

HEALTH HOPE OPPORTUNITY

SPRING 2026




From the Desk of President & CEO Tasha Blackmon


“Every door is the right door, and together, we are opening more doors to care, compassion, and hope for the neighbors we serve.”

— Tasha Blackmon

As we step into 2026, I feel strong senses of both optimism and urgency about what lies before us. Health care is facing one of the most challenging moments in recent history. Costs are rising, workforce shortages continue, and too many families still struggle to access the care they need. Yet moments like this also invite innovation, creativity, and a renewed commitment to the people we serve.

 **At Cherry Health, a principal idea is guiding our work: every door is the right door.**

Navigating health care can often feel overwhelming. Many people arrive with one immediate need, whether it is a medical concern, a dental appointment, or help with behavioral health. But that first visit should never be the end of the story. Instead, it should be the beginning of a connection to a full range of care that can support their health and well-being.

 **At Cherry Health, when one door opens, many others become available.**

Our teams work together so that however someone comes to us (through a clinic, a school-based health center, a behavioral health visit, or a conversation with a Community Health Worker), their first step opens the door to true comprehensive care.

Achieving this vision requires innovation, dedication, and partnership.

That partnership includes **you**. The generosity of our donors helps Cherry Health invest in new approaches, expand access to care, and meet the evolving needs of our communities. Your support fuels the ideas and solutions that make moments of transformation possible.

Double Your Impact

Did you know that many employers will match your donation to Cherry Health Foundation?

 To find out if your company offers this opportunity, contact your employer's human resources department.

If your gift is eligible for a match by your employer, please follow their process and alert us to the incoming matching gift.

For questions, please email foundation@cherryhealth.com or call 616.965.8254.

So Much More Than Paperwork



Health Insurance Assistance Program

At Cherry Health, a small but mighty team in the Health Insurance Assistance (HIA) program works every day with patients to navigate the complicated systems that can determine whether they can access care.

Last year, our staff helped 2,540 community members determine their eligibility for care through Medicaid, Medicare, the Health Insurance Marketplace, or our Sliding Fee program. That is a 48% increase from the prior year. Our staff in HIA have a simple but powerful role: ensure that people have access to the care they need.

A poll by KFF (formerly the Kaiser Family Foundation) found that two-thirds of Americans worry about the cost of health care for themselves and their families — ranking above concerns about housing, food, utilities, or gasoline.

Navigating a Changing System

In recent years, the landscape of health coverage has become more difficult and costly to navigate. The Marketplace was created to offer affordable insurance to individuals and families without employer-sponsored coverage. However, premiums more than doubled for over half a million Michiganders when many federal subsidies ended in 2025, putting coverage far out of reach for those with modest incomes.

At the same time, Medicaid eligibility rules are changing significantly. Medicaid now requires frequent renewals that rely on online systems that can be difficult to manage without reliable internet access, transportation, or time off work. Next year, a complicated work requirement will be added to the process. Many patients risk losing coverage simply because the systems are too complex.

That is where our HIA steps in. Katie Bishop, Director of Reimbursement, who oversees the program, explains: “Patients bring in all the letters they receive, hoping that our team can help them understand what to do. Staying covered requires constant work. We have patients who ask

for team members by name because they have built up a level of trust.”

A Powerful Return on Investment

Last year alone, Cherry Health helped complete over 980 insurance applications, securing coverage for 1,693 individuals and family members. That means nearly 1,700 people gained access to doctor visits, dentists, medications, and preventive care they might otherwise have gone without.

The impact is both human and financial.

Insurance coverage allows patients to receive preventive care, manage chronic illnesses, and afford essential medications. It also ensures that care provided by Cherry Health can be reimbursed — allowing our resources to stretch further and reach even more people.

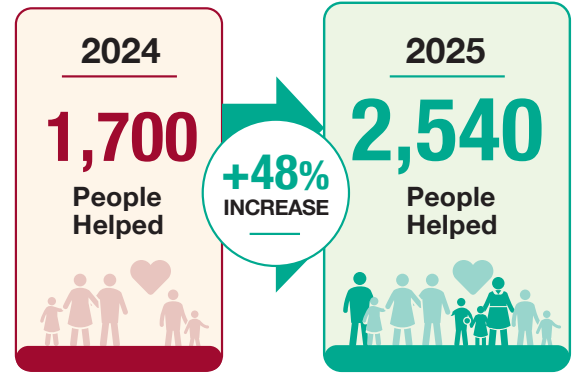
For example, under Medicaid guidelines, Cherry Health receives approximately \$250 per patient visit, though the average visit costs \$401 to provide. If each person enrolled by our team made just one visit for care, that coverage represents nearly \$425,000 in federal funding—reducing the amount that must be covered through other sources, including philanthropy.

Many of these patients live with chronic conditions and return for care several times each year — multiplying the value of that coverage.

In other words, helping patients obtain insurance is not just an act of compassion. It is a critical investment that expands access to care while strengthening Cherry Health's sustainability. Support from generous donors helps ensure that HIA can continue providing this guidance and advocacy — so that thousands of families each year can keep the coverage that protects their health and financial stability.

A single insurance application can unlock access to care, medications, and stability for an entire family. It is one of the most powerful investments we can make — turning guidance and advocacy into healthier lives and sustainable care for our community.

Expanding Access to Care



Meeting Patients Where They Are

When someone becomes uninsured, the consequences can cascade quickly.

Katie explains, “Becoming uninsured creates an avalanche of problems, especially for people who are barely hanging on. A change in health care coverage can quickly lead to unemployment and homelessness.” By helping patients maintain coverage, Cherry Health helps interrupt that cycle before it begins.

When someone loses health insurance, the consequences can spiral quickly — from missed medications to missed work, from illness to instability. Helping someone keep coverage is not just paperwork. It is protection for their health, their livelihood, and their future.

When insurance is not an option, Cherry Health ensures that care remains accessible through our sliding fee program, which adjusts costs based on income and family size. Even this process can be complicated, and staff often step in to help patients complete applications or resolve issues that could otherwise interrupt care.

Sometimes assistance goes beyond insurance. When a family living in an RV struggled to afford both transportation and medical care, a team member located a travel reimbursement resource — freeing up funds so the family could receive care at Cherry Health.

For patients balancing impossible choices, these moments of support make all the difference.



Thanks to the generosity of our partners and donors, Cherry Health can continue ensuring that people do not have to choose between their health and other basic needs.



Get Involved in the Mission!

Give online at cherryhealth.org/donate.
Use the enclosed envelope.

Going the Extra Mile to Transform Lives

Located about 35 miles northeast of Grand Rapids, Cherry Health's Montcalm Area Health Center in Greenville provides vital care to nearly 5,000 individuals each year. While the facility offers a range of services — from pediatrics and primary care to dental, vision, and pharmacy — what truly makes Cherry Health stand out is the dedication of people like Michelle Turley, a Community Health Worker whose deep local knowledge and personal care have made a lasting impact on the community she serves.

"I think of myself as a problem solver," Michelle says. "I work with many people who do not have cell phones, much less internet access. Many do not have personal transportation — a challenge in a town where the transit system consists of a single downtown loop. So many of our community members do not have the things that other people can take for granted."

Michelle says her job is to help however she can. "I sit down with people to complete applications for jobs, food stamps, and Medicaid," she notes. "I help them make medical appointments. I will drop off food from the pantry or prescriptions from our pharmacy. I have helped people get into detox facilities and secured emergency financial support. Just ask me for what you need, and I will figure out a way to do it."

Last year, Christina Oakes' father, a longtime Greenville resident, suffered a stroke. Taking over a parent's finances and medical affairs is often stressful and overwhelming. For Christina, it was especially challenging because she lives 30 miles away and is blind. "Michelle stepped in like a beloved family member to solve so many problems. She connected me to a nonprofit that immediately fixed his frozen pipes. This prevented a disaster and made it possible for him to come back home. Michelle went to his house to help him apply for food benefits he did not know he could receive. She taught me how to arrange transportation for all his medical appointments. Michelle is an integral part of his care."

Michelle's exemplary care is rooted in her personal experiences and desire to help others. After moving to Greenville to care for her own mother, Michelle quickly recognized how much the community needed more comprehensive and coordinated care. "In my previous medical roles, I saw too much of the 'treat 'em and street 'em' approach," she shares. "Here, things are different. I am able to do what is right."



Michelle is one of 23 Community Health Workers throughout Cherry Health who bring our vision to life every single day:

"Lives are transformed by creating a healthier community where every person has their best opportunity to thrive."



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