

2023

IMPACT REPORT



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REIMAGINING RURAL HEALTH

As the fiscal year closes, I am excited to share what Clemson Rural Health has accomplished in the past twelve months and look forward to next year. As we continue to expand our operation at an exponential pace, new technologies and team members are allowing us to reach rural and underserved communities in ways that would be unimaginable just a few years ago. It truly is an exciting time at Clemson Rural Health.

Fiscal Year 2023 was a banner year for Clemson Rural Health. We opened hub clinics in both Oconee County and Orangeburg County, opened the first Clemson Rural Health Support Office – located in Abbeville Area Medical Center, nearly doubled the number of patient visits, established new educational collaborations with colleges and universities in communities we serve, and much more. In recognition of our work, the Clemson University Board of Trustees embraced Clemson Rural Health in the University's strategic plan as a strategy to transform lives statewide and beyond.

For example, with the generous support of our state's legislature, the Governor's Office, the SC Department of Health and Human Services, philanthropic partners, foundations and other funders, our team was able to launch an innovative remote patient monitoring program integrated with our fixed and mobile clinics. Through collaboration with Palmetto



Ron Gimbel, Ph.D., arrived to Clemson as the Department Chair/Head, Public Health Sciences in July 2014 and held the position until July 2021 when he stepped off to serve as Director, Clemson Rural Health. Working with a talented leadership team, Dr. Gimbel is seeking to expand the University's leadership in rural health statewide.

Care Connections, we adopted advanced technologies to deliver health services while reducing barriers to care.

While we continue to evolve, our vision remains the same. My hope is that this impact report illustrates the vital and diverse work being done by Clemson Rural Health in our state and inspires you to join us in reimagining a healthier South Carolina.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Gimbel".

Ron Gimbel, Ph.D.
Professor and Director of Clemson Rural Health

OUR VISION

To transform health outcomes in rural and underserved communities.

OUR MISSION

To reduce premature mortality, decrease preventable hospitalizations and improve overall quality of life in the regions we serve.

OUR STRATEGIES

Integrating food and nutrition with primary care.

Conducting and facilitating research.

Investing in rural health workforce development.

Building strategic partnerships.

Providing evidence-based care.

Reducing social determinant barriers to health care.

Engaging patients as partners in their health care.

Clemson Rural Health is an academic component of the Clemson University College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences.

CLEMSON RURAL HEALTH
BY THE NUMBERS

\$1.3M

New Research
Awards

1,827
Preventative
Screenings



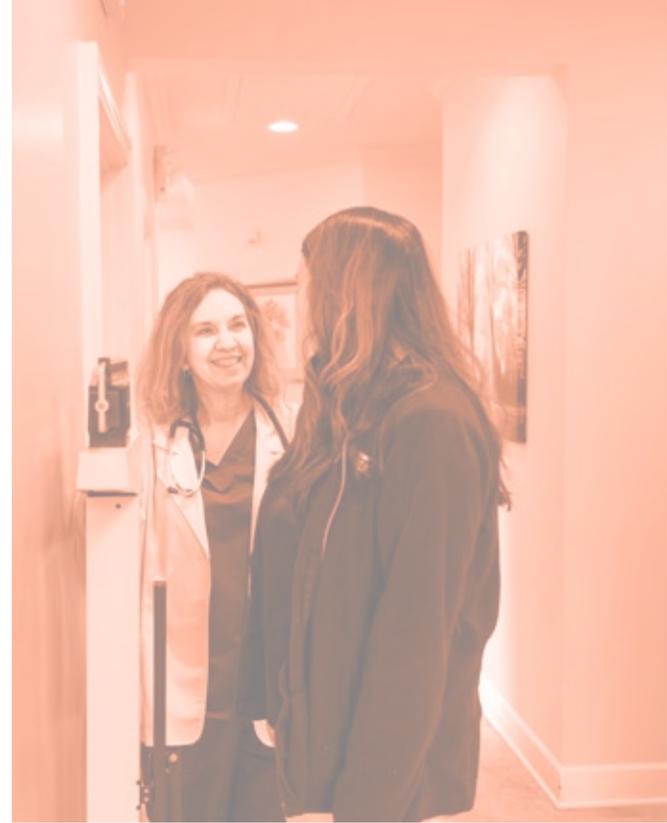
55K
Miles Traveled

210+
Community
Collaborators

76%
Increase in
Patient Revenue
from FY 2022



11,104
Total Patient Visits



9

Mobile Health Units

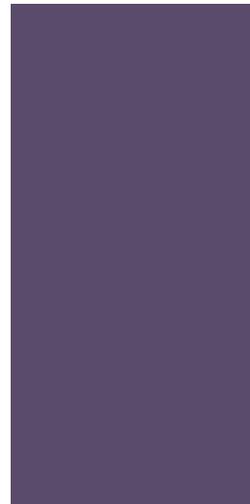
78

Mobile Clinic Locations

\$2.6M

Research Expenditures

Funding Sources



State Funding



Grants



Patient Revenue



University Funding



Philanthropy



Clemson® Elevate

OUR BOLD STRATEGY FOR CLEMSON

In April, Clemson University unveiled a three-part strategic plan to build its success and reputation. Fifteen areas of focus and excellence were defined including a focus on rural health initiatives.

While Clemson Rural Health has always worked to support Clemson University's land grant mission, being named as a key component of the current strategic plan bolsters our commitment to transform access and outcomes throughout South Carolina.



Deliver the No. 1 student experience in the nation.

Every Student Thrives



Double research expenditures by 2035, position for AAU membership.

Discovery Drives Success



Transform lives statewide and beyond through educational, economic, agricultural and health outreach.

Service Builds Community



*Clemson Rural Health is responsible for **four driving metrics** under the third Clemson Elevate pillar.*



Number of **improved clinical outcomes** for patients with chronic diseases served by Clemson Rural Health.

Number of **patients served** annually by Clemson Rural Health.

Number of **clinical trials** supported through Clemson Rural Health in underserved and rural communities.

Number of rural or underserved **residents enrolled in clinical trials** through Clemson Rural Health.

REIMAGINING CLINICAL CARE

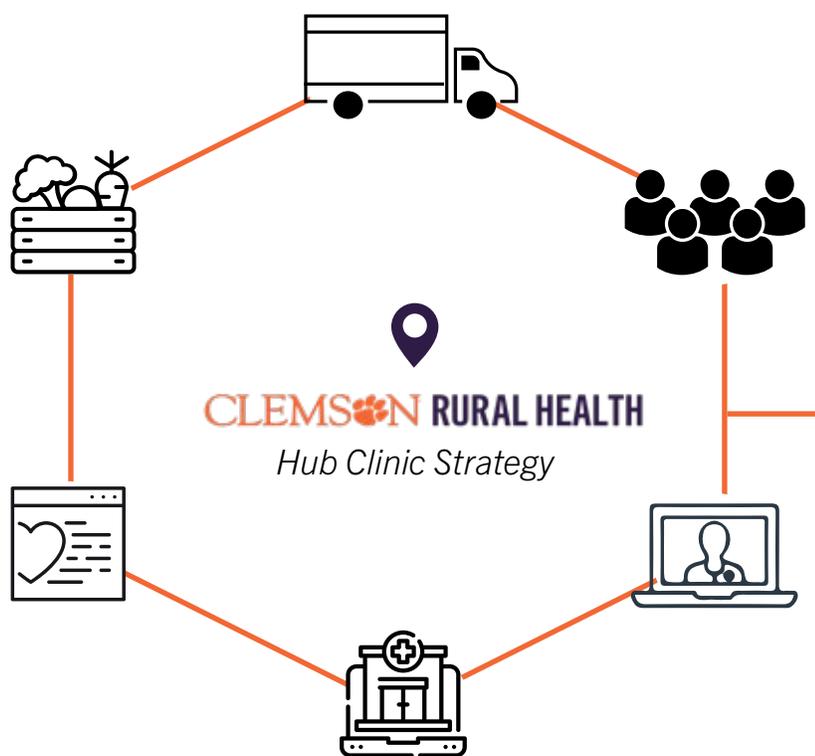
Connecting Communities through Hub Clinics

To deliver on its 2019 founding mission, Clemson Rural Health continues to install hub clinics in strategic locations across the state. The hub clinics will come alongside existing organizations and practices to fill gaps in care, enhance chronic disease management and primary care, expand access to preventive screenings, collaborate on social determinants of health projects, integrate healthy food solutions with clinical care, support South Carolina businesses through worksite wellness events, build and expand a diverse rural health workforce, and bring clinical and translational research into communities that have not had access previously.

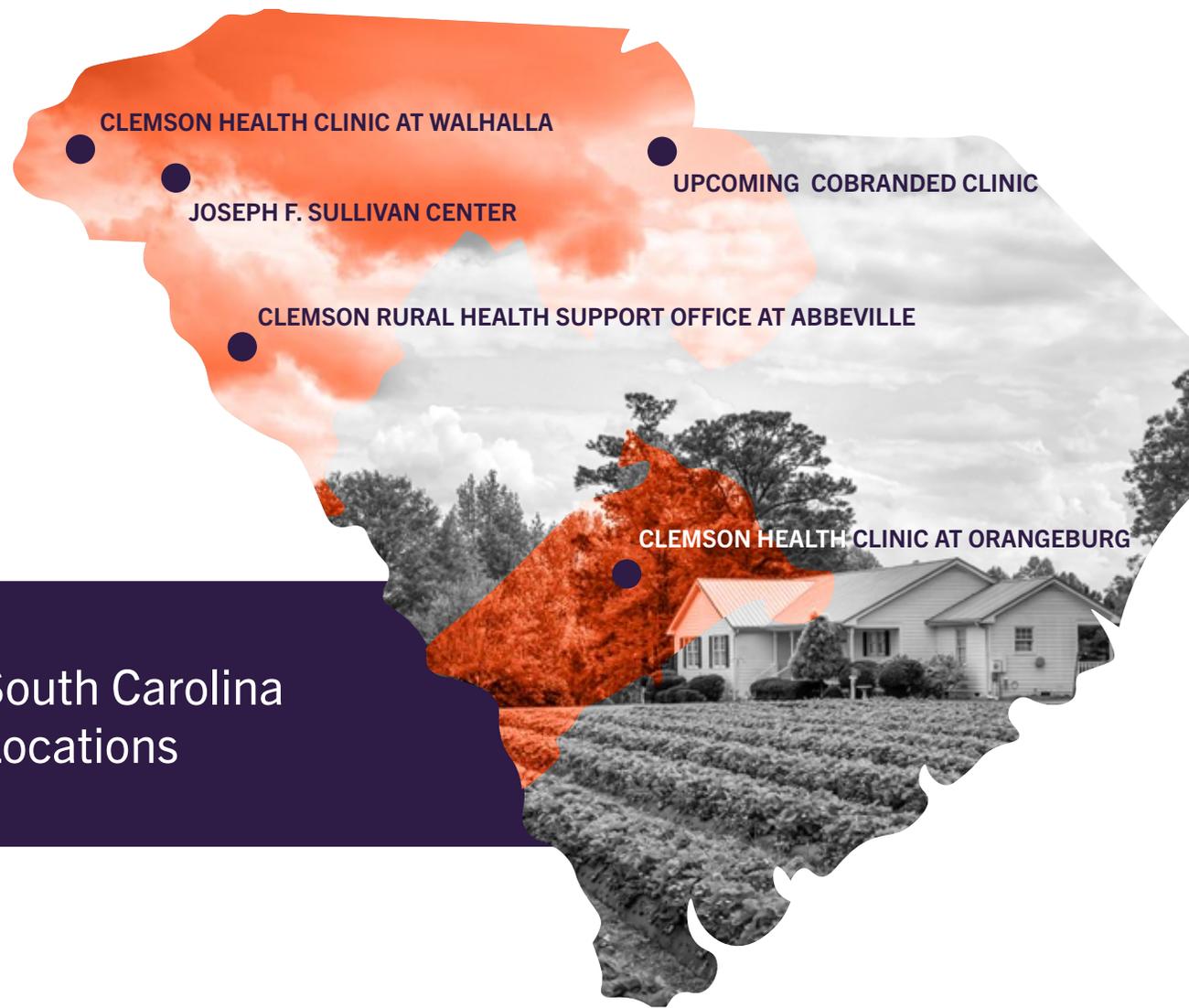
The purpose of the hub clinics is to decentralize health care resources into rural and underserved communities to improve health care access and outcomes. All hub clinics will include a

multidisciplinary health care team, a dedicated mobile health unit, and connection to a common electronic health system and rural virtual care platform.

During the 2023 fiscal year, Clemson Rural Health celebrated the grand opening of both the Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla and the Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg.



5 South Carolina Locations



Fleet of Mobile Health Units

Multidisciplinary Team

Remote Patient Monitoring Platform

Fixed Primary Care Clinic

Common Electronic Medical Record

Produce Prescription Program

A Grand Opening in Walhalla, SC



After operating as a SCDHEC sponsored site for many years, the Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla officially opened as a permanent Clemson Rural Health hub clinic on February 1, 2022. This clinic was strategically placed to fill health care gaps existing in Oconee County and beyond.

To mark the occasion, officials representing Clemson University, the City of Walhalla and Oconee County came together on September 26, 2022, for a ribbon cutting and open house.

The event included tours of the clinic and brand-new mobile health clinic, free blood pressure checks, giveaways and a catered gratitude

*The Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla **grew 143%** during the 2023 fiscal year, serving over **4,000 patients.***

lunch for the county employees who made the Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla possible.

Remarks were given by South Carolina Senator Thomas C. Alexander, Oconee County Council Chairman John Elliot, former County Council member Wayne McCall and Clemson professor and director of Clemson Rural Health, Ron Gimbel.



Filling Health Care Gaps in Orangeburg, SC

On January 9, 2023, Clemson Rural Health opened their hub clinic. The Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg was founded to offer primary care services and increase access to quality health care for the residents of Orangeburg, Calhoun, Bamberg and Barnwell Counties.

The clinic will focus on high quality clinical care, educational partnerships with local institutions of higher education, and facilitating clinical research. The hub will host mobile health units, telehealth, remote patient monitoring and other innovations.

Embracing a New Community

In line with Clemson’s land grant mission, Clemson Rural Health aims to reach the entire state with its innovative services. When entering a new community it is vital to not only provide data-driven and culturally competent care, but to hold to two absolutes. The first is to **do no harm**. The existing community practices and organizations are the backbone of the community. Clemson Rural Health’s goal is to build bridges and fill gaps to support these collaborators. The second is to remain **neutral brokers**. Clemson Rural Health will collaborate with any organization, practice, health care system or university that aligns with the mission to transform health outcomes in rural and underserved communities. The Orangeburg hub clinic already **collaborates with over 30 community organizations** to provide diabetes support, cancer screenings and primary care.

15% of Orangeburg County residents live with diabetes.

usnews.com

▼ *The Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg celebrated its grand opening on May 25, 2023. South Carolina Representative Gilda Cobb Hunter, Dr. Graham Adams and members of the Clemson Rural Health leadership team were there to officially cut the ribbon on the new hub clinic.*

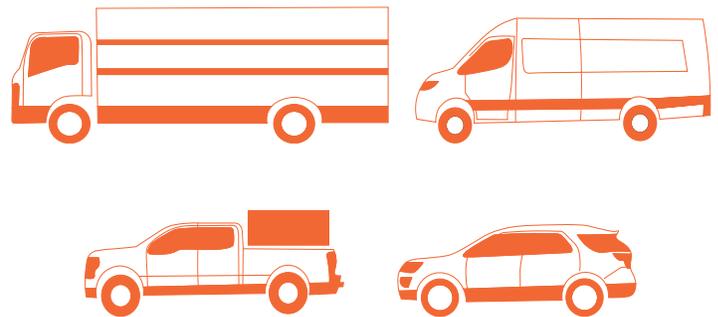




▲ From left to right: Terrence Bovian, Mobile Health Coordinator; Tamia Anthony, Community Health Worker; Courtnee Sanders, Administrative Assistant; Darlene Fludd, Nurse Practitioner; Donna Atkinson, Nurse Practitioner; Doniele Hayden, Office Manager; Calli Watford, Registered Dietitian; Sandra Jones, Community Health Worker.

New Mobile Health Units

The Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg is equipped with four mobile health units, each uniquely appropriate for various clinical and outreach initiatives. The largest mobile unit boasts two fully stocked exam rooms, lab, bathroom and waiting area and is typically used for primary care services and cancer screenings. For smaller clinics and HIV/HCV screening, the Orangeburg team sends out the Sprinter van converted into a mobile exam room. The third unit is unique to the Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg from the other hub clinics. The fresh produce delivery truck, affectionately known as Frank the Tank, is a Ford F250 outfitted with a refrigerated unit that can hold 25 produce boxes as a part of the clinic's produce prescription program. This truck will be able to deliver biweekly boxes to communities with limited access to healthy foods. And finally, the clinic's community health workers use the Clemson Rural Health SUV to travel across the low country as they build partnerships and awareness to advance the mission.





▲ *The Joseph F. Sullivan Center is located in Edwards Hall on Clemson's central campus. Founded in 1978 by nursing faculty to provide experience for students and convenient care for faculty and staff, the clinic began expanding beyond the borders of campus in the mid 1990s. This work has evolved into the Clemson Rural Health we see today.*



Caring for Clemson's Workforce

CU4Health is a no-cost annual screening that allows Clemson employees to take charge of their health and wellness decisions and makes Clemson University a healthier place of employment. The screening begins with a comprehensive health risk assessment and includes a complete blood count, lipid panel, basic metabolic panel and complete biometric screening. After receiving their results, patients have the opportunity to create a wellness plan with a health educator.

This service is offered at no-cost to employees and their spouses covered by the South Carolina state insurance plan. **21% of the Clemson employees screened exhibited elevated cholesterol and 17% had elevated blood pressure.** These employees then met with a health educator to discuss their results and create a plan for lowering their risk.

Campuswide Impact

While Joseph F. Sullivan Center (JFSC) operates primarily through its on-campus clinic, JFSC staff also take mobile health units to different departments and academic units to provide clinical services. During the summer months, Will Mayo, nurse practitioner and site lead, offered on-site CU4Health screenings and other preventive services for the Clemson University Police Department. During the fall and winter, JFSC hit the road to provide pop-up flu clinics around campus for faculty and staff. Through partnerships with various departments, they were able to conveniently provide **208 flu vaccines.**

The Joseph F. Sullivan Center screened **230** Clemson employees and spouses this year.





Bringing Care to the Patient

Mobile Cancer Screenings

As a member of SCDHEC's Best Chance Network, Clemson Rural Health provided comprehensive cancer screenings and education to South Carolina women, including **171 women screened for cervical cancer and 420 screened for breast cancer*** during the 2023 fiscal year in **17 community sites**. Clemson Rural Health nurses also **provided case management for 114 women** based on abnormal findings and ensured coordinated care for cancer treatment if needed. Spanish interpreters also attend these clinics as 40% of these patients are primarily Spanish-speaking.

*Screenings based on age and guidelines.

Prioritizing Heart Health

Conducted alongside the Best Chance Network, WISEWOMAN is a CDC administered program facilitated by registered dietitian Brooke Brittain to help women understand and reduce their risk for heart disease. After a cardiovascular risk screening, patients participate in six health coaching sessions concluding with a no-cost follow up screening.

During the 2023 fiscal year, Clemson Rural Health saw **168 participants** who experienced an average **clinically significant reduction in A1c of 6%** and an **average reduction in total cholesterol of 14%**.

Produce Prescription Programs

A major priority of Clemson Rural Health is to provide produce prescriptions programs at each hub clinic location. This program works by allowing providers to prescribe no-cost produce boxes to patients exhibiting chronic health conditions and some level of food insecurity. Each month participants receive two boxes of fruits and vegetables and attend a cooking demonstration led by a registered dietitian using the foods and recipes included in the box. Classes and resources are provided in English and Spanish by a team of Spanish language interpreters. Since its launch in 2022, **the program has enrolled 117 participants with 62% of the participants experiencing an average, clinically significant reduction in A1c of 11%**.

This year, Clemson Rural Health distributed **890 produce boxes** in Oconee, Abbeville and Orangeburg County.



Clemson Rural Health has identified 26 cases of HCV in South Carolina's correctional institutions.



Hepatitis C Testing in High Risk Communities

For the last two years, Clemson Rural Health has employed a novel approach to support the World Health Organization hepatitis C (HCV) elimination goals. Through the existing mobile health unit framework, a small team including a nurse practitioner, health educator and social worker were **deployed to 29 community sites to screen 509 individuals**. The sites were chosen to provide access to those at increased risk for HCV and its complications. At the mobile sites, the individual is tested through a point-of-contact finger stick and is given results within twenty minutes. If the patient tests positive for HCV, the nurse practitioner then provides treatment at low or no-cost to the patient. **This year, 88 patients with HCV have been identified, with**

57 on curative medication on the path to full recovery.

Building on previous years of success, the team began providing HIV point-of-care testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services at the HCV clinic sites. They also expanded their services to local detention centers. This step was especially important as those being held in a detention centers are uninsured and HCV effects this population 10-20 times more than the general population. This intervention not only reaches a known high risk population, but also decreases the burden of untreated infectious diseases on rural counties and hospitals.

Transforming Diabetes Outcomes

Once again on the cutting edge of health care innovation, Clemson Rural Health has implemented a comprehensive remote patient monitoring intervention for prediabetic and diabetic women known as **ManageTogether**. Funded by a Women’s Health Initiative grant, ManageTogether is available for women over the age of 18 in Orangeburg, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Calhoun counties.

To access the remote patient monitoring program, the participants were assigned some or all of the following medical tracking equipment.

- Blood Pressure Cuffs
- Pulse Oximeters
- Continuous Glucose Monitors
- Tablets with Data Plan
- Weight Scale

These devices were each connected via Bluetooth to Carium, a virtual care platform. This allows clinicians and health educators to see

daily health updates and make evidence-based decisions regarding their patients’ health. From a patient perspective, daily tracking positively reinforces healthy behavior changes.

Along with the remote patient monitoring program, participants also have access to biweekly produce prescription boxes and monthly health education classes led by certified diabetes educators.

The program officially launched in January 2023, and so far has reached 39 women. The first cohort will graduate in August of 2023.

The Women’s Health Initiative is grant-funded by the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, to support the goals of Diabetes Free SC.

MANAGE *together*

Reversing the impact of diabetes on our community, one woman at a time.

Supporting Women with High Risk Pregnancies

In conjunction with the ManageTogether diabetes support program, the Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg is also implementing clinical diabetes interventions for pregnant women in the Pee Dee region. Donna Atkinson, DNP, APRN, is a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist with over 20 years of experience working with high risk pregnant patients. Qualifying participants receive diabetes education, remote patient monitoring equipment and weekly appointments. To mitigate transportation issues and other social determinant barriers to care, Atkinson visits four Pee Dee locations each week on a mobile health unit and offers all other appointments virtually. **Since January this program has enrolled 53 women and has resulted in 17 successful births.**



Clemson Health Clinic at Orangeburg staff take the mobile health units on the road to build relationships around the community, provide health education and spread the word about the innovative diabetes resources available through Clemson Rural Health.





Improving Telehealth Access in Underserved Communities

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Clemson Rural Health has strategically partnered with **Palmetto Care Connections (PCC)** to provide telehealth access for rural communities. PCC is a non-profit organization, housed in Bamberg County, that brings technology, broadband, and telehealth solutions to health care providers in rural and underserved areas in South Carolina. This collaborative agreement allows Clemson and PCC to install state-of-the-art telehealth equipment in high-need, community-based settings including affordable housing communities, senior citizen centers, community centers, and other similar settings. Each telehealth cart includes a computer

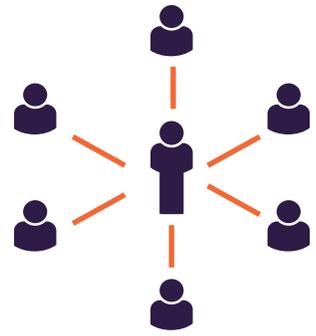
with webcam, stethoscope and two-in-one dermascope/otoscope and connects to a Clemson Rural Health provider. The supplied equipment allows the patient to receive a more comprehensive telehealth exam than would be possible otherwise.

This year, **5 telehealth carts have been installed** in the Orangeburg region.



Prioritizing Patient-Centered Care

Designing systems that improve the patient experience at each of the Clemson Rural Health sites is an ever evolving process. This year, each hub clinic implemented phone and text appointment reminders to reduce no-shows and assist patients in their health care compliance. These include reminders in Spanish for our Spanish speaking patients.



While Clemson Rural Health has been an Epic Connect customer of MUSC Health for four years, this year clinics expanded their MyChart functionality to include online self-scheduling, online bill pay and secure messaging with their provider. **Each quality improvement is another step in providing equitable access to essential care.**

Mobilizing Mental Health Professionals

Through a grant funded by the **Center for Rural and Primary Health Care**, an interdisciplinary team spent 12 months delivering a novel mobile mental health intervention in Abbeville, Cherokee, Laurens and Oconee Counties. During the course of the grant, Clemson Rural Health provided **mental health services for 60 patients with 284 total sessions.**

While accessible mental health care is a need in most of the state, it is exacerbated in rural counties and communities where the patient to provider ratios are three times that of urban counties and about five times the national average. The four counties served by Clemson Rural Health’s mobile mental health intervention were chosen because of their high demand for services and low supply of mental health providers.

Those who completed treatment with a Clemson Rural Health provider exhibited a **40% improvement** on validated anxiety and depression scores.

5,456 Miles traveled for mental health services.

REIMAGINING RESEARCH



Building Partners for Clinical Research

A core strategy of Clemson Rural Health is to conduct and facilitate research. Clinical research can have a profound positive impact on individuals and communities where the research is delivered. For many underserved and rural communities, residents are often never invited to participate in clinical research studies. They never have an opportunity to participate in cutting-edge science or innovations that could benefit them. To make matters worse, historically, there have been some well-known unethical research studies forced on rural and underserved residents, especially those of color.

Clemson Rural Health is committed to clinical research that is relevant to our mission and the patients we serve. In fiscal year 2023 and beyond we have begun to reimagine how this research can be closely integrated with our core operations. Whether you are a patient being seen in one of our fixed clinics, a mobile health

unit, or a virtual patient at home, we are working to establish a foundation that will alert your health care provider when you may be eligible to participate in an open clinical research study. In that way, Clemson Rural Health patients can be screened for eligibility and potentially invited into a research study without having to take any extra steps on their own. This level of innovation and a decentralized approach to conducting clinical research was promoted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as draft guidance in May 2023.

In fiscal year 2023, Clemson University, in support of Clemson Rural Health, issued a Request for Proposal for Contract Research Organizations (CROs) desiring to collaborate with our organization. Several CROs responded and a review of their proposals is underway. The first list of approved CROs for Clemson



University will be released in summer 2023. CROs play a key role in brokering clinical trials between study sponsors and research site locations, in this case Clemson Rural Health assets. Clemson Rural Health expects to begin working with approved CROs and their research networks by fall 2023.

This year Clemson Rural Health also launched a search to hire an experienced clinical research professional to serve as our founding associate director of clinical research. The incumbent is

expected to be named in August 2023 and will help the leadership team reimagine how clinical research can be supported in South Carolina's rural and underserved communities.



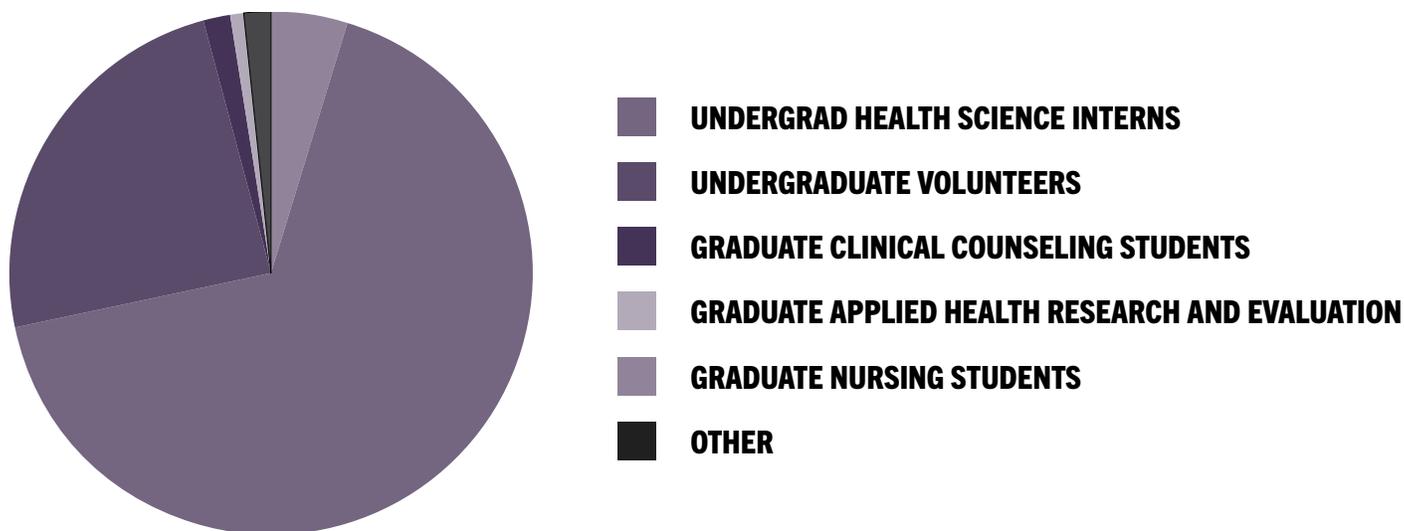
75

Patients are enrolled in Clemson Rural Health's two current clinical research studies.

REIMAGINING EDUCATION

Providing Unique Experiences

Each year, Clemson Rural Health opens its doors to Clemson students seeking clinical experience in a rural setting. Depending on their field of study, students are given opportunities to assist and shadow clinicians in fixed clinic settings and mobile health units. **This year, 121 students assisted the Clemson Rural Health team.**



Expanding Opportunities Statewide

The Clemson Rural Health team used this year to build partnerships and create internal systems that will allow students from other South Carolina universities to participate in internship opportunities in fixed and mobile clinics around the state. Beginning in the fall of 2023, Clemson Rural Health will welcome its first cohorts of dietetics students from South Carolina State University and social work students from the University of South Carolina.



5,716

Hours of student
clinical experience.



Improving Access for Veterans

In the spring of 2023, Raleigh McCabe participated in an independent study to improve the experience of veterans at the Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla. Oconee County is home to over 5,000 veterans, many of whom lack access to convenient and affordable health care. Through her experience, Raleigh had the opportunity to learn more about clinical best practices and barriers to health care. After graduation, Raleigh plans to apply for physicians assistant school and will work as a clinical research technician at Wake Forest Anesthesiology.

“As a student intern I have witnessed this clinic’s impact on the community members it serves. It has been an eye-opening experience and has prepared me for a career in the field of public health.”

- Raleigh McCabe, Class of 2023



Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care

As part of the grant-funded integrated mobile behavioral health program, Keyalla Miller and Khamedriah Grimes, both clinical mental health counseling graduate students, delivered 80 direct client hours to individuals without insurance. Along with working directly with clients, they assisted with client assessments and connected to county-level resources. Through their work with Clemson Rural Health’s clinical social worker, Eunice Lehmacher, they were exposed to underserved populations that they had never worked with before and developed a passion for rural mental health.

“This experience prepared me to be more aware of how to serve populations that live in rural communities, learning what can be done to provide mental health services to those far and wide.”

- Khamedriah Grimes, Class of 2024

Translating Education into Practice



In a brand new collaboration, students enrolled in Clemson’s medical interpreting and translating course were connected with the VeggieRx program at the Clemson Health Clinic at Walhalla. With the majority of the patients being Spanish speaking, there was a need for translating recipes, cooking classes and conducting follow up and reminder calls. One of the students, Emma Black, was excited to practice speaking Spanish in a clinical setting and to get to know the Spanish-speaking population better.

“This opportunity has made me realize just how excited I am to apply to medical schools later this year. I hope to be able to take the lessons I have learned working in the Clemson Rural Health Clinic into my career and to (hopefully) become a great physician someday.”

- Emma Black, Class of 2024

Putting in the Miles for Mobile Health



Raven Addison is a junior health sciences major in Clemson’s College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences. Between January to April 2023, Raven spent almost 200 hours on the mobile health unit shadowing clinical staff, collecting patient vitals and modernizing mobile patient intake forms. She gained new skills interacting with a diverse group of patients and integrating social determinants of health into their clinical care. She hopes to continue to grow her skills in rural health as she prepares to apply for medical school upon graduation.

“It was eye opening. I wouldn’t have known how a rural environment could affect someone’s health or access to health care before this internship.”

- Raven Addison, Class of 2024

ON THE HORIZON



Reaching the Upper Midlands

Within the core of Clemson Rural Health and Clemson University's land grant mission is a commitment to serve as a neutral broker in facilitating environments where we can collaborate with hundreds of stakeholders across the state. The team thoughtfully pursues varying levels of relationships where the potential for improving access to care is greatest for underserved and rural communities. That gives us the opportunity to work closely with select partners who align with our mission and vision for rural health access and outcomes.

In 2019, after researching county health rankings, cancer profiles, and engaging local stakeholders, the Clemson Rural Health leadership team agreed that a strategically placed hub clinic could transform health outcomes in Lancaster, Chester, Union, Fairfield and Kershaw Counties. In the upper midlands region, cardiovascular disease and its corresponding factors consistently top rankings for cause of death, rehospitalizations and emergency department complaints. To make the biggest impact on these rural and underserved communities, the proposed hub clinic was initially and is still envisioned as a co-

branded rural health clinic with a major South Carolina health system.

Finally, after four years of substantial planning, debate and evaluation of organizational alignment, geographic location for the clinic, counties served by aligned mobile health outcomes, the role of supporting rural health workforce development and other critical issues, the co-branded hub clinic is close to launch. This co-branded approach will be nationally novel as a land grant university will lead and manage the operation for an academic health system.

The rural health clinic will reside in Lancaster County with mobile health units serving each of the five counties. In addition to primary and preventive health services, the hub clinic will support clinical experiences for undergraduate and graduate students and will conduct clinical research.

Clemson Rural Health is excited about this new collaborative opportunity that will be unveiled in the near future.

New Collaborations with Abbeville Area Medical Center

In the spring of 2023, Clemson Rural Health and **Abbeville Area Medical Center** entered into an innovative collaborative agreement to enhance patient access to holistic health care and improve health outcomes for Abbeville County residents. The two entities have worked closely since 2016 to increase access to cancer, hepatitis C, and chronic disease screenings and treatment through Clemson Rural Health’s mobile health team. The new agreement will enhance Clemson Rural Health’s ability to support the vital work already occurring at AAMC and increase the reach of fixed and mobile health services in Abbeville and the surrounding counties.



Pictured left to right: Amanda R. Morgan, MPA, AAMC Director, Community Health, Wellness, & Outreach; Trey Moore, MD, AAMC Family Physician; Rod Boula, AAMC Interim CEO; Mary Beth Johnstone, Ph.D., CRH Associate Director for Research; Abby Morningstar, CRH Registered Dietitian; Ron Gimbel, Ph.D., Clemson Professor and CRH Director; Brooke Brittain, RD, CRH Associate Director for Food and Nutrition Security; Dianna Colvin, MSW, MPH, CRH Associate Director for Business Development and Communications.

Beginning in May of 2023, AAMC will house an on-site CRH registered dietitian, Abby Morningstar, to work directly with the hospital’s director of community health, wellness and outreach to support nutrition and health outreach in the community. Morningstar will coordinate the federally funded produce prescription and educational program, *Fresh for Life*, intended for those living with type 2 diabetes and collaborate with the medical center’s providers to support chronic disease management in the surrounding rural and underserved communities.

Center for Public Health Modeling and Response



The Center for Public Health Modeling and Response aims to utilize data-driven approaches to prepare for, and respond to, public health threats. Coming out of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Science's Department of Public Health Sciences saw the need for usable knowledge to help mitigate the health disparities highlighted in 2020. This team is designing and implementing modeling frameworks to help health care professionals, patients, and public health implementors with decisions about diagnostic testing, treatment initiation, lifestyle changes and resource allocation. These models will provide objective data on the decision-making process to avoid biases observed in clinical and public health decision making.

Current projects include:

- Data-driven approach to identify high-risk rural communities for delivery of mobile health clinics.
- Evaluation of policies limiting opioid exposure.
- Statewide infectious disease surveillance, prediction and resource allocation.
- Infectious disease epidemiology.
- Covid-19 modeling for institutes of higher education.
- Utilizing wastewater surveillance for early disease detection and response.
- Building a campus-community partnership to raise public health awareness.
- Identifying predictors of cognitive decline in older adults.



Chronic Kidney Disease

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is often a result of poorly controlled diabetes and/or high blood pressure that damages the kidney's ability to filter blood. While the disease is considered progressive, patients can take steps to slow the progression through guidance from a health care team. Patients that change lifestyle and other modifiable behaviors are typically able to live longer without complications or the need for dialysis. The Clemson Rural Health CKD Outcome Improvement Program is a multidisciplinary, patient-centered initiative aimed at doing just that.

Using remote patient monitoring and other technologies, the enrolled CKD patient works with our team to holistically manage their health including:

- Blood pressure
- Blood glucose levels
- Cholesterol
- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Sleep habits
- Smoking cessation (if a smoker)
- Mental health and more!

As an extension of our existing remote patient monitoring, enrolled patients will also receive individualized health coaching, medical nutrition therapy, cooking classes and access to hands on nutrition education. The program will launch in FY 2024 in collaboration with a major SC health insurance company.

New Opportunities for Long-Time Collaborators

While the **South Carolina Department for Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC)** is not a new partner for Clemson Rural Health, this year brought new momentum between the two organizations.

After meeting the four regional directors, Clemson Rural Health and SCDHEC have signed a collaborative agreement to be able to provide services at the same mobile sites. This will allow residents of rural communities convenient access to even more wraparound and preventive services including vaccinations and screenings.

MEET OUR TEAM

Clemson Rural Health Leadership



Ron Gimbel, Ph.D.
Professor & Director, Clemson
Rural Health



Leslie Hossfeld, Ph.D.
Professor & Dean, College of
Behavioral, Social and Health
Sciences



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Thank you to each of our 2022-23 Community Collaborators!

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