$900K in grants aims to fight health issues

The $15 million Memorial Health Fund was set up to provide grants in York County health, mental health and social services.

York County groups have access to as much as $900,000 in grants for health services, the result of a York County Community Foundation endowment.

Combating obesity and diabetes and providing access to healthy food are some examples of projects the funds could be used for, said Lise Levin, vice president of community investment at the foundation.

"The wording of the fund is deliberately extremely broad: physical health, mental health and social well-being," Levin said.
The endowment, called the Memorial Health Fund, came about after Memorial Hospital was sold to Community Health Systems in 2012, said Jack Kay, the chairman of the Memorial Health Fund board.

With the sale, Memorial Hospital went from being a nonprofit to part of a larger, for-profit company, and its stakeholders wanted to make sure that the sale would benefit York County, Kay said. Board members took the profits from the hospital sale and put it into a fund now worth more than $15 million.

Like many endowments, the fund generates grant money by investing the principle assets, said Jane Conover, president and CEO of York County Community Foundation.

“We'll have up to $900,000 to grant this year, and we expect similar amounts in future years,” Conover said.

The foundation is taking grant applications now through July 31, said Patricia Azriel, the foundation's director of communications.

"If a project is innovative and exciting and meets the criteria, it could be awarded by the end of October," Azriel said.