

What is the community challenge?

OnTrack Greenville middle schools located in the White Horse Community of Greenville County, South Carolina serve a higher proportion of low-income and minority students than other middle schools in the district. Overall, students attending these four schools have placed behind their peers in key academic measures of attendance, behavior, and course performance. These early warning indicators of disengagement in middle school are connected to increased risks of high school dropout (Balfanz & Fox, 2011).

What is the promising solution?

To help improve student health and attendance outcomes, the Greenville Health System (GHS; now known as Prisma Health – Upstate) Bradshaw Institute for Community Child Health & Advocacy implemented School-Based Health Centers at OnTrack Greenville schools. The School-Based Health Centers worked to improve student attendance by providing on-site opportunities for students to receive acute illness services, chronic care management, and screenings for psychosocial health (including depression, anxiety, and other traumas). In addition, they provided sports physicals, nutrition counseling, health promotion education, prescriptions for medication, and referrals to community resources, medical homes, and specialist services as needed.

What was the purpose of evaluation?

The evaluation of GHS's School-Based Health Centers by the Riley Institute at Furman University began in 2016 and finished reporting in 2019. An implementation evaluation examined reach, use, and model fidelity and provided feedback for quality improvement. To assess if students who used services at School-Based Health Centers had improved attendance, the impact study utilized a single-site, non-randomized group design with groups formed by propensity score matching. Treatment students were matched to: (1) other students in the treatment schools who did not participate in the intervention; (2) other students in the same school district; and (3) to other students attending Title I schools across the state of South Carolina.

What did the evaluation find?

As a grantee of the Social Innovation Fund, United Way of Greenville County engaged an independent evaluator to conduct an evaluation of the School-Based Health Centers. Key findings include:

- GHS implemented the program with fidelity. Reach and use of the SBHCs increased substantially by the last year of the study, and awareness increased among educators and students.
- Promising findings suggest that, when compared to matched students at district schools, School-Based Health Center students were significantly less likely to be chronically absent than comparison students.
- Students who used the School-Based Health Center were more likely to establish medical homes, an important exploratory secondary outcome of the model.

Program At-a-Glance

CNCS Program: Social Innovation Fund

Intervention: School-Based Health Centers

Subgrantee: Greenville Health System

Intermediary: United Way of Greenville County

Focus Area: Youth Development

Focus Population: Middle school youth

Community Served: White Horse Community of Greenville County, SC

Notes on the evaluation

After adjusting for multiple comparisons, the one significant positive result for student attendance was no longer statistically significant. The findings may have been limited by several contextual factors, including the fact that the study had to end two years early due to discontinuation of SIF funding. The study will continue with non-federal funding and will make improvements to some study procedures drawing on lessons learned from the early years of the study. With the ability to examine the School-Based Health Centers after they have been implemented over a longer time period, the study may be able to demonstrate significant effects.

How is Greenville Health System using the evaluation findings to improve?

OnTrack Greenville is a collective impact initiative that created a culture of trust and learning with Sub-Grantee and school partners.

1. Drawing on data-driven conversations with principals, immediate action led to an increase in the percent of students whose guardians returned signed parental consent-to-treat forms, which are required if students are to be able to seek treatment at School-Based Health Centers.
2. Program staff also learned that the frequent communication with stakeholders about the purpose and services of the School-Based Health Center helped build awareness and trust.
3. Fully integrating the School-Based Health Center Nurse Practitioner into school early warning and response teams led to increased capacity for timely screening and referral for health-related concerns.

Partners' commitment to shared values and the ongoing efforts of United Way of Greenville County serving as the collective impact backbone helped strengthen relationships between researchers, district stakeholders, and partners. Local leaders have committed to funding the initiative and evaluation for the final two years of the project in the absence of Social Innovation Fund continuation funding.



The content of this brief was drawn from the full evaluation report submitted to CNCS by the grantee/subgrantee. The section of the brief that discusses evaluation use includes contribution of the grantee/subgrantee. All original content from the report is attributable to its authors. **To access the full evaluation report and learn more about CNCS, please visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov/research>.**

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), combines public and private resources to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the U.S. The SIF invests in three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.

Evaluation At-a-Glance

Evaluation Design: Single-site non-randomized group design with groups formed by propensity score matching

Study Population: Middle school youth

Independent Evaluator: The Riley Institute at Furman University and Clemson University

This Evaluation's Level of Evidence*: Preliminary

* SIF and AmeriCorps currently use different definitions of levels of evidence.