



GARRETT COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Garrett County Health Department

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News Release

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Garrett County Celebrates the Grand Opening of the 360 Access Hub in Oakland

By Christen Coddington, Coordinator of Special Programs

OAKLAND, Md. — Nearly 100 community partners gathered on Friday, October 24, to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the 360 Access Hub, a new community-centered space located at 360 West Liberty Street in Oakland. The Hub is designed to serve as a connection point to local resources and operates as a client-choice food pantry, empowering residents to select the foods that best meet their needs and preferences.

The 360 Access Hub was established through a collaboration among the Garrett County Health Department (GCHD), Maryland Physicians Care (MPC), and Garrett County Community Action (GCCAC). Founding partners Shelley Argabrite and John Corbin of GCHD, Lorena De Leon of MPC, and Chris Mullett of GCCAC share a common belief that food is more than sustenance - *it's a way to connect people*.

Attendees toured the thoughtfully designed space, which includes a future teaching kitchen, an open area for classes and shared meals, a patio, private meeting rooms for agency partners, and a large area outfitted with a garage door, a pallet jack, shelving, and cold storage.

During the ceremony, Chris Mullett, GCCAC President, reflected on the building's transformation:

"This building has seen a lot of iterations, and this latest one is going to meet the needs of a lot of people in this community," Mullett said.

Shelley Argabrite, Director of Population Health, Innovation and Informatics, County Health Strategist, and Accreditation Coordinator at the Garrett County Health Department, spoke about the collective effort that made the Hub possible:

"It's been an outpouring of support, and it's very humbling to stand here in this moment and see all of us in this collective way," said Argabrite. "We have a lot of room to grow, but we have the opportunity to do that now. I look around and see a room full of hope, courage, generosity, and love. We are connected as human beings. We all need to eat, and we all deserve to eat well." Argabrite encouraged attendees to continue focusing on the power of shared humanity, "bringing life to a space that puts dignity first and honors every guest who walks through the door."

She also highlighted the five-year journey of iterative progress, funding, and community partnerships that led to this moment, including a significant investment from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and the ongoing support of Maisha Douyon Cover, Program Officer in Public Health and Community Impact at CareFirst.



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Jason Rottman, Chief Executive Officer of Maryland Physicians Care, concluded the event by reaffirming MPC's commitment to supporting its members through services at the 360 Access Hub.

"Access to nutritious food is at the heart of strong, healthy families," said Jason Rottman. "In Maryland, food insecurity remains a leading concern for many families, especially in rural counties. We are proud to support the launch of the 360 Access Hub in Garrett County to help ease that burden and expand access to health education, workforce development and lasting support."

Following the ceremony, the Hub's team immediately began serving the community. Thirteen families received direct food assistance through the client-choice pantry that very afternoon.

For more information, please visit 360AccessHub.com.



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