

**Volume 2 issue 20 Fall 2018**



**Your Vote is Your Voice!**

The November election is crucial to Michigan's future, especially to the future of individuals and families of children with disabilities and special health care needs.

Some wonder does my vote matter? YES, your vote is your voice!

Candidates must hear your voice because as elected officials they will make decisions about how services for individuals and families are funded and delivered.

The candidates are listening. They are traveling across the state holding town halls and forums; and are answering questions related to disability and health care policy submitted by various organizations.

Selecting candidates based on issues important to you will promote meaningful public policy, and the more people actively participating in the electoral process will help ensure our government is representative of all people.

It is crucial to [research](#) candidates and vote for candidates to represent you in Congress and in various state and local offices.

November 6<sup>th</sup> is your chance to speak up.

Voters like you will be asking themselves important questions—who should be the next Governor of Michigan? Who should be my next United States representative, state Senator or Representative of my district? Will they represent my family's views and needs?

Many state and local elections and issues are voted on during election day as well. For example, there will be three Statewide proposals on the ballot this year on whether to legalize recreational use of marijuana; reform voting laws and create a new system to address gerrymandering. For more information about these proposals and to view a sample ballot for your precinct click on: <https://bit.ly/2ekHxP4>

We encourage you to be part of this decision either by voting at the polls or by absentee ballot.

Vote as if your life depends on it. For some people, it does.

# What You Need to Know Before You Go to the Polls about Voter Rights and Accessibility

## **Voter Rights:**

- The American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Help America Vote Act (HAVA) are to help address voter accessibility issues
- Persons with Disabilities have the same rights to access the polls as people without disabilities including the right to vote privately and independently
- Special accommodations are required to make every location accessible.
- Special accommodations may include
  - Drive up voting / curbside voting
  - Special assistance
  - In-person voting prior to election days
  - Facilities are required to remove barriers (within reason)
  - Must be accessible for people with sight limitations

## **Voter Accessibility:**

- Polling stations must be accessible
- Entrances and doorways must be at least 32 inches wide.
- There can't be greater than ½ inch between levels of a surface
- Items attached to the wall that sticks out greater than 4" must be marked\*
- Handrails on all stairs
- Voting booths wheelchair-accessible. Must have a 36" route through the area where people vote. Can be made accessible with temporary fixtures
- At least 1 accessible voting system must be in place for voters with disabilities including voting equipment that is accessible to voters who are blind or who have low vision
- Be allowed to bring your service animal with you into your polling place
- Seek assistance from workers at the polling place who have been trained to use the accessible voting machine, or
- Bring someone to help you vote (including a friend, family member, caregiver, assisted living provider, or almost anyone else).
- Report violations to the Department of Justice

## Voting by Absentee Ballot

You may vote by absentee ballot in Michigan if:

- you are 60 years old or older
- you are unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- you are expecting to be out of town on Election Day
- you are in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- you are unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- you are appointed to work as Election Day inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence.

The following is from the Secretary of State:

Your request for an absent voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to your city or township clerk. (For assistance in obtaining the address of your city or township clerk, see <https://www.Michigan.gov/vote>) Your request must include one of the six statutory reasons stated above and your signature. You must request an absent voter ballot by mailing the [application](#), [large print application](#), a letter, a postcard, or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk's office. Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election.

Once your request is received by the local clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. You must be a [registered voter](#) to receive an absent voter ballot. Requests for absent voter ballots are processed immediately. Absent voter ballots may be issued to you at your home address or any address outside of your city or township of residence.

After receiving your absent voter ballot, you have until 8 p.m. on election day to complete the ballot and return it to the clerk's office. Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the return envelope and matches your signature on file. If you received assistance voting the ballot, then the signature of the person who helped you must also be on the return envelope. Only you, a family member or person residing in your household, a mail carrier, or election official is authorized to deliver your signed absent voter ballot to your clerk's office.

If an emergency, such as a sudden illness or family death prevents you from reaching the polls on election day, you may request an emergency absent voter ballot. Requests for an emergency ballot must be submitted after the deadline for regular absent voter ballots has passed but before 4 p.m. on election day. The emergency must have occurred at a time which made it impossible for you to apply for a regular absent voter ballot. [Please contact your local clerk](#) for more information about emergency absent voter ballots.

### **Absentee voter deadlines**

Application - November 3, 2018

Submission by mail - November 6, 2018

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

## Medicaid Work Requirements

On June 22, 2018 Governor Rick Snyder signed a bill requiring able-bodied recipients of the state's Healthy Michigan Medicaid program to work or risk losing health care coverage.



The new law affects Michigan's 670,000 Healthy Michigan Plan recipients covered under the state's Medicaid expansion. It requires able-bodied recipients to work but provides exemptions. The exemptions include:

- Individuals age 20 and under who have previously been placed in foster care.
- Individuals age 63 and 64. 1 Individuals must be between the ages of 19 and 64 to qualify for Healthy Michigan Plan, so exemptions are not required for individuals younger than 19 and older than 64. House Fiscal Agency SB 897 (H-2) as passed by the House Page 2 of 7
- Pregnant women.
- Individuals who have a disability that makes him or her eligible for Medicaid (i.e. individuals commonly referred to as Disabled, Aged, Blind (DAB) Medicaid recipients).
- Caretakers of a family member under the age of 6, with only 1 parent allowed to claim this exemption.
- Caretakers of a disabled dependent, with only 1 individual per household allowed to claim this exemption.
- Caretakers of an incapacitated individual.
- Individuals receiving temporary or permanent disability benefits from a private insurer or the government.
- Full-time students, who are not dependents of a parent or guardian or whose parent or guardian qualifies for Medicaid.
- Individuals who are designated as medically frail.
- Individuals who have a medical condition that results in a work limitation according to a licensed medical professional.
- Individuals who have proven to meet the good-cause temporary exemption.
- Individuals who have been incarcerated within the last 6 months.
- Recipients of state unemployment benefits.
- Allow court-ordered, prescribed, or Medicaid-funded substance use disorder treatment to count toward the workforce engagement requirements if the treatment impedes an individual's ability to meet the requirements.
- Require community service to be completed with a nonprofit organization and for community service to only count as a qualifying activity for up to 3 months in a 12- month period.
- Require a recipient who is also a recipient of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (known in Michigan is the Food Assistance Program) or the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (known in Michigan as the Family Independence Program) who is either compliant or exempt from that program's workforce engagement requirements to be considered compliant with or exempt from the Healthy Michigan Plan workforce engagement requirements.
- Allow a recipient to have 3 months of noncompliance in a 12-month period.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

## Medicaid Work Requirements

It is anticipated the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services will submit the Healthy Michigan renewal waiver (including changes to the “marketplace option” and the inclusion of work requirements) to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) in the upcoming weeks.

The Michigan League for Public Policy will convene a coalition of organizations and advocates who are interested in continued action on issues pertaining to the Healthy Michigan plan, and specific work requirements. Requirements are anticipated to go into effect October 2019.

The Arc Michigan and Michigan Family Voices were among over 100 organizations opposing this legislation issuing veto letters to Governor Snyder outlining the ramifications. We will continue to be involved in continued action on issues affecting individuals and families of children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities.



## Michigan's State Budget Now Includes Early On® Funding

For the first time since 1986, when the United States Congress authorized Public Law 99-457, Part H (now known as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) allowing states to develop early interventions programs, Michigan has a line item dedicated to *Early On* in the state budget. *Early On*, which started serving eligible infants and toddlers in October 1993, will receive \$5 million in state funding annually, starting October 1st.

Securing funding has been a long time coming. It was made possible by ongoing efforts of a coalition of many partners, including the *Early On* Michigan Foundation, Michigan's Children, Michigan Family Voices, the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education, Michigan Division for Early Childhood, and others who informed and educated policymakers on the need for Michigan's investment in effective early intervention services to promote the best outcomes for young children.

While the estimated need for state funding is about \$70 million, we acknowledge that meeting the need can be incremental. This is a “big step.” We encourage families and the providers that serve them to continue to inform and educate policy makers on the importance of early intervention services.

Thank you to Lt. Governor Calley for championing this endeavor and to everyone who was involved in reaching out to their policymakers.

**Together, when we use our voices, we can impact policies that effect families of children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities in Michigan.**

## **ADVOCACY/LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Michigan Health Policy Forum Registration is Now Open!**

Registration for the October 29 Michigan Health Policy Forum is now open. The Forum, “Searching for Sustainable Funding to Prevent Future Health Care Costs”, will begin at 1 PM at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing, Michigan.

For many decades we have acknowledged that healthcare services account for only 10-15% of health status. However, we have taken limited action to address the factors that account for as much as 85% of health status. A recent report from the Citizens Research Council found that Michigan ranks 42nd of the 50 states in per capita public health spending, averaging only \$12.92 dollars annually.

This Forum will explore the importance of social determinants of health and discuss funding options that will allow us to make a positive impact. We hope that you will join us for this discussion. Please feel free to review the resource materials related to this topic on the Michigan Health Policy Forum website [Reports & Resources tab](#).

To register for the October 29 Michigan Health Policy Forum [click here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Dennis Paradis, MPH at [dennis.paradis@hc.msu.edu](mailto:dennis.paradis@hc.msu.edu).

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### **MDHHS Looking for Parents to Serve on the Guy Thompson Parent Advisory Council**

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is looking for parents to serve on the new Guy Thompson Parent Advisory Council (GTPAC). As members of this council, parents will share their experience and provide input regarding child welfare programs and policies.

- The GTPAC will meet four times per year. Two in person and two by phone.
- At the meetings, members will discuss important Issues, provide input, and share their perspectives.
- Members will have the chance to attend a two-day leadership training.
- Members will be reimbursed for their time, mileage and child care.

#### **Eligibility**

Eligible participants include:

- Parents actively participating in or a graduate of a Family Preservation program (Families First (FFM), Family Reunification (FRP), and Families Together Building Solutions) or Parent Partners.

#### **How to Apply**

1. Please complete the online application using the following link:  
<https://mph.wufoo.com/forms/gtpac/>
2. Submit one letter or email of support (this could be a letter or email from a friend, coworker, or anyone in your life) to the address listed below.

Please contact: Danielle using the contact information below if you have questions or would like a paper copy of the application.

Danielle Guty, GTPAC Project Coordinator

MPHI Center for Health Equity Practice

2395 Jolly Rd. Suite 100

Okemos, MI 48864

[dguty@mph.org](mailto:dguty@mph.org) or 517-324-8365



## **PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY AT MICHIGAN FAMILY VOICES**

By communicating with congressional and administration officials, Michigan Family Voices strives to ensure that state and federal policies

- 1) advance the health and well-being of children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities,
- 2) promote family-centered health care, and
- 3) reflect the voices of families.

Michigan Family Voices also provides information about current policy proposals that could affect CYSHCN and disabilities, their families, the policy-making process, and how families can influence policy decisions.

Among the many issues on which Family Voices focuses:

- Affordable Care Act;
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
- Continuation of federal support for Family-to-Family Health Information Centers, which help families of children and youth with special health care needs to navigate the complex health system;
- Maternal and Child Health Block Grant;
- Medicaid;
- Support for family caregivers.
- 298

Michigan Family Voices collaborates with state child health and disability organizations, such as The Arc Michigan, the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, the Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council, the Michigan Disabilities Rights Coalition, the Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services, and other groups.

### **Family Leadership Network**

We are continuing to build our Family Leadership Network. Seeking individuals and families of children and youth with special health care needs/disabilities who have participated in leadership training and/or have experience in changing policies at the local or state level. To serve on committees, work groups and or providing feedback on various issues/topics: Children's Special Health Care Services, foster care, health care financing, early intervention, independent living, Medicaid, mental health services, special education, transportation, transition to adulthood, etc.

### **For More Information about Leadership Opportunities contact:**

Michigan Family Voices at (800) 292-7851 extension 472 or [info@michiganfamilyvoices.org](mailto:info@michiganfamilyvoices.org)

Visit: <http://michiganfamilyvoices.org/leadership-network/>



**Community Stakeholder Gathering**

OCTOBER 23, 2018

1:00PM-3:00PM OR 6:30PM – 8:30PM

Tuscola Technology Center

1401 Cleaver Road

Caro, MI 48723

**Learn About: Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy**

DECEMBER 6, 2018

7PM-8:30PM

The Arc Kent County

2922 Fuller Ave. NE #201,

Grand Rapids MI 49505

**Learn About: Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy**

JANUARY 30, 2019

5:30PM – 7:30PM

PLYMOUTH DISTRICT LIBRARY

223 South Main Street

Plymouth, MI 48170

**Register at:** <https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/eventregistration/>

**We have additional events scheduled! Check our website:**

<http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/>

**Be sure to view our selection of free On Demand Webinars available for viewing at home** [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/webinar](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/webinar)

# COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

## Helping Families Tell Their Stories

November 8, 2018  
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
SmartZone

2345 Meridian Street  
Sault St. Marie, MI

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L2JQKH3>

## Helping Families Tell Their Stories

November 20, 2018  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
3701 Jefferson Avenue  
Midland, MI 48640

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L2JQKH3>

## MIABLE

November 21, 2018  
1:00 pm – 3 pm  
Disability Advocates of Kent County  
3600 Camelot Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XMHTRBH>

## CSHCS 101

November 27, 2018  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Brunkow Head Start  
3000 S. 24th Street  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
48116

## Disability Pride

November 28, 2018  
6pm to 8pm  
The Arc Livingston  
2980 Dorr Road  
Brighton, MI

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DZ6KWXL>

## Understanding My Mental Health and Medicaid Rights

January 31, 2019  
10 am – 1:00 pm

St. Clair County Administration Bldg.  
Conference Room A  
200 Grand River  
Port Huron MI 48060

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DG5BXSX>

## **Who Should Attend Collaborative Learning Opportunities?**

Individuals and family members of young children, teen and young adults with special needs/disabilities (including: youth guardians; adoptive, biological, foster and step-parents, domestic parents who co-parent, grandparents, siblings, aunts/uncles, nieces/nephews, cousins, neighbors, religious leaders, and others who person defines as a family member), organizations and service providers of families of young children, teen, young adults, and individuals with disabilities

We encourage individuals and families to invite people who provide support and services to you and your family. Providers are encouraged to invite individuals and families you support and serve. Forming partnerships between people served and those providing services is crucial in building collaboration and partnering in decision-making at all levels with individuals and families of children and youth with special needs/disabilities.

**We have additional Collaborative Learning Opportunities.**

**For More Information Visit:**

<http://michiganfamilyvoices.org/learning/>

**or**

Michigan Family Voices at (800) 292-7851 extension 472

**or**

info@michiganfamilyvoices.org