



INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION POVERTY INSTITUTE

Research and Public Policy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Institute Launches Medical Debt Project in La Porte County with Support from Health Foundation of La Porte

Indianapolis, IN – Today, the Institute is excited to announce a new year-long initiative focused on ensuring that La Porte County residents know their rights when facing burdensome medical debt. Supported by the Health Foundation of La Porte, this multi-pronged project will facilitate lasting community well-being by studying experiences with medical debt, amplifying the voices of county residents who struggle to afford health care, and conducting a Know Your Rights campaign with workshops related to healthcare access, charity care, ACA coverage, and surprise bill resources. Such efforts come at a time when 7.3 percent of residents in La Porte County lack health insurance, 11.8 percent of residents have medical debt currently in collections, and nearly one in five residents of La Porte live under the poverty level, highlighting the need for community intervention so that all residents can access quality, affordable health care.

"Access to a doctor during times of medical need should not be a luxury," said Erin Macey, Director of the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute. "However, our [2020 Community Needs Assessments](#) indicated that many residents of La Porte [struggle to afford healthcare](#). The Institute is proud to announce this partnership with Health Foundation of La Porte to work within this sphere of great need, amplifying the voices of those struggling under the weight of medical debt and fear of accessing health care systems and providing resources to improve well-being."

Research with those experiencing health care barriers will be a key component of the project. Empowering Hoosiers impacted by medical debt is a key effort that the Institute pursues and is highlighted by the project lead, Lauren Murfree, who recently shared her own experience with medical debt testifying on [medical debt rules proposed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#), as well as supporting Research Associate Deborah Fisher. "Sharing my experiences with medical debt in public testimony to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau inspired me to devise this project as a way to take further action to help others facing challenges with medical debt," said Lauren Murfree, Policy Analyst at the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute and project leader for this partnership. "Accessible healthcare is essential to well-being, and I am looking forward to working with Hoosiers in La Porte on this project."

"Medical debt is a silent crisis that can have devastating consequences on individuals and families in La Porte County," stated Eric DeWald, Health Foundation of La Porte President and CEO. "By Partnering with Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, we hope to inform solutions that can alleviate this burden."

By the end of the project, the Institute will produce a media kit, host workshops, and publish a research report. Individuals interested in receiving these resources can sign up for the Institute's mailing list on the institute.incap.org website.

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About the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute

The Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute engages in research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain financial well-being. We believe that when Hoosiers are financially stable, they can achieve their full potential and better contribute to their communities. The Institute is a program of the Indiana Community Action Association.

About Health Foundation of La Porte

Health Foundation of La Porte (HFL), a private, independent foundation located in La Porte, Indiana, is dedicated to empowering La Porte County residents to live healthy and well. HFL has invested more than \$47 million in the La Porte County community since November 2017. To learn more about how HFL supports the La Porte County community, visit hflaporte.org, call 219.326.2471, or email contact@hflaporte.org.