



For the sixth time since April 2020, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County has distributed \$5,000 to Mendonoma Health Alliance (MHA) to provide financial relief to individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to reduced work hours or business closures. Additionally, MHA has received \$7,000 from the Gualala Lions Club since May 2020 and \$1,350 from the Gualala Community Center in June 2020 to further the work being done. MHA has also received \$7,316 in community donations.

As explained on the Community Foundation's website, "Individuals and families are struggling to meet basic needs, including food, shelter, and medical needs. Based on the current economic data about our county, it is possible that as much 55% of Mendocino County are not likely to have the resources to weather the financial impacts of long-term business and school closures. This fund is designed to provide immediate relief efforts to assist Mendocino County residents with basic needs during the COVID-19 crisis."

In order to run the program smoothly and to ensure there is enough staffing to cover the demand on these new resources, MHA folded the financial relief program into an existing program called Care Coordination. Care Coordination is a free program offered to any resident in the community who needs assistance navigating the healthcare system and/or needs access to necessary resources to maintain a healthy life. Under this program, Community Health Workers are able to coordinate transportation; review medications as prescribed by medical providers; provide client advocacy for health care; provide assistance completing medical and non-medical paperwork; provide access to food and food resources; and provide access to free minor medical equipment, such as blood pressure cuffs, scales, glucometers, pillboxes, and durable medical equipment. "Since many of the individuals who need access to relief funding also have other needs that can be met by working with our Community Health Workers, it only made sense that we would offer this program as an extension of Care Coordination," said Micheline White, Executive Director of Mendonoma Health Alliance.

Since receiving the funding, MHA has provided financial relief to 283 individuals in the community. Relief has been provided in the form of bill payments for rent, PG&E, water, propane, phones, internet for distance learning, grocery gift certificates to ensure access to fresh foods, and gas gift cards to help individuals get to medical appointments and to travel between other crucial resources.

To date, MHA has distributed over \$30,000 in financial assistance to community members. "We have about \$16,000 left to distribute. Individuals seeking assistance can contact our office at (707) 412-3176 x 102," said White. "At this point, we are providing each family with up to \$500 in bill payment assistance. Families may also receive grocery gift certificates and gas cards in addition to the bill assistance." Funding is not paid directly to individuals. Instead, MHA will pay the bill collector directly. Individuals receiving funding must be able to prove that they have been financially impacted due to reduced working hours, from being laid off due to the pandemic or a leave of absence to accommodate distance learning for children in the household. For more information about Mendonoma Health Alliance and the services they offer, visit [www.mendonomahealth.org](http://www.mendonomahealth.org).

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Mendonoma Health Alliance

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