

MolinaCares in Illinois newsletter

August 2024 Edition

Welcome from Plan President Matt Wolf

Welcome back to the Molina Healthcare of Illinois ('Molina') newsletter! It has been a busy summer for our team, as we have continued to work alongside trusted partner organizations to host events fostering community and equipping Illinoisians with resources like preventive care and back-to-school supplies.

June was a particularly busy month, as we participated in a series of Pride events throughout the state. As a plan president and executive sponsor of Molina's LGBTQ+ employee resource group, I am personally committed to creating a safe, inclusive space for LGBTQ+ individuals to thrive, and ensuring we support the diverse communities we serve. In this spirit, we announced a \$75,000 grant to [The Trevor Project](#), an organization that supports LGBTQ+ youth. Funding from the grant will help improve access to life-saving mental health tools via [TrevorSpace](#), an online social networking platform. Resources like these are critically important to addressing [mental health disparities](#) among LGBTQ+ youth.



Separately, this past June, our elderly neighbors were displaced when an electrical fire struck the Luther Center, a senior living center in Rockford. Residents were forced to leave their homes and suffered the loss of their personal possessions. The Molina staff quickly jumped in to support residents when they returned home, distributing essential food items. I am proud to be part of such a dedicated team that works tirelessly to meet the needs of our neighbors.

Please read on to learn more about the meaningful work we're doing to make a difference in the lives of fellow Illinoisians.

Matt Wolf
Plan President
Molina Healthcare of Illinois

Luther Center Emergency Volunteer Event



On June 8, Molina was contacted by Mayor Thomas McNamara's office after 200 individuals were displaced by an electrical fire at Rockford's Luther Center, a senior living center for individuals 55 and older. Once residents were safely returned to their homes, Molina hosted a free food giveaway to aid in replenishing food that was lost.

Molina provided more than 11,000 pounds of food to residents. Each resident received eggs, milk, bread, fresh fruit, fresh potatoes, canned corn and green beans, macaroni and cheese, bread, water, ground beef, and more. To help coordinate and distribute the food, eight Molina employees volunteered their time, packing the U-Haul with purchased items, unloading food items, setting up stations, and greeting and aiding residents in obtaining their food.

Efforts like this are critical to addressing food insecurity in Illinois, where [8%](#) of households with seniors face hunger, an issue that can result in high rates of [diabetes and heart disease](#). At Molina, we are committed to working with our community partners so all Illinoisians can thrive, no matter their stage in life.

Pride Month

In honor of Pride Month, Molina partnered with several community-based organizations, including [The Office Niteclub](#), [LGBTQ+ Center of Lake County](#), and the [Woodstock Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#), to host events celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. We brought health resources, educational activities, Molina Pride branded giveaways, and more to community members attending these events.



Molina also sponsored the 23rd annual Chicago Pride Fest which took place at the heart of Chicago's LGBTQ+ entertainment district, the North Halsted neighborhood. It was a celebration of LGBTQ+ life, culture, and community. Fifteen Molina volunteers handed out rainbow leis and beads, hand fans, and wristbands throughout the event.

LGBTQ+ individuals are [more likely](#) to experience discrimination and health care disparities, making Molina's resources and educational efforts vitally important to the community. We are very fortunate to have supportive community-based partners that share our values and support our commitment to celebrating the diverse perspectives and experiences of our LGBTQ+ community and providing compassionate care to all.

Celebrating Juneteenth

Throughout June, Molina collaborated with dedicated partner organizations to celebrate Juneteenth while bringing critical resources and health screenings to communities across the state. Black Illinoisians face [disproportionately high](#) rates of diabetes, breast cancer, infant mortality, and other key indicators of health. Molina is committed to improving health outcomes for all Illinoisians and creating more equitable access to care.

In partnership with the [Chicago South Side Birth Center](#), [Social Change](#), [Herban Grown Chicago](#), the [Black Chamber of Commerce of Southern Illinois](#), and other community-based organizations, we brought resources such as record expungement resources and health information directly to our community.



Participating in events including the Annual Juneteenth Block Party, Juneteenth Celebration and Expungement Summit, and the 1865 Juneteenth Fest are just a few of the ways we are empowering Illinoisians with the tools and knowledge to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Trevor Project Partnership

In collaboration with [The MolinaCares Accord \(MolinaCares\)](#), Molina awarded a \$75,000 grant to [The Trevor Project](#), the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ youth. The grant will help improve access to life-saving mental health tools via [TrevorSpace](#), an online social networking platform that provides LGBTQ+ youth with peer support and life-affirming resources as they transition into adulthood.

Digital resources like TrevorSpace are urgently needed in Illinois, where [41%](#) of LGBTQ+ youth reported that they seriously considered suicide in the past year. Additionally, 57% of LGBTQ+ youth in Illinois also expressed a desire for mental health care, but an inability to access it. This grant is part of the [MolinaCares Illinois Health Equity Initiative](#) – an investment of nearly \$5 million to improve equity and health outcomes in under-resourced communities.

Molina's partnerships with organizations like The Trevor Project aim to expand access to critical care and enhance health outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community in Illinois – especially through the state's diverse, marginalized, and underserved communities.

Learn more about the TrevorSpace grant [here](#).

THRIVE Fest



Molina joined the City of Rockford 5th Ward Alderman Gabrielle Torina and 12th Ward Alderman Gina Meeks, and the [Rockford Park District](#) in sponsoring THRIVE Fest 2024. More than 200 community members attended the July 20th event at the [Northwest Community Center](#). Attendees had the chance to participate in unique wellness events, including yoga, Zumba, low-impact aerobics, line dancing, and more.

Additionally, THRIVE Fest offered basketball games, face painting, free lunch from Chipotle, and a reading center for kids. To promote wellness, the Molina Mobile Unit was

onsite, offering free adult wellness exams, back-to-school physicals, and more. The Molina Mobile Unit is a community-based program dedicated to improving health equity and outcomes across the state with consideration for 89 of Illinois' 102 counties [classified](#) as health professional shortage areas.

Back-to-School Wellness Events

On July 25, Molina partnered with the [Latino Roundtable of Southwestern Illinois](#), [SIHF Healthcare](#), [Puentes de Esperanza](#), and the [Fairmont City Library Center](#) to host our 2nd annual Back-to-School Bash. At this year's event, over 20 vendors provided food, school physicals, dental exams, vision screenings, haircuts, and school supplies. To reduce costs for families, Molina handed out over 500 backpacks to school aged children in Fairmont City and surrounding communities.

To address [disparities in access dental health](#), Molina partnered with [Dental Safari](#) to complete 17 dental screenings and cleanings. SIHF Healthcare also completed over 20 school physicals on their mobile unit while the Lion's Club completed more than 25 vision screenings. Additionally, 30 haircuts were given, ensuring students feel their best for the start of a new school year.



In early August, Molina partnered with [Promise Healthcare](#) to host the Customer Appreciation and Back-to-School Fair in Rantoul. This fair provided Molina the opportunity to connect with and give back to the community by providing more than 24 free back-to-school physicals and wellness exams on-site at the Molina Mobile Health Clinic. Attendees of the event enjoyed games, music, prizes, school supplies, and school enrollment assistance, all free of charge. Molina distributed over 400 backpacks to Rantoul community members.

With a new school year quickly approaching, the average family is expected to spend [\\$875](#) on back-to-school supplies. Through events like these, Molina is easing the financial stress families face during back to school, while also distributing key health care resources.

Annual Fiesta Del Sol

In July, Molina sponsored the 52nd annual Fiesta Del Sol, the largest Latino festival of its kind. Molina offered face painting and glitter tattoos, distributing hand fans, pens, and wristbands in addition to health care information.

Latino Americans are disproportionately impacted by barriers to health care, with data showing that Latino Americans have the [highest uninsured rates](#) of any racial or ethnic group in the country. Therefore, bringing health resources directly to community events such as this one is critically important.



MolinaPalooza

On August 9, Molina hosted MolinaPalooza, an event convening over 200 providers for engaging breakout sessions and valuable networking opportunities to inform better care for Illinoisians. High-quality providers have been [proven](#) to affect the quality of services. Communication, cooperation, and collaboration among healthcare providers also supports effective and efficient medical services and a shared responsibility for patient care. Events like MolinaPalooza encourage this partnership, which we hope will lead to more support amongst providers and ultimately, better outcomes for patients.



Reading with Molina

Summer is a great time to relax and catch up on your reading! In July, Molina continued our partnership with WSIU to host another 'Reading with Molina' event. The last event was held at [Brown County Public Library](#), where attendees enjoyed story time with local author [Tracy Schleppehorst](#), themed activities, and crafts. Additionally, Molina provided every child in attendance with a free book and activity to take home, along with a bookmark for attending the event. At the Mt. Sterling event, the author read her book, *Ripley Goes to School*, to the children and their guardians to encourage children to better understand and express their emotions.

Equity starts with education. [Research](#) shows that low literacy and language skills are associated with lower educational achievement and long-term behavioral and social problems. Through these reading events, we hope to instill a love of reading at an early age while also educating and empowering attendees with information that leads to long-term achievement.

Molina Mobile Units

Over the past few months, the Molina Mobile Unit continued to make stops throughout our state, reaching communities that have less access to health care or higher rates of chronic health conditions. Residents in Lincoln, Pekin, Peoria, Springfield, and Decatur are just the latest to have received physicals, wellness exams, prenatal and postpartum assessments, and blood pressure screenings, all free of charge.

In honor of National Immunization Month in August, Molina has prioritized ensuring students are up to date on immunizations so they can return to school healthy. Across Illinois, the number of under-vaccinated schools increased by [77%](#) from 2019 to 2022. Whether it be a mother receiving critical prenatal care or children receiving vaccinations necessary for school, the Molina mobile team has seen the real impact mobile unit stops can have on our local communities. We look forward to continuing to serve Illinoisians across our state through upcoming mobile unit stops.



[Learn more about the Molina Healthcare of Illinois Mobile Unit.](#)

Upcoming Mobile Unit Stops

City	Date	Location	Time
Lincoln	August 30	Lincoln Park District	9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Springfield	September 10	Washington Street Mission	9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Bloomington	September 11	Pregnancy Resource Center	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Decatur	September 17	Macon County Health Department	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Lincoln	September 26	Oasis Center	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Why We Serve Illinois

Molina Healthcare of Illinois is dedicated to serving our members and providing the best possible care that improves the health and lives of all Illinoisians. Our Why We Serve campaign highlights the personal stories of some of our team members who go above and beyond to find innovative ways to improve health outcomes and the health care experience for our members. This issue highlights Dani Brazee, associate vice president of member growth and community engagement.

Be sure to [check out more stories](#) from Molina case managers, specialists, and other staff who help us go the extra mile to provide excellent care throughout Illinois.

Dani Brazee, Associate Vice President, Member Growth and Community Engagement



In 2011, I moved to Illinois to help implement managed care services for the state's Medicaid population. During those first few years, I was able to meet so many passionate people throughout our state who are committed to improving the lives of Illinoisians. Over the course of 14 years, the Illinois Medicaid program has transformed and expanded a suite of services to not only include health care, but also initiatives improving home and community-based services, access to mental health resources, maternal health, and so much more to address gaps in care for a more equitable system for all.

I am blessed and honored that the last six years have been with Molina Healthcare of Illinois. Everyone on our team brings compassion and commitment to the members and the communities we serve. Through our Volunteer Time Off program, I have had the privilege of being integrated in my community, working alongside Molina's partners and meeting members face to face. There is something special about looking our members in the eyes, knowing we are making a positive impact on their lives.

Not only are we helping our members, but in my role, I also lead the Business Enterprise Program helping businesses owned by minorities, women, and people with disabilities succeed. Through this program, we look for partnership opportunities that align with our business needs, prioritizing vendors that are owned by minorities, women, and people with disabilities. In the last four years, I am proud to say over \$100 million has gone back to local businesses.

While I was raised by generous and loving parents in a stable, positive home, I recognize not everyone is as fortunate as I have been. I take the core values of my upbringing such as, "love your neighbor as yourself" and "do unto others as you would have done to you" and work hard to live them every day.

Building lasting relationships with members and making a difference in my community is Why We Serve.



Building Stronger Communities...One Life at a Time