



**For Immediate Release**  
**Contact: Lisa French**  
**UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation**  
**Phone: 734-433-1000 ext. 7426**

## **UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation Receives Grant for Exhale – The Family Caregiver Initiative**

### *Huron Valley PACE in Ypsilanti One of Eleven New Projects Awarded*

**Chelsea/Ypsilanti, MI, Oct. 9, 2024** – The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is delighted to receive a three-year grant from Exhale – The Family Caregiver Initiative. This funding initiative, supporting family caregiver respite programs in Southeast Michigan, is made possible, thanks to a partnership of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation. Eleven projects were funded in this cohort, totaling nearly \$2.2 million in new Exhale grants.



A program of Brio Living Services, Huron Valley PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly), with its Day Center in Ypsilanti, serves the psychosocial, medical, and supportive needs of low-income, nursing home-eligible older adults, ages 55 and older, who live in its service area of Washtenaw and Monroe counties, and parts of Oakland, Wayne, and Livingston counties. Most participants are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and pay no additional fees for PACE services.

PACE also offers respite for the caregivers of its participants. However, Huron Valley PACE Executive Director Sonja Felton, LMSW, MPA, explained that there are many older adults and their caregivers with limited means and resources, whose income is just above the eligibility threshold for PACE. “Through this project, we aim to identify these individuals and caregivers, through our own PACE enrollment team as well as through partnerships with AARP Michigan, Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels, and the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, to be able to provide support and respite for these caregivers who would also greatly benefit from our services,” said Felton.

“When caregivers are asked about the help they need most, they consistently rank respite among their top priorities. Increasing opportunities for caregivers to take a break will improve their—

and their loved ones’—quality of life, and also benefit their loved ones,” said Neel Hajra, Chief Executive Officer, Michigan Health Endowment Fund. “That’s why we’re excited to help dozens more organizations in Southeast Michigan expand and strengthen the network of respite supports.”

“Through this project, Huron Valley PACE will offer respite, support, educational opportunities, and the gift of time for these caregivers, while also ensuring the older adult and caregivers’ families are cared for through activities, meals, and opportunities to socialize,” said Felton.

The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is the fundraising arm for Brio Living Services. Foundation President and CEO Kelli Smith, CFRE, said, “We are grateful to receive this Exhale grant to support the needs of family caregivers across the Huron Valley PACE service area, with the goal of making life better for both caregivers and their loved ones. This wonderful collaboration of local nonprofits and funders is in keeping with Brio Living Services’ vision of ‘a world in which all are empowered to age well.’”

PACE offers a cost-effective alternative to nursing home care, providing overall savings of 40% to the State of Michigan compared to traditional nursing home care. PACE’s interdisciplinary team of professionals provides participants with a “one-stop” shop model for all their healthcare needs, including comprehensive medical, occupational and physical therapy, pharmacy needs, nutrition and meals, health education, social and recreational activities, and door-to-door transportation. Most participants are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid and pay no additional fees for PACE services.

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***Exhale – The Family Caregiver Initiative** funds innovative collaborative projects that are reimagining respite and increasing respite opportunities for family caregivers of older adults. Respite, a period of rest or relief, can play a key role in reinforcing caregiver well-being and effectiveness, leading to better health, social-emotional outcomes, and lower costs of care for family caregivers and older adults they care for. Read more about Exhale at [ExhaleForCaregivers.org](http://ExhaleForCaregivers.org).*

*The **Michigan Health Endowment Fund** works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and older adults. For more information about the Health Fund and its grantmaking, visit [mihealthfund.org](http://mihealthfund.org).*

*The **UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation**, in support of Brio Living Services, is the charitable arm for the organization, with headquarters in Chelsea and Grand Rapids, Michigan. The mission of the UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation is: As faithful, philanthropic stewards and steadfast advocates for vibrant aging, we support the mission of Brio Living Services. The UMRC-Porter Hills Foundation’s fundraising initiatives focus on the health and well-being of older adults, and the education and retention of our outstanding team members. These include the Foundation’s cornerstone—Benevolent Care—as well as Team Member Investment, Capital Improvements, and Program Investment.*

*734.433.1000 | 616.577.2297 | [Foundation.UMRCPH.org](http://Foundation.UMRCPH.org)*

*Building on a foundation of serving older adults since 1906, **Brio Living Services**, formerly UMRC & Porter Hills, is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives. Its vision is: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Brio Living Services represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan and serves the most economically diverse population of older adults. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a*

*commitment to cutting-edge care, Brio Living Services and its affiliates serve approximately 8,000 older adults each year, from 22 locations and service lines, across 20 counties in Michigan's lower peninsula. 734.433.1000 | 616.949.4975 | MyBrio.org*

*The mission of **Huron Valley PACE** is to partner with aging community members to provide integrative care and promote successful community living. Huron Valley PACE serves older adults age 55 and older who have ongoing healthcare needs and live within our service area. PACE provides all the care and services covered by Medicare and Medicaid, as well as additional care and services regarded as necessary by the interdisciplinary team. PACE provides coverage for primary and specialty care, prescription drugs, medical transportation, hospital visits, dental care, medical equipment, home care, as well as physical, occupational, and speech therapy, and other services. Our interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals will work together with you and your family to develop the most effective plan of care for you. 734.572.5777 | HuronValleyPACE.org*