



MHEDS
Multi-Cultural Health Evaluation Delivery System

Caring for People from
Around the World and
Right Here at Home

ANNUAL REPORT

2022





A Letter to Our Community



As MHEDS closes on its 50th year of serving the Erie region, we offer some reflection and thought for its future. This past year saw our staff and patients emerging from the throes of a pandemic...loss of friends and family members, finding strength and stamina we didn't know we had so that we could continue to claim the privilege of serving our patients and community.

MHEDS is Pennsylvania's Region 5 grantee for refugee health. Fiscal Year 2022 brought us 756 new refugee patients—488 of whom were from Afghanistan—helping our military there and being evacuated to safety in the United States as part of Operation Allies Welcome. MHEDS is fortunate to have hired two of them to help us continue our mission. One, a trauma surgeon, is now on track in our “Refugee Physician to Work” program. Working as an interpreter and cultural navigator, a second Afghan staff member has identified medical school as a future goal. He is currently in Community Health Worker training and will begin classes to become a Medical Assistant in the spring. MHEDS also offered health care to Ukrainians who are resettling in Erie with

friends and relatives who provide private sponsorship for them. There will be more to report on their successful transition in the 2023 fiscal year. We also signed an agreement with Keystone Health, Pennsylvania's sole grantee for agricultural health—once again making MHEDS a health service provider of care to those responsible for the hard work it takes to grow our food and supply us with dairy products. MHEDS is proud to spend its 50th year in service to those from around the world and right here at home.

As the sun also sets on our term of leadership, we wish MHEDS, its new leadership, and its patients all the best as they move forward in 2023.

Michael Antoon, DO
Board President

Patricia Stubber, PhD, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Highlights

Ethnic Diabetes Program

MHEDS is pleased to announce that its ethnic Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support program was accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists (ADCES) this year. While the education is the same as that of the American Diabetes Association, MHEDS includes the foods and cultural ways of the patients in

each of the programs. To date, we have offered sessions for Arabic speakers of Iraq and Syria; Nepali speakers of Bhutan and Nepal; Burmese and Karen speakers of Burma (now Myanmar); Ukrainian speakers from Ukraine; Somali speakers from Somalia; and Swahili speakers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Refugee Health Professions Workforce Development

A few years ago, MHEDS began a workforce development program for refugee physicians. As one can only imagine, the stress of fleeing the country where you lived in fear of being killed is tremendous. If you worked there as a physician or other health professional, you can no longer follow your life's dream at the same stage where you were when you left. There are several barriers to overcome for an internationally educated physician to be licensed in the United States. This includes passing three tests (STEPS Exams) with successful admission and completion of a residency program. MHEDS partners with the International Healthcare Professionals Program led by Dr. Daniel Weber to help refugee physicians as they navigate the training and licensing system in the

United States. MHEDS hires the physicians as "Clinical Assistants" who provide a great of clinical, cultural and linguistic support to MHEDS' primary care providers. Dr. Weber's program offers weekend study sessions for the required tests and other experiential trainings. The first physician with plans to return to MHEDS as a family physician in August of 2025 is Nawar Al Janabi, MD. Dr. Nawar came to Erie as a refugee from Iraq. His patients are anxiously awaiting his return so they can resume their relationship with him as their family physician. He is currently in his first year of residency at Indiana Hospital in Pennsylvania. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, trauma surgeon from Afghanistan is working as a clinical assistant and participates in Dr. Weber's study sessions. We see this as a win-win-win for patients, physicians and MHEDS!



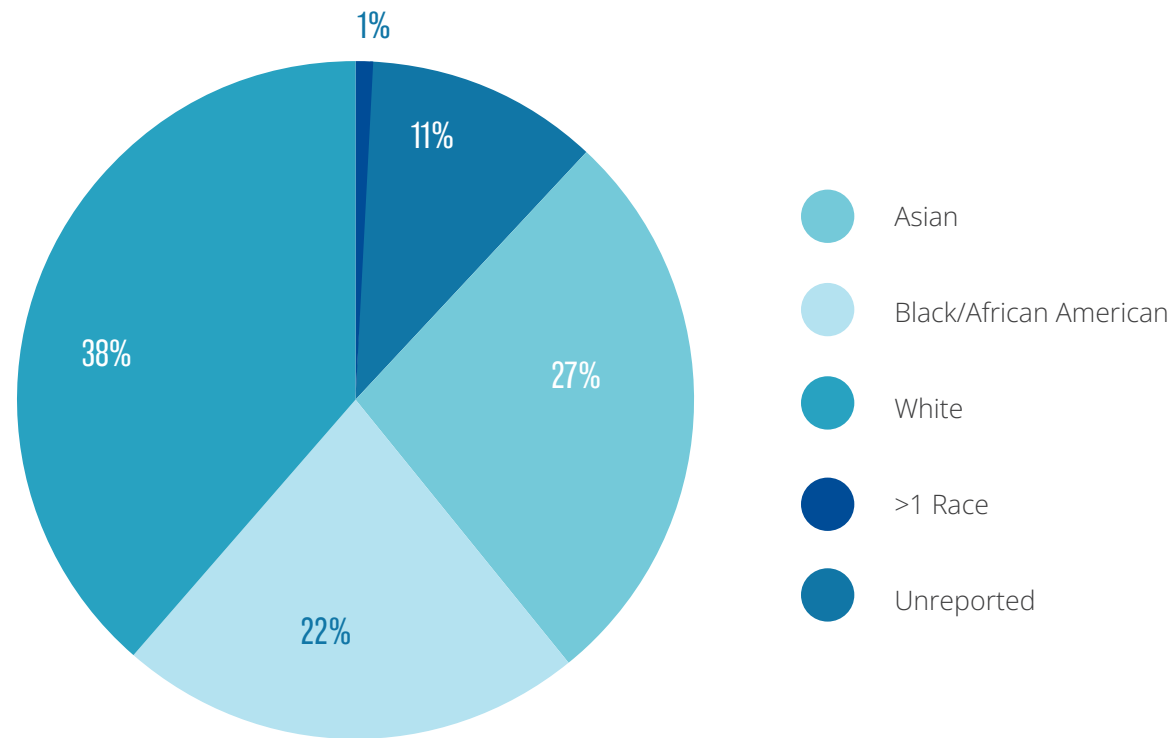


Mental Health

Another important accomplishment this past year was the addition of on-site mental health services. Through an agreement with Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services, MHEDS patients were able to receive mental health screening and counseling at the same time as they received their primary care services. Refugees experience emotional and physical trauma while fleeing danger in their former homelands, with the added stress and anxiety of starting over in a community where language and cultural ways are different. They have experienced tremendous loss of family, personal property and social status. With appropriate emotional and psychological support along with education about their new community, they can usually work through the stress and anxiety of re-location in about a year. Other conditions may take longer. Having this type of support co-located with other health services makes good sense and helps remove additional barriers related to stigma, language and transportation. One of the best features of this new service is that the counselor has global experience in several of the countries where MHEDS' patients originate, allowing for a higher level of cultural competency.

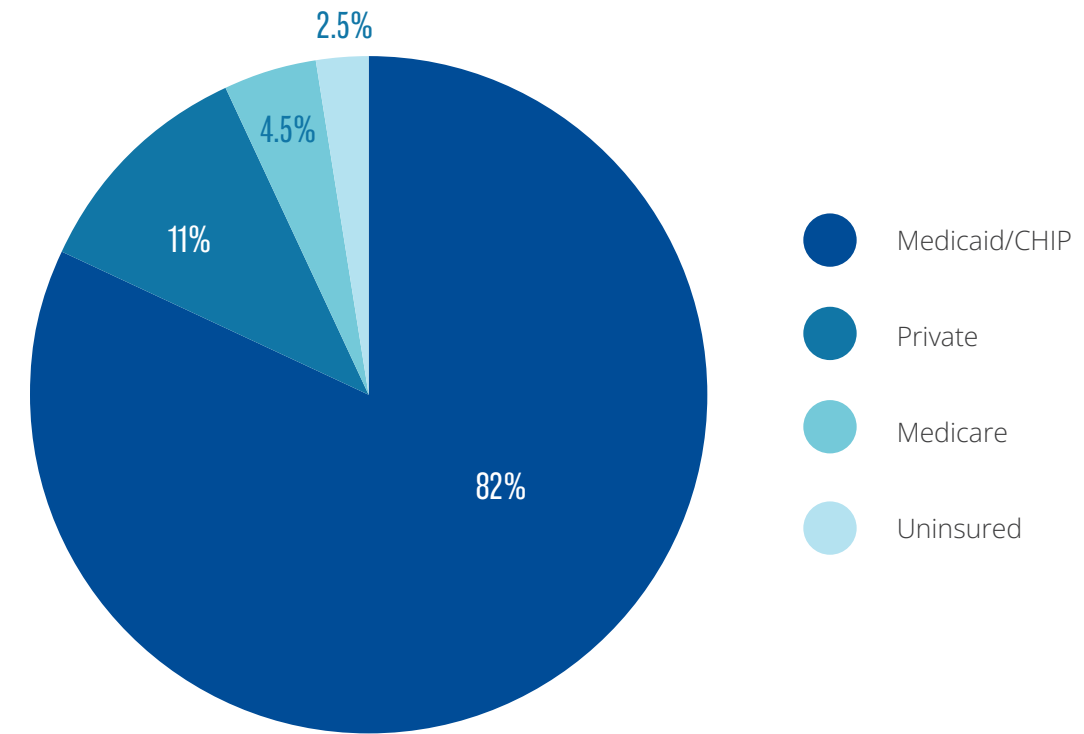
Our Patients - The Reason We Exist

MHEDS continues to serve a very diverse group of individuals who originate from all over the world. To meet the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate (CLAS) standards of services, MHEDS staff starts at the governance level with more than half of its members being patient consumers and thus also a diverse group. During its 2022 fiscal year, physicians and nurse practitioners provided care to 2,886 unique patients who visited their providers on 8,310 occasions; 118 (4%) sought immigration health services. While race offers part of the story of patient origin, it is language that completes the picture. This year's largest portion of individuals (38%) are white—but 23% are Arabic speakers originally from Iraq and Syria; 5% are Ukrainian speakers and 4% speak Russian as their first languages leaving only 6% originating in the United States. Twenty-seven percent of patients are of Asian race with the greatest number (17%) being Nepali speakers originally from Bhutan or Nepal, followed by Pashto and Dari speakers from Afghanistan. They are complemented by individuals from Burma (Myanmar) and India; 22% of patients are listed as being of Black or African American race. Most are of African descent from the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Somalia. A smaller number are African American and 4% of patients overall describe themselves as Hispanic or Latino.



With respect to health insurance, Medicaid and CHIP continue to be the top insurers of patients at 82%; 11% have coverage by private insurers; 4.5% are insured through the Medicare program and 2.4% are uninsured. MHEDS offers a

sliding fee discount based on income and family size for all patients, ensuring that cost is not a barrier to receiving health care. Two staff members are certified insurance assisters, making sure that everyone is able to have health insurance coverage.



Financial Highlights

In accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the United States, MHEDS' auditors, Monahan & Monahan, Certified Public Accounts affirmed that once again MHEDS reports a positive financial year with revenue over expenses of \$128,706. Income from services provided was \$1,602,011. Grants and contributions exceeded \$700,000. Total Assets and

Liabilities are at \$938,197. MHEDS spent \$2.19 million on its staff to care for its patients. Using both grant and service income, significant upgrades were made to its primary location at 2928 Peach Street, making the surroundings more pleasant and safer for both patients and staff.

Our Staff

MHEDS continues to grow its staff both in number and in skills development. The unanticipated arrival of 488 new patients from Afghanistan brought challenges to both the resettlement agencies and MHEDS. We hired Afghan staff to ensure culturally and linguistically congruent care. MHEDS also hired a phlebotomist who is a nurse from Ukraine. We credit her with patient satisfaction as shown below in a photo with happy customers.

Staff members continue to expand their knowledge and ability to provide care for our patients. Two staff members are set to complete training as Medical Assistants in October 2022 and two more will begin training in the spring of 2023. They resettled in Erie from Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Iraq and Ukraine. Ten of our interpreter staff will receive Community Health Worker training from the Northwest PA Area Health Education Center starting in fall of 2022. MHEDS also shares knowledge with its community members. This past year we completed “Effective Treatment of Adults with PTSD”, a project led by Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Publications include both treatment guidance and a lexicon of culturally appropriate mental health terminology in five languages: Arabic, Burmese, English, Nepali and Swahili. Webinars were held in English with interpretation into the other languages. Attendees included health systems, health care providers, government, community leaders and the public. This year two staff members who speak Dari, Pashto and Ukrainian are group leaders for a CDC-funded Vaccine Safety project led by CHOP. Project publications are anticipated to be in Dari, English, Pashto, Swahili and Ukrainian.



Looking Ahead

MHEDS’ mission is to enable all who wish to achieve complete mental, physical and social well-being by providing equitable, culturally sensitive, patient-centered health care, regardless of their ability to pay.





PEACH STREET LOCATION

2928 Peach Street, Erie, PA 16508
(814) 453-6229



JFK CENTER LOCATION

2021 E 20th Street, Erie, PA 16510
(814) 616-7730