

December
2023

Quarterly Newsletter

MED ZED

ADDRESSING SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH, TOGETHER



Executive News &
Employee Spotlight



MedZed
Food
Center
Donations

Our Partnership in Addressing SDOH

Social Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health
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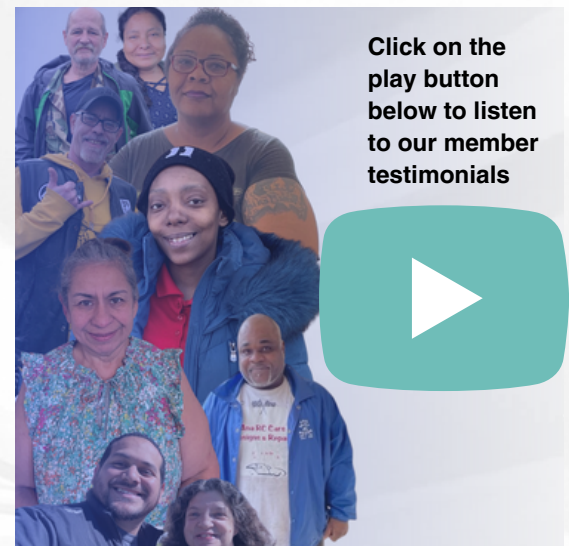
Healthy People 2030

In November 2023, the White House released the [U.S. Playbook to Address Social Determinants of Health SDOH-Playbook-3.pdf \(whitehouse.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Playbook-to-Address-Social-Determinants-of-Health-SDOH-Playbook-3.pdf). The playbook is a call to action for the entire country to invest in our communities and to strengthen the health of our society. It is designed to be a launchpad for a comprehensive strategy for addressing SDOH and outlines an initial set of framework actions that federal agencies are undertaking to support health by improving the social circumstances of individuals and communities. The playbook focuses on three pillars: expanding data gathering and sharing, supporting flexible funding to address social needs, and supporting the backbone organizations.

“We envision a future where health and social circumstances can be addressed holistically and equitably. Clinical intervention alone is not sufficient to maximize the health and well-being of Americans negatively impacted by SDOH. Achieving this vision will require bold collaboration....”

The playbook also emphasizes that addressing SDOH must be a collaborative effort: state and local communities, public health agencies, health plans, and providers all have vital roles to play in contributing to holistic, coordinated care. Our plan partners have made a commitment to address SDOH. Our clients are the leaders in this initiative, and we are grateful to work with partners who share MedZed’s vision to address health inequities by addressing the SDOH needs of the membership.

In our final newsletter of 2023 we want to focus on what we do best together – addressing the social barriers to health care. In this issue, you can read several stories about how your support enables us to work one-on-one with members to understand their unique social determinants of health and support them in taking control of and improving their health. We’d also like to call your attention to the video link we’ve embedded on the right: it includes excerpts from interviews we’ve done with members to understand how our work has helped them. We have been inspired by their words of gratitude and hope, and wanted to share with you as a way to thank you for the privilege of helping people on your behalf.



Click on the play button below to listen to our member testimonials

Addressing SDOH, One Member at a Time

Intense Focus on Housing Brings Stability

Layla*, a 52-year-old female member, was referred for severe depression, high anxiety, and high A1C. She lived in a rental with her two adult children, one of whom is autistic. She and her family were at risk of homelessness; the owner had informed her the property was for sale and she would need to move out.

Once Layla was consented, MedZed initiated an intense effort to help her find housing. MedZed helped her apply for more than 20 properties through [affordablehousing.com](https://www.affordablehousing.com), uploaded the necessary KCHA documents, and accompanied her to view more than 10 properties. MedZed also helped her set up Papa Pals for transportation to additional property viewings.

In less than a year, Layla was able to sign a lease and move directly into a new apartment with her family. She now feels secure about her future and is able to focus on her health, with the support of MedZed. She is scheduled for physical therapy, working on her A1C, and obtaining dentures.



Reliable Transportation Supports Progress of Medical Treatment

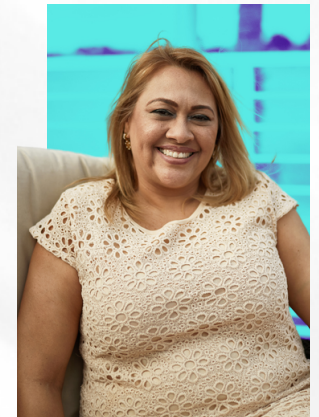
John*, a 57-year-old male member with diabetes and congestive heart failure, was on the waitlist for a heart transplant following prior heart surgery and left ventricular assist device placement. He was connected to the local health department for transportation, but it was unreliable, and he was often late to appointments, including with the transplant team. He was also in need of affordable housing.

MedZed connected him to the plan-provided transportation, which John has successfully used for all his provider appointments. He recently received a heart transplant and continues to be supported by the plan and MedZed on completing his follow-up appointments. MedZed also assisted with identifying, applying for, and visiting income-based housing. John has now been approved for affordable housing and with MedZed's ongoing support, is finalizing a lease and move-in date.

Access Enables Reconnection to Treatment

Milena*, a 30-year-old female member, was referred for multiple medical conditions, including acute bacteria endocarditis in lining of heart valve, pneumonia sepsis, open wound infections, and acute hemoglobin. She was an active substance abuser of heroin and not connected to any providers or drug treatment facilities. Moreover, she was estranged from her family and had lost physical custody of her children. She was difficult to find, but MedZed was able to locate her at the hospital through a health information exchange notification.

MedZed completed several visits with Milena during her hospitalization to build rapport and trust and engage her in addressing her needs. MedZed connected her to an inpatient drug treatment program, where she completed a 4-week program; she then transitioned to a sober living facility. Milena is now connected to a methadone program and is receiving counseling and recovery services. She is also connected to primary care, dental, and case management services. MedZed has also worked step by step to reconnect Milena to her family and rebuild her relationship with them and continues to support her in her path to recovery.



Health Literacy Reinforces Steps to Better Health

Yvette*, a 64-year-old female member, saw her PCP twice per year, but struggled with multiple health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, allergies, and migraines. Moreover, she was experiencing a loss of sensation in her feet and undiagnosed vision issues. These problems severely distressed her and limited her mobility and ability to manage her conditions. MedZed worked quickly to address these problems to help Yvette better engage in her own care. MedZed connected Yvette to an ophthalmologist, who began treating her for retinopathy with injections and reassured her she was not losing her vision. MedZed also connected her to a podiatrist, who fitted Yvette for orthotics and referred her to physical therapy to strengthen her ankles. She was also connected to Modivcare for these appointments, as she was unable to drive.

At the same time, MedZed provided ongoing diabetic education, especially about healthy cooking and eating, and arranged for Mom's Meals to assist with healthy eating choices. MedZed continues to work with Yvette to convey the importance of actively engaging in her own care. Yvette has completed her mammography and colonoscopy, attends her provider appointments, is maintaining a better diet, and has seen her A1C drop from 11.2 to 8.7 across six months. Her vision is improving and she feels empowered to take control of her health.

Employee Spotlight: Cathy Foster

Cathy has deep roots in healthcare, starting with data entry for an occupational health company as a teenager, then working as a medical record coder in college. After her bachelor's and master's degrees, she worked as a data analyst at several healthcare systems. She joined MedZed in 2016, eager to bring her medical knowledge and extensive data experience to a smaller organization with a lot of opportunity to have impact on people's lives.

At MedZed, Cathy's role has evolved over time to cover a broad set of IT areas; she analyzes files claims and also works on compliance and HITRUST certification. "I've always made it a point to understand what data was going in, and what data was coming out." In working with multiple operations teams, she can see the big picture of how to improve MedZed's analytics for all clients.

Cathy not only has a deep understanding of data, but also appreciates that people have to be able to use it effectively. She especially enjoys managing the incoming data and interpreting between program managers and the rest of the IT team. "I can see myself doing the job that our team does, I can put myself in their shoes, I can empathize. The bottom line is – we all have the same goal; we all want to help the members. My goal is to support the people who can make that happen."

In Cathy's spare time, she likes to "do things not a lot of people like to do – to cook, to work outside, to chop wood, keeping up with 9 acres of land myself, make bread, sew." She is looking forward to spending the holidays with her family, and considering whether to act on her nephew's dare that she wear a Grinch costume to a work meeting for the second year in a row...

Expanding the Executive Team in 2023



Tami Colver,
Chief People Officer



Dana Miller-Martinez,
Director of Quality and Compliance



Brian Singer,
Chief Technology Officer

MedZed's Annual Holiday Food Center Donations

MedZed is happy to announce that we will be continuing our annual donations to local food banks to support the communities where your members live. We provide these donations as an expression of our gratitude to our partner health plans – we know it takes the entire village to support those in need! Below is a list of organizations we have donated to. Thank you for your partnership in 2023!

Alameda Food Bank, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Auburn Food Bank, Bridge to Hope Miami FL, Central California Food Bank, Community Food Bank of NJ, Feed More Virginia, Hope Center Food Bank Butte, Imperial Valley Food Bank, Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Maryland Food Bank, Ocean Shores Food Bank, Redwood Empire Food Bank, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Pasco, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Svs, San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, Second Harvest of the Greater Valley, Snohomish Community Food Bank, Spokane County United Way, The Salvation Army - Redding, The Salvation Army Memphis, West Seattle Food Bank, Yakima Rotary Food Bank

