

# • United Methodist Health Ministry Fund •

Strategic Plan – 2019-2022



# We are called to help Kansans thrive with healthy minds, bodies, and spirits

As stewards of the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, our calling leads us to work to make Kansas a healthier place and to bring about action on key health issues.

We're called to act boldly. We're called to think beyond what's right in front of us. We're called to build relationships and form connections. From its inception, the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund has been a catalyst for change, and this action-oriented spirit inspires our work for the next four years.



# The Path to a Strategic Plan



In mid-2018, the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund embarked on a planning process designed to set program priorities for the next four years and align a newly-developed organizational identity with our work as we move forward.

In a series of meetings which included a staff retreat, a Board of Directors retreat, stakeholder input, and significant research, the Health Fund examined its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, focusing on where the organization could maximize the impact of its grantmaking and on key roles it should play.

During these retreats, we examined lessons learned and looked back at the Fund's history through a timeline exercise, resulting in a vision statement that will inspire a sense of direction for the Fund as it works to fulfill its mission.

Stakeholders agreed one of the Fund's strengths is providing funding statewide, particularly in the rural, remote regions in the western two-thirds of Kansas. Furthermore, the Fund will continue to build on its strengths of communication, policy, and systems to maximize the impact of its grantmaking.

Based on the priorities outlined in the following pages, the team at the Health Fund will create a multi-year action plan focusing on three strategic areas:

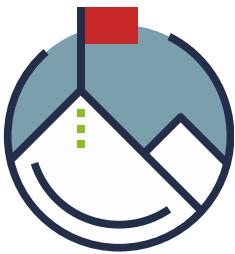
- **Access to Care**
- **Early Childhood Development**
- **Healthy Congregations**

The largest changes in our work are reflected in the increased focus on Healthy Congregations and the addition of breastfeeding work to the Early Childhood Development program area. The strategic planning process strengthened our focus on how we fund, how we operate, and how we tell our story.



## VISION

Kansans are physically, spiritually and mentally healthy



## MISSION

Healthy Kansans through cooperative and strategic philanthropy guided by Christian principles

# Strategic Principles: Our Point of View



## Health is determined by a multitude of forces.

As the Health Fund charts its course for the next four years and works to improve the health of Kansans, it is important to recognize that health goes far beyond physical well-being—it involves body, mind, and spirit. We also understand that health is shaped by more than one's genetic code and easy access to a clinician. For many, the root causes lie in poverty, the physical environment, hunger, and social isolation.

Our work will tackle a range of opportunities to address not only health care systems but also the social and economic forces affecting overall health, commonly referred to as the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health include education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety.

The Fund has long understood the importance of the social determinants of health, seeking to address those factors wherever possible. One significant outcome of the planning process was a vision of an overarching social determinants of health framework to guide work in all three of our strategic focus areas. Another significant development was the identification of new opportunities to innovate and improve health at the community level through increased investment in the Healthy Congregations program.



## Social Determinants of Health

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employment</li><li>• Income</li><li>• Expenses</li><li>• Debt</li><li>• Medical bills</li><li>• Support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Parks</li><li>• Playgrounds</li><li>• Walkability</li><li>• Zip code / geography</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy</li><li>• Language</li><li>• Early childhood education</li><li>• Vocational training</li><li>• Higher education</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hunger</li><li>• Access to healthy options</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social integration</li><li>• Support systems</li><li>• Community engagement</li><li>• Discrimination</li><li>• Stress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health coverage</li><li>• Provider availability</li><li>• Provider linguistic and cultural competency</li><li>• Quality of care</li></ul>

### Health Outcomes

Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

## Program sustainability is critical.

Systems and environments take years to change. For this reason, we invest our money and resources to ensure program sustainability years beyond our initial involvement. This is one reason we don't just give grants, but rather strive to remove barriers, create connections, and share hands-on expertise to ensure our grant programs have solid roots to stand on their own. Ensuring program sustainability can include supporting efforts to bring in outside grant dollars, the development of sustainable financing, or examining new health care delivery models.

# Areas of Focus



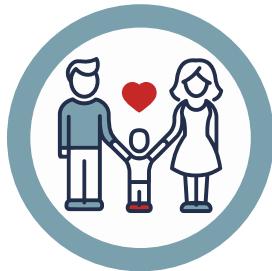
For the next four years, the Health Fund will align its strengths, resources, mission, and Christian values to focus on three key areas where we can make the greatest impact:

## ACCESS TO CARE



The Health Fund is keenly aware of the critical role that access to health care plays in supporting the health of Kansans and maintaining strong, healthy communities. Our focus on access is two-fold: ensuring viable financing and funding models for care so providers can remain operational, and ensuring that delivery systems are integrated to achieve optimum health outcomes for individuals. To improve financing models, the Fund will continue to partner with Kansas Grantmakers in Health on policy efforts such as Medicaid expansion, ACA implementation, and the Opportunity Fund. As our rural communities continue to face challenges associated with growing older and more sparsely populated, the ability of providers to adapt to new models of care will be critical. We recognize the need for rural communities to develop sustainable, innovative care delivery systems and we see an opportunity to support integrated models of care which address the health of mind and body together by including behavioral health services.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



The planning process affirmed our ongoing focus on early childhood development. Research shows that investing early creates not only the best health outcomes, but also the greatest return on investment. Through support for evidence-based early childhood mental health and development programs, we can ensure our youngest Kansans enjoy nurturing family environments and access to screening and early intervention so they are primed for a healthy life and prepared for school success. Nutrition plays a key role as well, and through the planning process we saw an opportunity to refine our program areas by incorporating breastfeeding, with a special focus on increasing duration, into our early childhood development work.

## HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

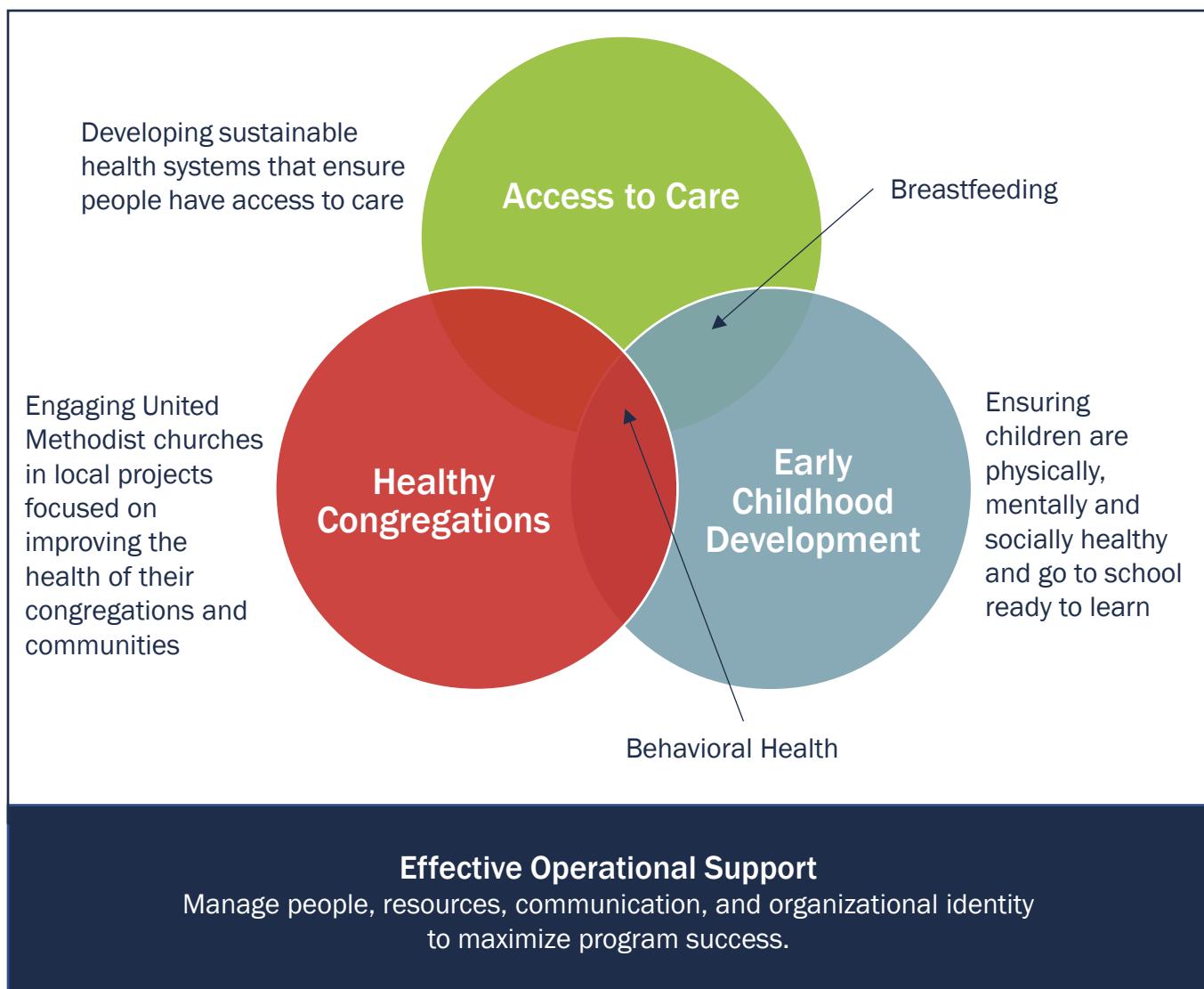


With our intimate ties to Kansas and Nebraska United Methodist congregations, the Fund is uniquely positioned to support local projects improving community health while at the same time strengthening our partner churches. The social determinants of health framework will help us define new kinds of projects to fund, while the breadth and depth of the Healthy Congregations network provides an exceptional opportunity to explore and test new ideas. Through greater engagement with our United Methodist congregations and collaboration with new interfaith and community partners, we see Healthy Congregations as a promising way to lead communities toward better overall health—physical, mental, social, and spiritual.

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Where possible, we will seek opportunities in places where program areas overlap—such as breastfeeding and mental health—in order to continue to gain the best health outcomes for the people of Kansas.

As a result of these strategic shifts, we will work to align operations, programming and staff—both existing staff roles and potentially additional staffing to appropriately support the growing focus on the Healthy Congregations work.



# Strategic Initiatives



## ACCESS TO CARE

### GOAL

Sustainable health systems that ensure people have access to care

### PRIORITIES

- **Convene Stakeholders and Share Best Practices**

Convening disparate individuals and groups has long been a role of the Health Fund. We will convene stakeholders with the intention that shared knowledge and experiences will unveil greater opportunity for systems change and growth.

- **Stabilize Healthcare Financing**

To be financially sustainable, health care providers need a stable and adequate reimbursement system. Kansas needs to improve policies and data/tracking infrastructure to be competitive for federal grants to initiate and further health care delivery. We will support studies, pilot projects, grant applications, and idea-sharing for financing rural health care systems, and support advocacy for policy changes and grassroots efforts enabling this flow of funds.

- **Inspire Innovative Health Care Delivery Systems**

Rural Kansas' changing demographics and the ever-changing state of healthcare reimbursement put severe pressure on traditional rural health care models. We will help create an environment that fosters scalable new ideas including study, development, sharing, and pilots for innovative delivery systems that decrease costs and improve care.

- **Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services**

Behavioral health is key to well-being. However, existing policies and payment systems often create barriers to treatment. We will advocate for policies that reduce barriers for individuals needing services, integrate behavioral health into primary care systems, and support evidence-based interventions.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

## GOAL

Ensure children are physically, mentally and socially healthy and go to school ready to learn

## PRIORITIES

### ● Convene Stakeholders and Share Best Practices

Great ideas are born and honed when knowledgeable people connect and share best practices. We will convene stakeholders to create new partnerships and a vibrant learning community, with the idea that shared knowledge and experiences will unveil greater opportunity for systems change and growth.

### ● Create Sustainable Financing Systems

To be financially sustainable, early childhood development programs need stable and adequate funding and reimbursement. We will advocate for state policies that fund programs, as well as remove barriers to reimbursement for critical areas like behavioral health. We will also support advocacy for policy changes and grassroots efforts that enable Kansas to capture federal grants.

### ● Support Screening & Interventions

Acting early in a child's life to address developmental adversity helps pave the way to school success and a lifetime of good health. We will support universal screening for early identification of social/emotional risks and challenges, as well as support evidence-based early interventions. Early nutrition also plays a key role. We've made huge strides in breastfeeding initiation and duration, but minority populations still lag in both areas. We will support work to close this gap through both awareness and policy initiatives.

### ● Advocate for Maternal and Childhood Development Policies

Though policymakers may view early childhood development programs as valuable, they have not taken sufficient action to provide funding or infrastructure. We will work to educate and persuade policymakers to raise maternal and childhood development to a high level of priority.



# HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

## GOAL

Engage United Methodist churches in local projects focused on improving the health of their congregations and communities

## PRIORITIES

- **Increase Program Participation and Engagement**

We see great opportunity to engage Healthy Congregations participants in local efforts to improve the health of their communities. To improve community health, we will aim to increase the number of participating congregations and strengthen relationships with our existing congregations. We will also create new, special grant opportunities that serve as tools for Healthy Congregations teams, providing resources and support to help participants achieve their goals of improved congregational and community health. We will also develop an advisory group of pastors and lay leaders to help guide the program, assist with outreach, and shape our program offerings.

- **Integrate With UMHF Programs**

Healthy Congregations has previously been treated as a stand-alone initiative, but we now recognize the unique opportunity our grassroots network of local congregations offers to further our work and achieve greater impact in access to care and early childhood development. We will use lessons learned from our Healthy Congregations work to inform our work in early childhood development and access to care, and similarly will provide lessons learned from our work in those fields to Healthy Congregations teams.

- **Convene Ecumenical Partners**

Healthy Congregations has offered an opportunity to position United Methodists as leaders in congregation and community health. Through the Healthy Congregations program we see emerging opportunities to support interfaith partnerships aimed at improving health. We also see opportunity in convening ecumenical partners locally and across Kansas to create a shared vision and plan to improve the health of Kansans.

- **Explore Policy and Sustainability Opportunities**

Community projects can scale if they have funding beyond what the Health Fund and local churches can provide. We will explore opportunities for shaping policy or securing funding that allow community projects to leverage public funding.

# Realizing the Strategy

This strategic plan is our starting point. The plan is the product of staff and board retreats and input, planning meetings, literature reviews, consultant research, and stakeholder interviews. This document is the synthesis of what we've learned throughout the six-month planning process and is intended to inform the strategic work that we fund. It will guide how we operate and how we tell our story.

As an organization, we will continue to grow, learn and evolve, with our decisions guided by this plan. We will work to operationalize the plan to ensure it is a living document. Each year, we will undertake detailed program planning informed by this plan and with input from our partners, research, and the board. What follows is a program plan for 2019-2022.

As our work unfolds in 2019-2022, we will be launching our brand awareness project, including a new website. We will also work to fully integrate communications into our work plans to elevate and advance our programs and our brand identity. We will continue to work to be a catalyst for change and innovation in the areas of access to care, early childhood development and throughout our Healthy Congregations work.

Most importantly, we will continue working to fulfill our vision and mission to improve the health of Kansans.

