



For Immediate Release

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Grants funding includes Healthy Beginnings and Healthy Behaviors

(SUFFOLK, VA) February 12, 2019 – The Obici Healthcare Foundation board of directors recently awarded \$808,973 in grants that will be used to fund 14 projects, including several that fall under the Foundation’s new Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Behaviors and Healthy Spaces grant programs. Projects begin in February and March.

“The Obici Healthcare Foundation is pleased to award these grants in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$300,000 to local nonprofits that provide care to residents living in our service area,” said Board Chair Scott Carr. “Grant funds will be used to support our mission of improving the health status of the people living in Western Tidewater, and they reflect our new strategic grantmaking focus.”

The Foundation in 2018 set forth a five-year strategic plan that focuses on two priority areas: Access to Healthcare and Prevention. Board members in late January approved the latest round of grant opportunities, the Healthy Beginnings Community Planning Grant, the Healthy Spaces grant opportunity and Healthy Behaviors partnership, planning and implementation grants.

“We applaud the communities who submitted proposals for these projects that will ultimately improve people’s access to health services and promote healthy behaviors,” said CEO Annette C. Beuchler. “We will continue to offer more opportunities as we roll out our five-year strategic plan in the coming months.”

Healthy Beginnings, which falls under Access to Healthcare, is a five-year initiative to improve outcomes in the first year of life for women, families and infants, and is one strategy within the Foundation’s new investment in maternal and child health. Healthy Beginnings Community Planning Grants worth \$5,000 each were awarded to two collaboratives. Albemarle Regional Health Services in Gates County, NC, and The Children’s Center in Western Tidewater will use their funds to develop community plans that address maternal mental health. The Gates County collaborative will also develop a plan to increase breastfeeding rates.

The Foundation’s Strengthening the Safety Net focus area provides support to health safety net providers who deliver comprehensive care to uninsured and medically underserved populations who otherwise could not access it. The goal is to ensure long-term positive health outcomes for patients.

The Western Tidewater Free Clinic received a \$41,458 safety net grant to support the clinic’s transition to Medicaid expansion. The clinic estimates 1,000 of its existing patients are now eligible for Medicaid expansion, which began statewide in January. The one-year special grant will cover technology, training and staffing costs associated with the transition.

The Foundation awarded a \$200,000 grant to ACCESS College Foundation for a new project designed to build the healthcare workforce in Western Tidewater. ACCESS College provides students, who may not have the opportunity, the path to attend and complete college. The grant funding will be used to identify healthcare workforce needs in the region, select students currently in the ACCESS Program who are in healthcare-related programs and prepare them for careers in those needed areas.

The Foundation's Prevention priority area reflects its effort to improve health outcomes related to chronic diseases and continues its focus on access to nutritional foods and physical activity. Recognizing that communities within Western Tidewater are unique and have different assets and needs, the Foundation in 2018 offered a Healthy Behaviors opportunity that provides three distinct but complimentary grant awards: partnership development and planning grants, and implementation grants worth up to \$100,000 a year for projects designed to increase access to healthy foods and/or physical activity. The Foundation awarded a three-year implementation grant to the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia to be used for a Community Produce Hub that will serve Franklin and Southampton County addressing the challenges of food access within Western Tidewater.

The nonprofits receiving Healthy Behaviors grants are:

- Smart Beginnings Southeast, a \$10,000 partnership development grant for the Early Childhood Food Insecurity Collaborative
- Girls on the Run Hampton Roads, a \$17,515 planning grant to expand the Girls on the Run program to Franklin, Southampton, Surry and Gates counties
- Suffolk Public Schools, a \$5,000 planning grant for the Wellness Initiatives for a Happy, Healthy, Productive Staff
- Surry County, a \$25,000 planning grant for a community wellness program
- YMCA of South Hampton Roads, a \$5,000 planning grant for the YMCA Healthy Choices Program
- Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, a three-year, \$300,000 implementation grant to fund the Community Produce Hub.

The Healthy Spaces grant opportunity funds projects that seek to improve people's access to physical activity and healthy eating. Healthy Spaces are one-year, one-time grants of up to \$50,000 for community projects such as playgrounds, walking trails, community gardens and farmers' markets that make it easier for people to make healthier choices that have the potential to improve their health.

Healthy Spaces grants were awarded to:

- City of Franklin, \$50,000 to renovate and convert unused tennis courts at the Armory Drive Recreational Park into multi-sport courts.
- City of Suffolk, \$50,000 for an inclusive playground at Lake Meade Park
- City of Suffolk, \$45,000 to develop a playground area at the Booker T. Washington Recreation Center
- The Improvement Association, \$50,000 to purchase and construct playground equipment at the Early Learning and Workforce Development Center

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About the Obici Healthcare Foundation: The Obici Healthcare Foundation is a private foundation established in 2006 from the sale of Louise Obici Memorial Hospital to Sentara Healthcare. Since its inception the Foundation has awarded over \$48.5 million in grant funding.