

I want to take a few moments and recognize the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation under executive director, Meg Distler, and staff.

As you all know, funding of public health departments is at an all-time low in the United States --- and Indiana specifically is 50th in terms of federal dollars coming to the state for public health initiatives. We've seen our federal, state and local grant funding dwindle in the past five years – so much so that projects have been curbed or discontinued.

So, when a local Foundation hears the need and steps up to fund important public health projects, we need to recognize them for their generosity. The SJCHF, however, didn't just hear our need and donate to an initiative....they've been supporting public health initiatives in our Department for nearly 15 years.

I have attempted to put together some information on the grant funding they have provided to us over this past decade.

In the year 2000, the Department wanted to hold a Legislative Breakfast to speak to local legislators about 5 major public health issues with which we were seeking assistance and attention. This is one the first projects that the Foundation graciously funded. They underwrote our costs to do needed printing and provision of the breakfast itself. This was one of the first attempts for our Department to make contact with legislators and those relationships have continued today.

In 2001, they funded "Youth Getting Fit: Teens Teaming up Against Tobacco Public Service Announcement Campaign"

In 2002, they began assisting with funding for our Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program and provided nearly \$30,000 in grant funding for our Lead Case Manager position. This funding increased (to a total of approx. \$390,000 over the course of the next 6 years) until the Department was able to take on that position on their own. They also provided additional grant funding during those years to assist with phlebotomy for the Lead Program for several years when other funding was cut by another organization. In addition, they acted as the fiscal agent for several years for the CDC grants related to Lead Poisoning and

dedicated staff to assist with the overall provision of Lead Poisoning Prevention and education services.

In 2004, the Foundation provided funding to hire an independent health researcher to provide a report on “Services that Public Health Departments Provide for Indigent Populations”.

In 2005, the Department (along with several safety network providers) were looking to move into the 21st century with regard to technology and patient care – and studied the effectiveness of and options for purchasing and installing an actual Electronic Medical Record. The Foundation underwrote all costs associated with the study and the installation of this EMR (which is still in use today).

The Foundation has provided funding for workshops for our management staff, travel for education regarding current public health programs or projects, and has purchased countless pieces of equipment and supplies over the past 13 years.

In 2011, shortly after we began experiencing such a large influx in Burmese refugees, the Foundation not only assisted with funding a study regarding case management for incoming refugees, but they graciously began funding two part-time Burmese interpreters. They are still providing funding for this today. Without interpreters and translators, we simply could not function in our clinical and field settings. If you cannot communicate with your patient or constituent, you cannot make a difference and affect change in their life! The Foundation has also coordinated and provided interpreter education and certification programs.

Finally, the Foundation funds a program entitled VSee – which facilitates off-site patient interpretation for Burmese in real-time via web cam and also assists with health care patient navigation such as making appointments and scheduling transportation for refugees.

All totaled for the past nearly 14 years.... the Foundation has provided close to \$1,000,000 to the Department for vital programs. This is phenomenal in and of itself....but the staff also make the difference!

Now a few words about Meg Distler herself. It is clear that Meg and her staff (as well as the Foundation’s Board, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, and their

other driving supporters) have a pure heart for those who are disadvantaged or in need of care or services in the health arena. They have always been very supportive of not only the Department's monetary needs but of the staff including me and Dr. McMahan. Meg is a very giving and very understanding person by nature – so her role has suited her so well. We could not be more appreciative to Meg, her staff or the Foundation as a whole for the unending and generous support to this Department.

We thank you! On behalf of our Board and the Department, we'd like to present you with this glass award commemorating all you have done for us.

Please join me in thanking Meg and the Foundation for their support!