

## MSU: Assuring Safety and Self-Sufficiency for Those Most Vulnerable

- MSU researchers teamed with local school districts and the YWCA to establish an **after-school enrichment program grounded in systematic instruction in physical activity**. This project led to development of a curriculum for 8-11 year olds.
- An MSU researcher on children's activity levels is lead author of a position statement on the "**Importance of Physical Activity for Children/Youth**," written for the Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health, and Sport.

### Outcomes for Michigan's Future:

- Initial results from an MSU study of *Salmonella* outbreaks and sporadic infections over 10 years suggest that Michigan children are at higher risk for salmonella infection than the national average. Data will be used to develop a **more effective health policy on salmonellosis in Michigan**, identifying the foods related to contamination and evaluating risk factors to develop control and prevention measures.
- Women on Medicaid who have recently delivered a baby will be involved in focus groups to identify feeding practices of Medicaid mothers with infants. The MSU project will develop an intervention to **improve infant feeding practices** and to delay the introduction of solid foods until they are appropriate.
- School age obese children and adolescents in Mid-Michigan are the target group for an MSU study that will implement the IM FIT Pediatric Program. IM FIT will be tailored to the Medicaid population and will be less labor-intensive than other programs developed to **address childhood obesity**.
- In partnership with state agencies, MSU will help to **improve Michigan's nursing home care** with a \$5 million federal grant to develop a training program and a system that will more thoroughly check the backgrounds of employees in the field. Another MSU study revealed that low job satisfaction and work overload supersede low pay as a reason for high turnover among workers in these facilities.

### Spotlight on Success

"One of Michigan's current problems is the number of abused and neglected children. Michigan has recently updated its laws and policies to address these problems. Now we need for the courts and other systems to respond with speed, skill, and compassion to these vulnerable children. Therefore, I am proud to support the Chance at Childhood Program to further my work on behalf of children and families in Michigan."

—Former Lt. Governor Connie Binsfeld

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## Outcomes for Michigan's Future

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### In Brief:

**Children** are perhaps Michigan's most vulnerable population because they are completely dependent on caring adults for their well being. But the **elderly, people with disabilities, and those disadvantaged in other ways** also need society's help to assure that they can live securely.

### Situation:

National research indicates that **a youth entering the juvenile court before age 14 is more than 50 percent likely to be rearrested and returned to court. Once a second court appearance has occurred, the odds of a return to court jump to 80 percent.** This cycle disrupts educational progress, which is the key predictor of future incarceration, and often strains ties to family and local institutions.

**Youths aging out of foster care have much higher levels of unemployment, low wage levels, homelessness, incarceration, and lack of education than their peers.** In Michigan this is a growing population, and the economic and social consequences of not addressing this issue are mounting.

Michigan's children face **significant health issues.**

- In the Medicaid population, as many as 4 percent of all boys ages 10–11 are receiving medication for **ADHD**.
- Up to 7 percent of Michigan children suffer from **asthma**.
- In the past 10 years the number of children diagnosed with **Autism Spectrum Disorder** in Michigan has increased almost 400 percent.
- **Obesity** has tripled in school-age children in the United States since the 1970s, and Michigan is among the states with the highest levels of obesity. Physical inactivity and obesity are the leading health indicators targeted for intervention by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

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- **Cerebral palsy** occurs in approximately 250–300 Michigan births per year.
- Extremely **low-gestational-age infants** — although only 1 percent of births in Michigan — account for nearly 40 percent of infant mortality, and survivors make up a substantial fraction of children with severe chronic disabilities. Ten percent of all babies are born prematurely, and

prematurity accounts for the majority of infant mortality and a large proportion of children with chronic neurodevelopmental disabilities in Michigan.

**Abuse, neglect, and domestic violence** create danger and negative environments for this vulnerable population.

### MSU Capacity:

MSU faculty partner with community teams and government agencies to address the needs of Michigan's vulnerable populations in projects like those that follow:

- MSU studies funded by the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy generate knowledge about the effectiveness of **early intervention programs for court-involved youth**. Even where a significant reduction in youth reoffending does not occur, the information helps officials revise strategies and prevent continued involvement in the justice system and the costly outcome of incarceration.
- MSU researchers are evaluating **after-incarceration programs** designed to increase economic independence and training for incarcerated youth in high population communities and the attitudes of the communities to their return. Contacts with local leaders help determine how gaps in aftercare services can be filled.
- MSU researchers are developing programs and recommending practices that address **disproportional impacts of the justice system on ethnic groups**. The Association of State Legislators passed resolutions to implement policy recommendations from the research report.
- MSU's Chance at Childhood program links lawyers and social workers to strengthen the knowledge base and the practice and advocacy skills necessary to meet the needs of **abused and neglected children and youth**, their families, and communities.
- MSU's Inclusive Recreation for Youth studies ways to integrate **special-education youth** into their communities and help **youth with disabilities** become more visible and active community members.

MSU's capacity to **address the health needs of Michigan's children and the elderly** is demonstrated in projects like these:

- Multidisciplinary MSU research examines the role of sex hormones in the development of **ADHD and eating disorders**. This work may help clarify the link between genes and behavior and lead to better ways to diagnose and treat these conditions.
- MSU research among children — birth through three years of age — in the Michigan Medicaid system established that **very young children are often diagnosed with ADHD** and treated with psychotropic medications but do not receive an adequate array of health services and monitoring.
- An MSU team is studying markers of inflammation and infection and the hormonal system during pregnancy and at birth in a pilot project expected to be the first phase of a larger study of **cerebral palsy**.
- The MSU Pregnancy Outcome and Community Health (POUCH) project is internationally known as one of the largest community-based multidisciplinary research projects, having enrolled more than 3,000 Michigan women early in their pregnancies. Funded by NIH, the study investigates all **causes of preterm delivery** from social to psychological to biological.
- With support from the Blue Cross-Blue Shield Foundation, an MSU project examines **how medical care for seriously ill newborns is distributed in Michigan**. In previous studies, Michigan was shown to be an exceptionally well-regionalized state compared to other areas. This system may be unraveling because of economic pressures.

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- MSU and University of Michigan scientists take their unique mobile laboratory to urban locations to **test for pollutants in ambient air and determine their effects on the airways** of laboratory animals, which likely parallel the effects on school children who have long-term, ongoing exposure to the pollutants.

- The Geriatric Education Center of Michigan — administratively located at MSU — initiated a new education program for Michigan's primary care providers who deal with **dementia patients**, with a specific focus on medically underserved communities.

### Successes:

**Michigan children are safer and less likely to be jailed:**

- MSU Outreach as a partner in CADY (Community Asset Development for Youth) builds **youth violence and substance abuse prevention programs** largely through schools.
- MSU researchers studying ways to **divert youth from the criminal justice system** paired troubled adolescents with MSU student advocates. The result: less recidivism.
- The Services to Empower and Enable Kids Project (SEEK) aims to **break intergenerational incarceration** by increasing protective factors while decreasing risk factors. The project resulted from a state-requested longitudinal study that MSU faculty conducted.
- In response to Michigan House Resolution no. 26 that mandated the Michigan Department of Education and Family Independence Agency to assess **after-school care**, MSU surveyed the general population to determine what proportion had care, why others did not, and what benefits and outcomes resulted from safe, high-quality programming. The result: legislation to permanently fund some after-school programs and make them a high priority. This policy continues to develop.
- MSU's research on how school-based **zero tolerance policies** affect youth, families, schools, communities, and the juvenile justice system showed the negative implications on the education of urban students and offered policy alternatives.
- Following publication of an **MSU study on foster care**, section 18 was added to P.A. 280. It added programs and services that promote, implement, and support foster care focus groups. The research is also provided to students, child welfare professionals, agencies, and other child welfare stakeholders.

- MSU research on **kinship care** (the full-time nurturing and protection of children by related adults other than parents) led to a statewide directory of resources, a kinship care resource center, a statewide network of support groups, a modest fund to provide emergency grants to kinship care families, and a forum for kinship caregivers and local and state human service and legislative leaders.
- MSU investigators looked at risk and protective factors related to the incidence of **domestic violence** and evaluated interventions directed at minimizing its impact in situations including mothers' prenatal representations of their infants, the maternal-child relationship, preschool children's functioning, adolescent peer relationships, and mother and child health.

**Michigan children are healthier:**

- An MSU researcher's standard of **care for ADHD** was downloaded more than 60,000 times within the first month after journal publication, an indication of the large impact this work will have on clinical practice.
- The MSU Blood Lead Level group developed an effective approach to **screening children for risk of lead poisoning**. Working with the Michigan Department of Community Health, they developed a Web site that provides a quick and cost-free assessment of whether or not a child needs more expensive blood testing for lead levels. This approach assures that blood tests are used when the risk is substantial but not when the risk is low.
- To **prevent overweight and obesity in at-risk toddlers**, MSU researchers found ways to promote healthy feeding and mealtime practices in low-income families in research carried out with eight Early Head Start agencies in 28 Michigan counties.