

# HEALTH HOPE OPPORTUNITY

SUMMER 2025

## Medicaid Changes Impact Cherry Health and Our Patients

With passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) Act, major Medicaid changes are coming that will significantly affect Cherry Health and the 53% of our patients who depend on Medicaid. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) operating on tight margins, we rely on Medicaid reimbursements to serve our communities. Any loss in patient coverage could threaten our ability to provide care.

**To those who advocated with us — thank you!** While the final outcome was not what we had hoped for, we are now working toward the long-term implementation of this legislation. With \$1 trillion in federal spending to be cut over the next decade from Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for lower-income Americans, we will likely not know the full extent of its impact for another two years. Here are the key impacts facing our patients on which we are currently focused:

### Frequent Eligibility Checks

Medicaid recipients will face redeterminations every six months, risking coverage loss due to missed paperwork even for those who qualify for exemptions.

### Work Requirements

Many must now report 80+ hours per month of work, school, or volunteering. While exemptions exist, timely documentation is essential to maintaining coverage.

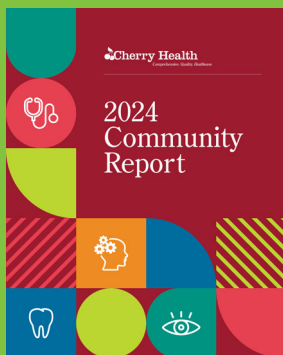
### Technology Barriers

Meeting new requirements demands reliable access to phones and internet, which are unavailable to some. Losing the support of our AmeriCorps members, previously vital for enrollment help, worsens this challenge.



Cherry Health remains steadfast in our commitment to the communities we serve. We are focused on helping individuals and families navigate the new landscape and remain committed to ensuring access to care, reducing disparities, and supporting healthier communities. We thank you for your unwavering support and advocacy. We will continue to keep you informed.

2024  
Community  
Report  
*Now Available*



View online at [bit.ly/24CHReport](https://bit.ly/24CHReport)  
or scan the QR code.



# Affordable Housing: Cherry Health Steps In



Construction has officially begun on Shea Ravines, Cherry Health's first step toward addressing the affordable housing shortage in West Michigan! Located next to our Wyoming Community Health Center, the two-building development will feature 112 affordable apartments, with completion of phase 1 expected in fall 2026.

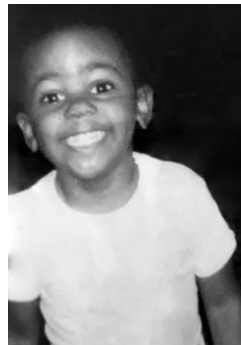
Each building includes 40 one-bedroom and 16 two-bedroom units for individuals earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). Upon completion, 20 Permanent Supportive Housing units will be set aside for those exiting homelessness. In partnership with Woda Cooper, Cherry Health is a part owner of this impactful project — without financial investment — positioning us to benefit the community for years to come. Shea Ravines represents more than housing. It is a step toward hope, stability, and opportunity.

## Where Are They Now? Cherry Health Pediatric Stories

### Demetrius Pittman

Demetrius Pittman's young mother wanted what was best for her son. She was without the support of her family and knew that she needed to create a better life for herself and Demetrius. With strength, tenacity, and determination, she moved them from Detroit to Grand Rapids, where there were people on whom she could rely. She was equipped with the courage to ask for and accept the help offered. There, she and Demetrius moved from place to place amongst friends' homes and faced significant challenges finding stable housing. While his mother pursued her own education, Demetrius attended Alger Elementary in Grand Rapids.

Despite sleepless nights and worries, healthcare was not a concern thanks to Cherry Health. As a child, Demetrius saw a pediatrician at Cherry Street Health Center whom he and his mother liked very much. Even at that young age, Demetrius knew that feeling seen, heard, and cared for was how it was supposed to be. His visits to his doctor made him feel all of those things. Demetrius went on to earn a BA in Business Leadership from Cornerstone University and his MBA in Human Resource Management from Central Michigan University. It was evident that Cherry Health had a lasting impact on him.



Demetrius  
as a Cherry Health  
pediatric patient.



Demetrius Pittman, Chief People Officer, Cherry Health.

**“Even when I was very young, I noticed and loved how Cherry Health was ingrained in the community, and I saw first-hand that no one was ever turned away or made to feel unwelcome. No one was judged. I knew that, in my professional life, I wanted to be involved with an organization that was very community focused, where the doors are always open for everyone.”**



At Cherry Health, Demetrius found that community focus and so much more. In his role as Chief People Officer, Demetrius is passionate about creating an environment where each of the nearly 700 team members feel valued and motivated to reach their full potential. He also finds it important that, in his personal life, he can support those in need within his local community through volunteerism.

Cherry Health helped equip Demetrius in his early years with tools needed for his future success: the understanding that access to quality, affordable, equitable healthcare is of great importance for all.



### Hanokh Hiwale

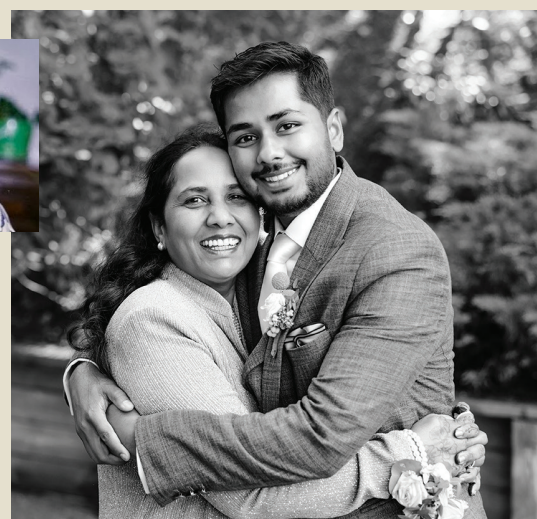
When Hanokh was a child, he became a Cherry Health patient. His family moved from India to Grand Rapids so his father could attend seminary. His mother learned quickly, from other seminary spouses, that Cherry Health was the best place to find health and wellness care. She knew that the sliding scale fee would make quality care affordable.

While Hanokh was in high school, his parents returned to India while he remained in Grand Rapids to complete his high school education and attend college. Before returning to India, Hanokh's mother gave him a very important piece of advice. She told him, "Continue seeking care at Cherry Health and always bring your Form I-20 (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status) and passport with you to appointments." She knew that Cherry Health would provide excellent care, but also would regularly schedule and remind him of well-care check-ups through the years. This had great value for a family separated by nearly 8,000 miles.

Hanokh describes receiving fantastic vision and dental care. Seeing the same dental hygienist for 4-5 years, he proudly shared that he never had a cavity. As important as the dental care he received, he marvels at how the hygienist always remembered everything about him from visit to visit. She would ask questions about events he had shared that had been upcoming at his last visit, truly making him feel seen and valued. He believes that Cherry Health really cared for him and knew who he was.



Hanokh as a Cherry Health pediatric patient.



Hanokh Hiwale, Practice Administrator, Restoration Eye Care, shares a hug with his mother.

Armed with a BS in kinesiology from Calvin University and an MBA from Cornerstone University, Hanokh is now a Practice Administrator at Restoration Eye Care in Wyoming, MI. He is part of a collaborative team where he performs ophthalmic tech responsibilities in addition to his practice management work.

Hanokh and his wife plan to stay in the community, and he hopes to someday have as meaningful an impact on others as Cherry Health had on him.

**"I'd like to serve the community and replicate the service I received as a patient at Cherry Health."**



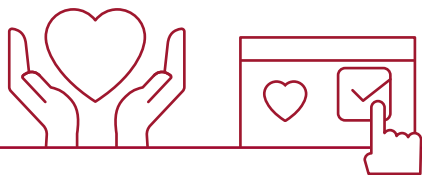
# Compassion in Action



Thanks to donor generosity, we can offer temporary emergency assistance and support for our team members as they perform their work caring for others every day. The following are reminders of how a small gesture to bridge a critical gap can have a lasting impact on someone's life.

After their car suddenly broke down, without public transportation available near home, a Cherry Health team member had no choice but to rent a vehicle in order to get to work. That unexpected expense quickly piled up, stretching the budget beyond its limit. Turned down for any community assistance, struggling to make ends meet, and falling slightly behind in rent, our team member feared losing ground even further. Cherry Health's Blue Butterfly Fund was able to offer an emergency grant to ease the burden and allow our team member to stay afloat while working toward a more stable solution.

As winter approached, one Cherry Health team member faced a harsh reality: their home heating supply was at risk. After a challenging year marked by financial strain, savings were exhausted and there was no longer a safety net on which to rely. The immediate issue was the propane company's requirement of full prepayment for refill — an unfortunate consequence of having fallen behind on payments the previous year. Thanks to the Blue Butterfly Fund, the propane tank was filled before winter. This support offered a chance to regain balance and break what had begun to feel like a relentless cycle of falling behind.



You can donate directly to the Blue Butterfly Fund by going to [cherryhealth.org/donate](https://cherryhealth.org/donate) or texting [cherrycares](https://cherrycares.com) to **50155** and designating your gift on the pull-down menu.

## Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)



**Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from a traditional IRA** are a terrific tax-advantaged method of donating if you are 70 1/2 or older. Such gifts qualify towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) while avoiding income tax and directly impacting the mission you value. Because Cherry Health Foundation is a supporting organization of Cherry Health, IRS rules state that **QCDs must be made payable to Cherry Street Services, Inc.** (DBA Cherry Health; EIN 38-2853534). Please inform your charitable giving advisor of this requirement.



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