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South Texas Grantmakers partner to revitalize Rio Grande Valley health care

McAllen, Texas – [Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation](#) is making its mark in the Rio Grande Valley, and potentially the nation, through a bold and innovative effort to improve the health of South Texas in partnership with [Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.](#)—the largest, private funding source for healthcare services in South Texas.

The partnership between the Legacy Foundation and Methodist Healthcare Ministries took shape after the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS), invested in Methodist Healthcare Ministries' [Sí Texas: Social Innovation for a Healthy South Texas](#) project, an initiative designed to test strategies effective in treating diabetes and depression in communities with high rates of poverty, obesity and other associated risk factors. The federal investment from the SIF was matched by Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and now the Legacy Foundation has stepped up to sustain the effort locally by providing a dollar-for-dollar match to each of the Rio Grande Valley organizations taking part in the project. In total, the Legacy Foundation will provide \$3.3 million in support of the initiative.

According to Randall Baker, executive director at Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, the partnership with MHM was a natural fit and came at a pivotal moment in the organization's development, "We at the Legacy Foundation just completed our second funding cycle for 2015 and we are especially pleased to count the network of Rio Grande Valley providers, who are laying the groundwork for such an extraordinary opportunity to improve the health of our communities, among our grantees."

The Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation was established in 2011 and was the result of a joint venture between Valley Baptist Health System and Vanguard Health System. As a result of this transaction, the Foundation received proceeds that are the source of funds for its grant making program. This year marks the foundation's second year of funding, which amounts to a total of \$ 8,000,000 invested in programs and services operated in the Rio Grande Valley by its grantees.

"Partnership is engrained in the Legacy Foundation's mission—it is at the core of our approach to grant-making. I know through our partnership with Methodist Healthcare Ministries we will have a lasting impact in this region," says Baker.

Six of the nine agencies taking part in the Sí Texas Project will be presented with grant funds from the Legacy Foundation:

- Nuestra Clinica del Valle, Hidalgo and Starr Counties
- The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron Counties
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Community Health Management Corp, Inc. (El Milagro Clinic), Hidalgo County
- The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (formerly The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio), Hidalgo County
- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health, Cameron County
- Community Hope Projects, Inc. (Hope Family Health Center), Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, and Cameron Counties

The funding provided to these agencies represents 49 percent of the total funding the Legacy Foundation will provide this year, and it has committed to continue funding the effort for the next five years.

“Both Methodist Healthcare Ministries and the Legacy Foundation share a mission of serving the least served and are driven by the principles of our faith and connection to the community we serve,” explains Kevin C. Moriarty, president and chief executive officer at Methodist Healthcare Ministries. “There is a tremendous need and demand for healthcare services in the Rio Grande Valley, yet the access to care is severely limited—not just in terms of what is available to those who are uninsured or low-income, because conditions like diabetes and depression do not discriminate based on one’s income, but the lack of coverage makes it all the more difficult to treat those conditions. That’s why this partnership is so unique and timely; the investment the Legacy Foundation has made today, and their commitment to the initiative into the future, will help to test and prove strategies for treating diabetes and depression that will work for others far beyond the Rio Grande Valley—our goal is to find a method that can be replicated across the nation.”

The Legacy Foundation funds organizations that improve the quality of health in the lower Rio Grande area, and is currently accepting applications for its 2015 funding cycle. The deadline to apply for grant funds is November 1, 2015. To learn more about the Legacy Foundation’s grant-making program, interested applicants are invited to attend a funding forum on Friday, September 18 at the Harlingen Public Library hosted by the Legacy Foundation. For more details visit www.vblf.org.

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About Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation

The Legacy Foundation, in the tradition of Valley Baptist Health System, invests in and serves as a catalyst for ideas, partnerships, medical education, research and programs that improve the health and quality of life in South Texas. The Foundation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. For more information, visit www.vblf.org.

About Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc. (MHM) is a private, faith-based not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing medical, dental and health-related human services to low-income families and the uninsured in South Texas. The mission of the organization is "Serving Humanity to Honor God" by improving the physical, mental and spiritual health of those least served in the Rio Texas Conference area of The United Methodist Church. The mission also includes MHM’s one-half ownership of the Methodist Healthcare System, the largest healthcare system in South Texas, which creates a unique avenue to ensure that it continues to be a benefit to the community by providing quality care to all and charitable care when needed. For more information, visit www.mhm.org.