



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. LOUIS PARTNERSHIP SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONWIDE ‘BUILD HEALTH CHALLENGE’

Two-year grant brings together community organizations to improve maternal and infant health

ST. LOUIS, MO (Sept. 13, 2017) – [FLOURISH St. Louis](#) has been selected by a coalition of 12 funding organizations to participate in the [BUILD Health Challenge](#), a national program that puts multi-sector community partnerships at the foundation of improving health for everyone. The St. Louis-specific project will focus on improving maternal and infant health outcomes by targeting transportation access for pregnant women and new parents in two contiguous zip codes of 63106 and 63107 in the City of St. Louis.

FLOURISH St. Louis is one of 19 communities selected to participate. BUILD awards funding, capacity building support and access to a national peer learning network. The program emphasizes cross-sector collaboration among local non-profit organizations, hospitals, and public health departments to address upstream conditions that create opportunities for better health. BUILD selected FLOURISH St. Louis because of its Bold, Upstream, Integrated, Local, and Data-driven (BUILD) ideas to improve the health of its residents.

FLOURISH St. Louis’ BUILD Health Challenge project is comprised of Generate Health as the lead applicant, the City of St. Louis Department of Health, SSM Health, St. Louis Children’s and Barnes Jewish Hospitals, Mercy Hospital St. Louis, and Project LAUNCH/Vision for Children at Risk. Supported by BUILD technical advisors, these organizations will work with local residents and other FLOURISH partners to identify and implement innovative solutions to community challenges. Matching and in-kind funds from the three hospitals, combined with BUILD’s \$250,000 two-year grant, will further extend the partnership’s capacity to help reduce infant mortality in 63106 and 63107.

This project will engage new partners in managed care, Metro Transit, medical transportation, and policy advocacy to address community-identified priorities to improve transportation access for two high-need zip codes that suffer from infant mortality rates three times the state average. Transportation is essential to access employment, healthy food, affordable housing, quality education and health care. In these neighborhoods, residents are more than twice as likely to not own a car, and to rely upon public transit, than City residents overall. Public transportation is a fundamental driver of health equity in St. Louis, where nearly three out of four public transit users are black.

“Parents rank transportation as a major barrier and significant source of daily stress,” said Kendra Copanas, executive director of Generate Health STL. “FLOURISH St. Louis’ BUILD Health Challenge project will provide a way for parents, health care providers, academia and transit to collectively accelerate and amplify policies and innovative transportation models that respond to the obstacles keeping families from thriving.”

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“Every community faces its own set of challenges and opportunities when it comes to improving the health of its residents,” said Emily Yu, executive director of the BUILD Health Challenge. “With this award, we hope to catalyze the work of FLOURISH St. Louis and bring together, residents and organizations from across sectors to address the root causes of health issues in St. Louis – and ultimately transform how we think about health in America.”

BUILD seeks to create a new norm in the U.S. by addressing upstream factors affecting health. It is supported by a unique collaborative of local and national funders, which includes the Advisory Board, The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, the Colorado Health Foundation, the de Beaumont Foundation, The Episcopal Health Foundation, Interact for Health, The Kresge Foundation, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, New Jersey Health Initiatives, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Telligen Community Initiative, and The W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

If you are interested in getting involved or sharing ideas, contact info@flourishstlouis.org. For more information, visit buildhealthchallenge.org or follow at [@BUILD_Health](https://twitter.com/BUILD_Health).

About FLOURISH St. Louis

FLOURISH St. Louis is a community-driven initiative focused on reducing St. Louis’ devastatingly high infant mortality rates, so that every baby can celebrate a happy and healthy first birthday. FLOURISH St. Louis brings together families and leaders from education, faith, business and health care to create long-lasting and substantial change by changing the conditions that prevent families from having a healthy pregnancy and baby. This collective impact approach brings the entire community together to reduce infant mortality by focusing on highly impactful areas, including prenatal care, transportation, behavioral health, safe sleep, and health communication and navigation, and by reducing racial disparities. The initiative is funded and supported by Missouri Foundation for Health, working in coordination with Generate Health. For more information, visit www.flourishstlouis.org.

About Generate Health

Generate Health believes St. Louis can be a more thriving region through improving the health and well-being of our community’s moms, babies and families. As a coalition, Generate Health unites the community to accelerate positive change for families and our region for generations to come. More than 300 organizations and over 800 individuals take action through Generate Health initiatives around priority health issues for women and children.

Generate Health’s work focuses on understanding the community’s needs, educating service providers and community leaders, advocating for positive policy change, and mobilizing the region around the most pressing maternal and child issues. For more information about Generate Health, call (314) 880-5719 or visit www.generatehealthstl.org.

About City of St. Louis Department of Health

The City of St. Louis Department of Health is the local public health agency serving the City through its vision, mission, and values. The health department’s vision is St. Louis, an equitable community achieving optimal health for all. The organizational mission is to assure a healthy community through continuous protection, prevention and promotion of the public's health. Caring, qualified, culturally competent employees who are responsive and proactive to community needs support the achievement of this mission. The department was established in 1867 and has delivered outreach and prevention services to the City for 145 years—currently serving a population of 319,294. The City of St. Louis Department of Health is fully accredited at the comprehensive level, which is the highest granted by the state accrediting board—Missouri Institute of Community Health.

About St. Louis Children’s and Barnes-Jewish Hospital

St. Louis Children’s Hospital has provided specialized care for children for more than 130 years. US News & World Report ranks St. Louis Children’s among the best pediatric hospitals in the nation. In 2015 the hospital again received the Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the nation’s highest honor for nursing excellence. St. Louis Children’s Hospital is affiliated with Washington University School of Medicine, one of the leading medical research, teaching and patient care institutions in the nation. The hospital is a member of BJC HealthCare. For more information, visit StLouisChildrens.org, or find us on Facebook and @STLChildrens on Twitter.

Barnes-Jewish Hospital is a 1,386-bed teaching hospital affiliated with Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. The hospital has a 1,519-member medical staff, and has been listed on the elite honor roll of best hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report* for 25 consecutive years. Barnes-Jewish is a member of BJC HealthCare, which provides a full range of health care services through its 15 hospitals and more than 100 health care sites in Missouri and Illinois.

About SSM Health

SSM Health (ssmhc.com) is a Catholic, not-for-profit health system serving the comprehensive health needs of communities across the Midwest through one of the largest integrated delivery systems in the nation. With care delivery sites in Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, SSM Health includes 20 hospitals, more than 60 outpatient care sites, a pharmacy benefit company, an insurance company, two nursing homes, comprehensive home care and hospice services, a technology company and an Accountable Care Organization. SSM Health – St. Louis operates 8 hospitals, 5 urgent care locations, 26 SSM Health Express Clinic at Walgreens and more than 40 medical offices in the area.

Since 1956, SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital has offered the highest level of care as the country’s only free-standing, non-profit Catholic pediatric hospital. SSM Health Cardinal Glennon provides hope to thousands of children with complex conditions from Missouri, Illinois and beyond. The 195-bed teaching hospital is staffed by SLUCare physicians affiliated with the Saint Louis University School of Medicine. Since 2013, U.S News & World Report has recognized SSM Health Cardinal Glennon as a Best Children's Hospital.

About Mercy Hospital

Mercy Hospital St. Louis, part of Mercy’s eastern Missouri region, is an 859-bed comprehensive teaching hospital. The 80-acre site houses a nine-level heart and vascular hospital, a cancer center, a comprehensive children's hospital, and a surgery center.

Mercy, named one of the top five large U.S. health systems in 2017 by *Truven*, an IBM Watson Health company, serves millions annually. Mercy includes 44 acute care and specialty (heart, children’s, orthopedic and rehab) hospitals, more than 700 physician practices and outpatient facilities, 40,000 co-workers, and more than 2,000 Mercy Clinic physicians in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Mercy also has outreach ministries in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. For more information, please visit www.mercy.net.