

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, Feb. 14, 2022

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Flint/Genesee County students invited to write essay about current health/COVID-19 impact

Contest encourages students to learn about their family health history, COVID-19 and why it's important for present and future

FLINT – Genesee Health Plan (GHP) today announced it is accepting entries for its **Seventh Annual Health Heritage Essay Contest**. **Sovita Credit Union** is the contest sponsor, which is open to all Flint and Genesee County students in grades 5-12, including students in home-school, private school and virtual/distance learning.

Students are encouraged to interview one or more of their family members about their family health history and write an essay about their findings, understanding of their current health and COVID-19 as well as their plans for their future health. The contest began in February of 2015 to coincide with Black History Month with a focus on family health history. The 2021 contest drew 115 contest submissions, the most since the contest began.

“Knowing your family health history, especially during COVID-19, is important because each person is impacted by the pandemic in a different way,” said **E. Yvonne Lewis**, GHP Director of Outreach and Founder/CEO of the National Center for African American Health Consciousness. “Each year we hope the contest sparks a conversation between students and parents to keep the conversation going, providing a mechanism for students to learn, understand and reflect on their current health and future goals.”

The specific essay guidelines are outlined below and can also be found at geneseehealthplan.org.

Elementary (grades 5 and 6 only) & Middle/Junior High School

- Elementary: 200-350 words
- Middle/Junior High School: 350-500 words
- Essay must be typed or clearly hand-written
- First place winner will receive a \$200 gift card; second place winner will receive a \$100 gift card

High School

- 500-750 words
- Essay must be typed
- First place essay contest winner will receive a \$400 gift card; second place winner will receive a \$200 gift card

“Sovita Credit Union is excited to partner with GHP again this year to sponsor the Health Heritage Essay contest,” said **Jen Shew**, Sovita Credit Union Director of Marketing. “While the pandemic is not yet over, the contest provides an excellent opportunity for students to learn and reflect on how COVID-19 has impacted them, begin discussing their family health history and connect the contest with their studies whether attending classes in-person or virtually. We are grateful for the teachers and school staff who encourage their students to participate and hope that this year’s contest will be the biggest one yet.”

All essay submissions are due by Monday, April 4. Contest winners will be recognized at a later date.

Teachers are also invited to encourage participation among their students for the chance to win a prize. The teacher(s) who have the most student entries in the contest will receive a prize listed within their respective grade. Teachers have enjoyed participating and winning the prize to use for classroom supplies and other needs. Additionally, parents/guardians who encourage and assist in their student's involvement are also eligible for a \$100 gift card, sponsored by the [National Center for African American Health Consciousness](#).

Essays can be submitted electronically to: healthheritage@countyhealthplans.org or dropped off at the GHP office located at 2171 S. Linden Road, Flint.

Contact **Sherika Finklea** at (810) 232-7740 ext. 217 with any questions about contest guidelines.

For more information including specific contest rules and guidelines, visit www.geneseehhealthplan.org.

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Genesee Health Plan (GHP) is Genesee County’s plan for better health which began with the vision to have a community where each person has equal and affordable opportunity to live a healthy life. GHP is a nonprofit health care organization that was launched in 2001 to provide health care coverage and life-saving services to the uninsured residents of Genesee County. The plan has provided more than 90,000 county residents with doctor’s visits, cancer screenings, prescription drugs, x-rays and many more life-saving services since 2001. Learn more about GHP at geneseehhealthplan.org or call 844.232.7740.