Associate Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences. “We’re excited to build on this successful partnership and take our efforts to the next level, expanding opportunities for students to make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve."

As of this month, this effort has transitioned into its next stage with the recent institutional review board approval at ACC, enhancing the project’s ethical and regulatory compliance, data credibility, and participation protection, enabling greater opportunity for funding eligibility to support other rural communities seeking similar support. Larry Wallace Sr., Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Black Men's Health Clinic, expressed the appreciation of support as BMHC served as project lead for this comprehensive study, which identifies existing health care services for Manor, the fourth largest city in Travis County. He stated how “the goal of this study is to better understand the health status and recommend strategies to improve access for all residents, especially those in underserved groups. A dedicated health unit in rural communities like Manor could greatly enhance the coordination and delivery of healthcare services.”

ABOUT Harvard’s Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation

The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI) advocates for legal, regulatory, and policy reforms in health and food systems, with a focus on the health, public health, and food needs of systemically marginalized individuals. CHLPI’s broad range of initiatives aims to expand access to high-quality health care and nutritious, affordable food; to reduce health- and food-related disparities; to develop community advocacy capacity; and to promote more equitable, sustainable, and effective health care and food systems.

Website: <https://chlpi.org/>

ABOUT Bristol Myers Squibb

The Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, an independent charitable organization, works to improve global health by empowering local communities and health systems to create lasting impact in regions of the world that are underserved and heavily burdened. The BMS Foundation embraces innovative approaches that have the potential to reshape healthcare systems by engaging in partnerships that build capacity in the geographies where they focus. Through these strategic partnerships, the BMS Foundation can transform how care is delivered and help to ensure improved health now and in the future.

Website: <https://www.bms.com/about-us/responsibility/bristol-myers-squibb-foundation.html>

About Austin Community College

Celebrating over 50 years of service as of 2023, ACC is a nationally recognized two-year college serving Central Texas. The college is focused on student success and building brighter futures through upward mobility. Through collaborative partnerships and innovative learning programs, ACC provides affordable, flexible pathways to help everyone reach their education goals, learn new job skills, or advance their career. ACC’s Health Sciences Division combines the highest quality instruction with clinical experience in both hospital and community settings.

Website: [Austin Community College District](#)

ABOUT the Black Men’s Health Clinic®

Mission: BMHC exists to lower barriers to successful physical, behavioral, and social determinant care by removing burdens men of color commonly experience, such as scheduling, finances, and coordination between providers (at no additional cost to clients) and elevating them to a priority by providing resources designed to best aid them.

Vision: A no-wrong-door safety-net program addressing disparities through effective strategies focused on decreasing mortality and morbidity rates among men of color via improved quality of life, self-health maintenance, and family lifestyle at no additional cost to clients.

Value Statement: Ensuring the longevity of life by making physical, behavioral, and social care more accessible in underserved and underrepresented communities while transforming and removing stigmas regarding typical healthcare systems into positive life-changing experiences.

Website: <https://blackmenshealthclinic.org/>

The Black Men’s Health Clinic ~ Care You Can Trust

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