TuSalud

Merck Foundation Awards $22M to Improve Cardiovascular Care

La Clínica del Pueblo in Washington, DC, will benefit from the five-year “Collaborative for Equity in Cardiac Care” initiative.

December 8, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

The nonprofit La Clínica del Pueblo, which serves Latinos in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area received a five-year grant from a Merck Foundation initiative seeking to improve access to high-quality care for people living with cardiovascular conditions, according to a news release.

The Merck Foundation’s “Collaborative for Equity in Cardiac Care” us a $22 million, five-year initiative supporting 11 organizations across the country working to improve access to health care and achieve health equity.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death for men, women and people of most racial groups in the United States, including African Americans, Latinos and American Indians, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2022, 702,880 people died of heart disease.

In Washington, D. and Prince George’s County, Maryland, Latinos are disproportionately affected by CVD. In fact, between 2019 and 2021, CVD mortality among Latino adults ages 35 and older was 475.4 per 100,000 in DC and 459.3 in Prince George’s County, compared with a national average of 322.7 per 100,000, according to the release.

La Clínica del Pueblo is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that provides medical care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, language access services, community health action programs and more.

“Cardiovascular disease affects far too many families and their loved ones in our community, yet there is so much that we can do to prevent and manage it, to support people and help them live longer, healthier lives,” said Amina Chaudhry, MD, chief health officer of La Clínica del Pueblo, in

the release. “This program will help us expand our comprehensive, culturally responsive approach to care by connecting patients with access to specialty care and community-based support. We are grateful to the Merck Foundation for this generous gift and are excited to enhance access to cardiac care in our community.”

The Merck initiative builds on the company’s legacy of investing in community-focused programs that improve access to high-quality health care in underserved areas.

“Collaborative grantees serve a range of populations, and each one has firsthand experience in addressing the specific gaps in access to high-quality cardiac care in their communities,” according to Lisa A. Cooper, MD, MPH, MACP, director at Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity and director of the Collaborative NPO. “Bringing together these outstanding organizations to strengthen local partnerships and address the social and environmental factors that influence health will not only meet immediate patient need but also pave the way for sustained improvements in the delivery of cardiac care across the U.S.”

Other grantees include:

- Capital Health System (Trenton, New Jersey)
- The Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness (Madison, Wisconsin)
- Gallup Community Health (Gallup, New Mexico)
- Georgia State University Research Foundation/Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (Atlanta, Georgia)
- Public Health Institute/Population Health Innovation Lab (Lake County, California)
- University of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois)
- UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care (McKeesport, Pennsylvania)
- Zufall Health Center (Morris County, New Jersey).

For the full list of grantees, go here.

In related news, a recent survey found that only about 30% of Latino respondents knew their own cholesterol levels. This is particularly alarming because Black and Latino Americans in particular face significantly higher rates of high blood pressure, diabetes and other cardiovascular risk factors.

To learn more, click #Cardiovascular or #Health Equity. There, you'll see headlines such as "Nationwide Survey Reveals Gaps in Heart Health Awareness," "Latinos With Diabetes More Likely to Develop Heart Disease" and "Forget 10,000 Steps a Day. You Don't Need That Many."

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