



[www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us)

**Floyd J. McCree Courts & Human Services Building**

630 S. Saginaw Street  
Flint, Michigan 48502-1540  
Phone 810-257-3612  
Fax 810-257-3147

**Community Health**

Phone 810-257-3612  
Fax 810-257-3018

**Environmental Health**

Phone 810-257-3603  
Fax 810-257-3125

**Personal Health**

Phone 810-257-3132  
Fax 810-237-6162

**Burton Branch**

G-3373 S. Saginaw St.  
Burton, Michigan 48529  
Phone 810-742-2255  
Fax 810-742-2561

**McCree North Health Center**

115 E. Pierson Rd.  
Flint, Michigan 48505  
Phone 810-600-2400  
Fax 810-785-9675

# Genesee County Health Department

Robert M. Pestronk, M.P.H., Health Officer  
Gary K. Johnson, M.D., M.P.H., Medical Director

## PRESS RELEASE

Release Date: April 5, 2007 End Date: April 9, 2007

Contact Persons: Robert M. Pestronk, M.P.H.  
Health Officer & Director  
Genesee County Health Department  
(810) 257-3612

Donna Strugar-Fritsch  
Principal  
Health Management Associates  
(517) 482-9236

RE: **IMPACT ANALYSIS REVEALS HEALTHCARE USE,  
COMMUNITY-WIDE BENEFITS OF GENESEE HEALTH PLAN**

Access to – and use of – medical services by underserved adults in Genesee County has improved as intended under the Genesee Health Plan (GHP), according to a unique impact analysis of the local healthcare program.

The three-year study, launched in 2005, indicates that GHP members are making effective use of primary and preventive healthcare services, and use fewer physician specialist and hospital services than comparable groups. GHP members increasingly seek regular primary care physicians' offices and clinics, rather than relying on hospital emergency rooms to obtain basic health services. And overall use of physician office and prescription services mirrors that of the County's insured residents, dispelling the myth that the uninsured bring an unmanageable burden of 'pent-up demand' for services.

The findings were announced at a press conference on Thursday, April 5, at the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD), marking Public Health Week. Robert M. Pestronk, Director of the GCHD and Health Officer for Genesee County, says that the outcomes emerging from the analysis highlight the success of GHP as a critical resource for local families.

“The GHP was designed to provide basic health services, prescription drugs, and some specialty care to the uninsured,” Pestronk said. “We expected that as members established relationships with physicians, their care would become more continuous, better managed, and less chaotic. That is exactly what the analysis shows.”

The analysis also clearly demonstrates that health coverage enhances the ability of persons with acute and chronic illness to seek and maintain employment and to participate in educational endeavors. Such outcomes, says Pestronk, have a positive impact on the greater Flint area.

“Many of the stakeholders in the GHP had strong assumptions that covering the County’s uninsured would bring a series of benefits to the community,” said Jack Litzenberg, senior program officer at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. “Analysis of the plan continues to confirm those beliefs, and the lessons learned may prove valuable to other Michigan communities and to policy makers across the country.”

After its launch in 2001, GHP membership expanded rapidly with support from various public and private sources, including the C. S. Mott and Ruth Mott Foundations, and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. The three foundations are funding the three-year impact analysis, designed to monitor how growth in the GHP affects members, physicians, health care organizations, the county’s business climate, and other community sectors. Health

Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm specializing in health care program and policy issues, is conducting the analysis.

More than 25,000 county residents are currently enrolled in the GHP. On November 7, 2006, Genesee County voters approved a seven-year property-tax millage to support and expand the GHP. "Within two years, GHP plans to cover all 36,500 of the county's uninsured adults," said Linda Hamacher, GHP's Executive Director. "We look forward to providing basic services to the remaining uninsured, and to working with our community partners to creatively and effectively address larger access and payment challenges in hospital, specialty care, dental, and mental health services," she said.

#####