INVITATION:
HealthConnect is an invitation to our community to rethink how we address the most challenging barriers to health and disparities facing Central Iowa’s children and youth.

Mid-Iowa Health Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health by ensuring our children and youth are surrounded by a safe and supportive community, have access to quality health and education services, and are protected from toxic forms of adversity.

HealthConnect efforts will:

- Connect an identified children’s health issue with a non-healthcare breakthrough solution.
- Connect the current and historical social barriers that create significant obstacles to a healthy childhood.
- Connect with the voice and leadership of those directly affected.
- Connect with initiatives already underway in our community and with existing assets and resources.
- Connect system-focused strategies that reach across sectors to support health improvement.
- Connect how programs and policies can impact equity and health outcomes.
- Connect data and research to prioritization and meaningful action.
- Connect the understanding that children live in families and families live in communities.

The foundation for lifelong health begins in our homes, schools, jobs, and neighborhoods. For all children and youth in Central Iowa to have equal opportunity for good health, greater attention and resources must be directed to addressing the fundamental causes, or upstream factors, of poor health for children and youth.

We believe that by connecting non-traditional partners in innovative ways, creative approaches to improving children’s – and lifelong - health will emerge.
PROPOSED WORK:
Should accelerate action, create equity and catalyze innovative solutions to the most pressing health needs of children and families in our community.

Can be in various stages of the innovation process, including increasing collective understanding of the issue, testing and/or implementing promising solutions.

PRIORITY AREAS:

FOSTER COMMUNITY - THROUGH OPPORTUNITY, CONNECTIONS AND STABILITY
Examples:
- Cultivate educational opportunities to support the enrichment and advancement of children and youth
- Increase access to safe, affordable housing
- Strengthen neighborhoods, reduce violence, and promote social capital among community members
- Promote positive relationships that provide support, trust, and social connectedness

ENSURE ACCESS - THROUGH EQUITY, UTILIZATION AND NAVIGATION
Examples:
- Ensure children and families have equitable access to timely and appropriate medical care, preventive services and adequate health insurance coverage
- Increase the availability of culturally and linguistically responsive healthcare
- Expand access to services that help families navigate health and support systems, connecting children and youth with the right care at the right time
- Promote the utilization of preventive services, such as prenatal care and screening

REDUCING ADVERSITY - THROUGH PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND RESILIENCY
Examples:
- Reduce the prevalence and incidence of child abuse, neglect and family dysfunction
- Increase awareness of the important role early childhood brain development plays in future physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and well-being
- Foster resiliency to manage stress and function well when faced with challenges and trauma
- Support parenting knowledge, skills and healthy family interactions to nurture the social, emotional, and physical development of children and youth