

MolinaCares in

# ILLINOIS NEWSLETTER



## Welcome from Plan President Matt Wolf

Over the past few months, Molina Healthcare of Illinois has been hard at work launching the MolinaCares Illinois Health Equity Initiative, a nearly \$5 million investment in our state. This initiative represents a groundbreaking commitment to addressing health disparities and improving outcomes through a community-based approach to care.

As part of our commitment to improve health, the Molina Mobile Unit hit the road again to provide preventive care services to under-resourced communities. In observance of American Heart Month, we incorporated heart health assessments in addition to the wellness exams, prenatal and postpartum assessments, and blood pressure screenings traditionally offered at Mobile Unit stops.

In pursuit of enhancing wraparound services for our members, we held a variety of events in collaboration with community partners who share our commitment to whole-person care. As we celebrate National Nutrition Month, we look forward to ongoing engagement with organizations that share our commitment to reducing food insecurity and building stronger communities, one life at a time.

Matt Wolf  
Plan President  
Molina Healthcare of Illinois

## MolinaCares Illinois Health Equity Initiative

**Molina Healthcare of Illinois** (Molina), in partnership with the MolinaCares Accord (MolinaCares), is proud to announce the MolinaCares Illinois Health Equity Initiative, a commitment of nearly \$5 million to improve equity and health outcomes across Illinois.

Approximately **12%** of Illinois' population currently lives below the poverty line, with many residents having limited access to health care, housing, healthy foods, transportation, and jobs. Studies have shown those who live in poverty tend to have a higher disease burden, according to the **National Health Council**. This initiative seeks to reverse that trend by adopting a statewide approach to address social determinants of health and improve health equity through partnerships with community-based organizations.

As part of the initiative, Molina recognized **The Awaken Foundation L3C** with a \$250,000 grant for their commitment to empowering Illinoisians through apprenticeships. The check was presented at **Northwest Community Center's** 'A Night in History' event. State Representative Maurice West was in attendance, joining us in honoring The Awaken Foundation and celebrating Black History Month.

Additionally, Molina awarded the **Chicago South Side Birth Center** a \$250,000 donation in support of its facility, which will open in 2025, and to provide resources to improve access to maternal health care for Illinois residents. These resources are critically needed in our state. In Illinois, **14.2%** of expectant mothers face inadequate prenatal care, and **34.3%** of Illinois counties are classified as maternity care deserts—places with no obstetric hospitals/birth centers or obstetric providers. Upon completion, the South Side Birth Center will be the first of its kind on Chicago's South Side, providing much-needed care for women and infants in this historically undeserved area.

By investing in partnerships targeting health-related social needs, health transformation collaboratives, population health, adolescent behavioral health, maternal health, and justice-involved individuals; Molina hopes to create a more equitable approach towards health care to improve the overall health of Illinoisians.

### Learn more about the MolinaCares Illinois Health Equity Initiative.



## Reading with Molina

While proficiency in language arts for Illinois students **improved to 35%**, proficiency remains below pre-pandemic levels. To help address this problem, Molina Healthcare of Illinois recently launched the 'Reading with Molina' event series with the goal of instilling a love of reading in Illinois' youth.

In March, Molina partnered with **WSIU** and the **Carbondale Public Library** to host a fun reading event for local families. The event featured story time and themed activities. Every child in attendance received a free book and activity to take home. Molina representatives were on hand to distribute resources and information.

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## Lawndale Christian Health Center Redetermination Event

Did you know an average of **32,000 Illinoisians** per month lose their Medicaid coverage due to issues related to paperwork, despite still being eligible for benefits? Molina is bridging this gap by partnering with **Lawndale Christian Health Center** to offer an ongoing educational series on Medicaid redetermination. Together, we are working to ensure our communities receive the information needed to navigate what can be a complex health care system.

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## Heart Expo Lunch and Learn Event

In celebration of Heart Health Month, Molina joined **Mercyhealth** in hosting a Heart Expo Lunch and Learn event. Over 100 attendees had the opportunity to learn about warning signs of heart attacks, the correlation between mental health and heart health, CPR techniques, blood pressure screenings, and how diet and exercise play a role in the cardiovascular system.

Dr. Rashad Belin, interventional cardiologist, concluded the session by providing participants with a detailed presentation and question-and-answer session. Molina representatives connected with members who had questions ranging from redetermination, to how to find local providers, and how to navigate requesting transportation services.

## Go Red Event

Molina Healthcare of Illinois participated in the Go Red event at **TCA Health** in Cook County in recognition of Heart Health Month. At the event, the TCA Health Medical team—made up of health educators, nutritionists, and diabetes educators—held a special forum titled “Heart to Heart: Conversations about Heart Disease.” Members of the Molina team were in attendance to distribute manicure kits, hand sanitizers, and travel toothbrushes, in addition to general health and redetermination information.



## Self-Care Fair

In February, Molina was proud to participate in a Self-Care Health Fair alongside Senator Adriane Johnson and State Representative Rita Mayfield, in partnership with the **Eleanor Murkey Community Center** and the **College of Lake County**. The event provided mental health and community resources to attendees.

Empowering Illinoisians with the resources to prioritize self-care and wellness is critically important, as **29%** of residents in our state have reported symptoms of anxiety and depression. Molina representatives distributed manicure kits, hand sanitizer, and travel toothbrushes, in addition to information on wellness and redetermination.



## GANT Senior Ministry Event

Molina Healthcare of Illinois is empowering Illinoisians through health education to combat racial and ethnic health disparities. In partnership with Greater All Nations Tabernacle Church (GANT), Molina took part in one of the organization's monthly **GANT Senior Ministry Wellness Events** in February.

Molina representatives provided lunch for attendees and distributed key information on wellness and community resources. Additionally, Dr. Wendi El-Amin, associate dean for equity, diversity, and inclusion at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, presented critical health information for minority populations. Bringing education on preventative services and community resources to Illinoisians is just one way Molina is working to improve health outcomes in our state, especially among historically marginalized populations.

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## Record Expungement Event

In January, Molina partnered with **Social Change** and hosted a "Get Your Record Cleared Event" in Chicago, in commemoration of Martin Luther King Junior's tireless fight for freedom and equality. Attendees benefited from a free legal clinic on record sealing, a much-needed opportunity in Illinois, where it is estimated only **10% of people** eligible for record sealing have received it.

Many formerly incarcerated individuals suffer from mental health issues, substance use disorders, and lack of resources. Through events like this, we aim to change the narrative around incarceration and recidivism by ensuring formerly incarcerated populations have the tools necessary to face everyday challenges head on. At the event, Molina employees were also on-site to answer questions regarding Medicaid redetermination.

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## Take Flight College Send-Off

Molina is proud to be a part of **Chicago Housing Association's** (CHA) Take Flight to College program in support of brighter futures for undeserved youth in Illinois. While CHA youth may receive financial aid to pay for college tuition, they still face a large gap between the financial aid they're awarded and the cost of other out-of-pocket expenses such as school supplies, linens, towels, and toiletries. To meet this need, Molina is proud to have contributed laptops to support students in their educational journey.

We are inspired by stories like Demarion Brown's, a senior at Johnson College Prep who has persevered through health challenges to start his college career at University of Illinois Chicago this fall. It's stories like Demarion's that drive us to continue our efforts to equip youth in our state with the tools necessary to overcome generational poverty through education.

## Reveal the Teal Loteria Night

In Illinois, cervical cancer is one of the **leading causes of death** for women. Prioritizing education to help identify symptoms is crucial to early detection and better outcomes. That's why Molina partnered with **Equal Hope** to host "Reveal the Teal Loteria Night" commemorating Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. During the event, attendees received travel packs, information on numerous community resources, and information on the Medicaid redetermination process that is so critical to continuity of care.



## A Cozy Winter Celebration Event

In January, Molina Healthcare of Illinois proudly teamed up with **Herban Grown Chicago** to host "A Cozy Winter Celebration" at the Molina-sponsored community garden. Through this event, Molina was able to support local families by offering attendees resources like warm winter clothes and health information. To spread generosity and warmth, Molina employees distributed cookies, hot cocoa, earmuffs, scarves, and mittens to children.

Today, **over 17% of Chicagoans** are living below the poverty line. Essential items like warm clothes are needed now more than ever to ensure our communities are equipped with the tools necessary to not just survive, but to thrive.



## Molina Mobile Health Unit

Over the past few months, the Molina Mobile Health Unit has continued to make stops throughout our state, meeting Illinois' historically marginalized communities where they are to deliver the care they need. Residents in Peoria, Rockford, Springfield, Lincoln, and Pekin are just the latest to have received wellness exams, prenatal and postpartum assessments, and blood pressure screenings, all free of charge.

Molina is committed to thinking creatively about addressing some of Illinois' most pressing challenges to health. Molina partnered with **Springfield Clinic** to offer blood pressure screenings, hemoglobin A1C screenings, and height and weight measurements to attendees in observance of American Heart Month. Preventive screenings are important in Illinois, where **heart disease and stroke** are, respectively, the first and third leading causes of death in the state.

The Molina mobile team has seen the real impact these visits can have on our local communities. Whether it be a mother receiving critical prenatal care that may not otherwise be available or children receiving vaccinations necessary for school, Molina is making a difference.

### Learn more about the Molina Healthcare of Illinois Mobile Health Unit.

#### Upcoming Mobile Health Unit Stops

We look forward to continued engagement with Illinoisians across our state through upcoming Mobile Health Unit stops. We hope to see you there!

City	Date	Location	Time
Rockford	3/28/2024	Voice of Inspiration 3112 N. Rockton Ave., Rockford	11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Pekin	4/3/2024	The Salvation Army 243 Derby St., Pekin	8 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Springfield	4/9/2024	Washington Street Mission 408 N. 4th St., Springfield	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Peoria	4/17/2024	Dream Center Peoria 714 Hamilton Blvd., Peoria	9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Lincoln	4/25/2024	The Oasis Center 2810 Woodlawn Rd., Lincoln	9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.



Building Stronger Communities...One Life at a Time

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