

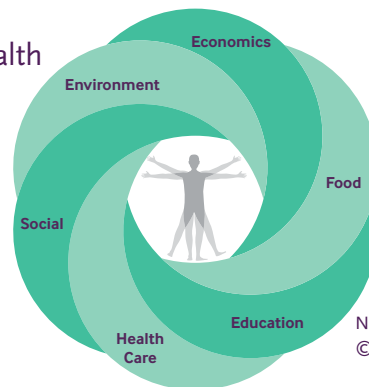


Since our inception in May 2000, the Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation has supported more than 125 community-based organizations across the Commonwealth. By investing in physicians and the communities they serve, we have helped to leverage their knowledge and leadership, as well as fill a major gap in care and services. ***Please consider joining us as we work to improve the health and well-being of people across Massachusetts by making a tax-deductible contribution today!***

## GRANT SPOTLIGHT

In August 2019, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation released *The Geography of Uninsurance in Massachusetts: An Update for 2013–2017*, which reveals that an estimated 2.8 percent of Massachusetts residents were uninsured as of 2017. While this is the lowest state level uninsurance rate in the country, there is still much work to be done. The report identifies 137 hot spot communities where the average uninsurance rate was 5.3 percent and 31 priority hot spot communities where the average uninsurance rate was 5.8 percent, with an average concentration of 799 uninsured residents per square mile. While enrollment in health insurance is important, the issue of access to appropriate health care and the social factors affecting health must also be addressed to ensure that people get the health care they need and deserve. The Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation remains committed to filling major gaps in care and services in Massachusetts and is proud to award grants that work to intervene in early predictors of poor health outcomes. Learn more about organizations recently receiving grants below.

## Social Determinants of Health



NEJM Catalyst ([catalyst.nejm.org](http://catalyst.nejm.org))  
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**Father Bill's & MainSpring (FBMS)** has been a leading innovator of ending and preventing homelessness in southern Massachusetts. FBMS in Quincy and Brockton provide guests with a place to sleep, nutritious meals, and health and mental health services with on-site clinics, shower facilities, and basic personal items. Staff members use a triage approach to assist each guest, assess, and meet immediate needs while working to develop a service plan identifying what services are needed to achieve stability. They have a 90% success rate with those in supportive housing, a situation in which individuals or families have a case manager in their first year of FBMS-sponsored housing with programs that provide emergency and permanent housing and help people obtain skills, jobs, housing, and services. Brockton has been identified as a priority hot spot community with more than 3,500 individuals (3.8% of its population) who are uninsured.

**Amherst Survival Center** forges meaningful partnerships for health improvement while offering medical care to underserved/ uninsured individuals. The center hosts an array of free, comprehensive basic needs programs that strengthen food security, health, community engagement, and social connectedness for over 6,000 individuals annually. Last year, there were 46,454 visits to the Center by people who live throughout Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Both Hampshire and Franklin Counties have an uninsurance rate of 2.6%, representing close to 6,000 uninsured individuals.

**Saint Anne's Free Medical Program** opened in 1996 with a mission to provide quality health care to the uninsured and underinsured in central Massachusetts. The program, began by Dr. Harvey Clermont, is now led by Dr. Jane Lochrie and a team of health care professionals and other volunteers, including medical students from the University of Massachusetts School of Medicine. Services include physicals, sick visits, immunizations, and assistance with health insurance. An average of 72 patients are seen at each weekly clinic. Worcester has been identified as a priority hot spot community with more than 6,000 individuals (3.3% of its population) who are uninsured.



Saint Anne's Free Medical Program — volunteers preparing for the evening clinic.

# Supporting Physicians, Patients, and Communities

**The Outreach Van Project (OVP)** at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) was founded in January 1997 by several students at BUSM and the School of Public Health under the guidance of an advisory board and aid from several BU-affiliated community agencies. The OVP provides reliable and consistent care to the underserved, predominantly Hispanic community of East Boston. Roughly half the clients are Central American immigrants, including largely women and children, who speak solely Spanish and are not aware of the supportive services available to them. Basic necessities, including food, clothing, toiletries, and a warm meal, are provided to clients weekly. Additionally, first- and second-year medical students, accompanied by a licensed physician, provide basic medical screening, including blood pressure and glucose checks, and administer flu shots. Referrals are provided to connect the underserved to primary care and other community services such as shelters and detox programs. More than 1,400 people are served annually. The uninsurance rate in East Boston is 7.9%, representing 3,700 individuals.



The Outreach Van Project — volunteers distributing basic necessities.

**Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires (VIM)** in Great Barrington was established in 2004 through the collaborative work of a dedicated group of doctors, businesspeople, and community volunteers, becoming the 30th VIM facility nationally, the first in New England, and the only one in Massachusetts. VIM provides access to free, comprehensive health care for those in the Berkshire region who are income-qualified and uninsured or underinsured. Volunteer clinicians typically address more than one medical concern during a visit. A patient may be examined by a physician, receive nutrition counseling, and have an optometry appointment all in one day and under the same roof. VIM patients are the heart of the local economy: working in shops, hotels, restaurants; doing landscaping, construction, housekeeping, and farming; providing caregiving and other personal services; and contributing to the creative and performing arts community. Berkshire County has an overall uninsurance rate of 2.9%, although in Great Barrington that rate increases to 7.7%.

**The Sharewood Project** in Malden was started by students of the Tufts University School of Medicine (TUSM) class of '99 and opened its doors on February 18, 1997. Sharewood is a free health education program that also provides limited health care services to the medically underserved populations of the Malden and Greater Boston areas. Medical services are managed by volunteer physicians and faculty from TUSM. Sharewood operates at St. Paul's Church and serves approximately 1,000 clients annually, many of whom do not have health insurance or do not know how to access health care services. Sharewood's goal is to educate its clients about common diseases, screen for some of those diseases, and most importantly, connect them with health care resources in their local communities. Malden has been identified as a priority hot spot community with more than 3,000 individuals (5% of its population) who are uninsured.



The Sharewood Project — volunteers sorting medical supplies.

**Data Source:** Karpman M, Gonzalez D, Long SK. The Geography of Uninsurance in Massachusetts: An Update for 2013–2017. Boston, MA: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation and the Urban Institute. 2019. [https://bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/default/files/download/publication/Geography\\_of\\_Uninsurance\\_REPORT\\_Aug2019\\_Final.pdf](https://bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/default/files/download/publication/Geography_of_Uninsurance_REPORT_Aug2019_Final.pdf).

The Massachusetts Medical Society continues to advocate for access, affordability, and quality of patient care to be the primary objectives of care integration.

To learn more about the Foundation's activities or to contribute, visit [www.mmsfoundation.org](http://www.mmsfoundation.org) or call Jennifer Day at (781) 434-7044.



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