



South Carolina
FOUNDATION

Grantee Highlights

Fall 2024

About the Foundation

Our Vision

To bridge health and health care in South Carolina

Our Mission

The mission of the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation is to promote and support healthier South Carolinians, particularly the economically vulnerable, by supporting solutions to address gaps in health care and serving as an agent of change to support innovation and value-added public-private partnerships.

Our Values

We have a unique position as a statewide health foundation that allows us to support select systemic population health issues and approaches across South Carolina.

We recognize that improving health is complex; therefore, we support a continuum of approaches ranging from providing direct care for the economically vulnerable to advancing policy, systems and environmental changes.

We prioritize efforts that will improve the health of future generations of South Carolinians.

We empower organizations to increase effectiveness toward improved health outcomes.

We support efforts that represent community and statewide priorities that are locally determined, culturally relevant and data-informed.

We equip our partners to connect learning to action and use data for continuous improvement.

We are a catalytic partner, supporting organizations and programs as they gain sustainability by leveraging funds, and we value innovative projects that can expand to multiple geographic areas in South Carolina.

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From the Executive Director

I am pleased to share the Fall 2024 Grantee Highlights Report with you. We have so much to share related to the important work being done across South Carolina.

The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation strives to foster connections among our grant partners in addition to financial support of their work that is changing health for the better in our state.

As in recent funding cycles, we continue to focus on three primary health issues while also supporting evolving approaches to increase the value and impact of services. Together, we are finding new ways to do more and do better.

In this report you will learn about our concentrated funding in oral health, mental health and diabetes, with spotlights on partners in these key areas. You'll also learn how the Foundation is addressing projects outside of these three health issues by supporting and developing solutions to help individuals and communities achieve better health.

The Foundation is in a unique position to accelerate large-scale efforts that aim to change the course of our state's health. You will see the scope of work being done in the Grantees at Work section that summarizes the more than 100 active and recently completed projects.

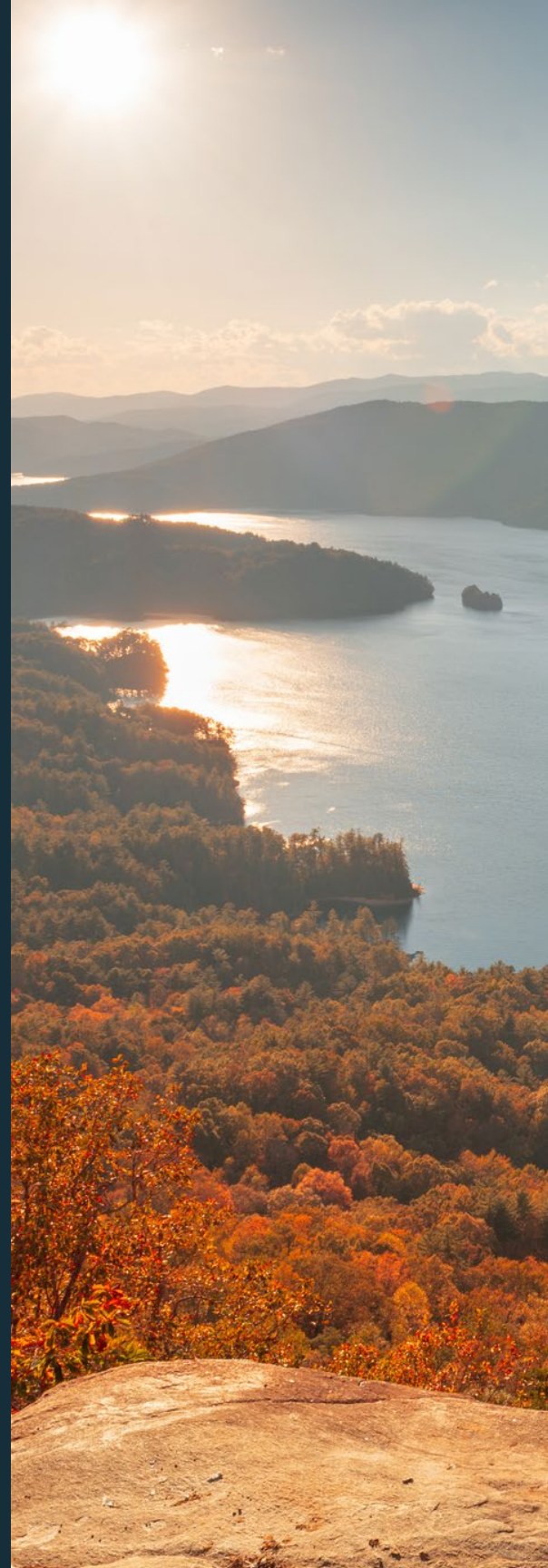
We aim to support our partners and these projects from start to finish through our appreciation of the local and regional texture across communities. We have been working across an extensive network that bridges efforts and makes connections from past successes to future opportunity. This unique position allows collaboration and cross-pollination that encourages growth and development for grantees and the state.

I hope you are inspired by the impact of our partners' efforts in every corner of the Palmetto State. Together, we strive to meet local needs while having a lasting impact on the future health across South Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Erika Kirby', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Erika Kirby
Executive Director





A Healthier, Happier South Carolina

We're tackling complex health care challenges head-on, connecting bold, innovative community partners with grants that improve health outcomes for all South Carolinians.

As a statewide health foundation with deep understanding of the fabric of our communities, we focus on select systemic population health issues. Through partnerships and funding, we empower nonprofits, government agencies and educational institutions to create solutions that have regional impact and advance the broader reach of improvements.

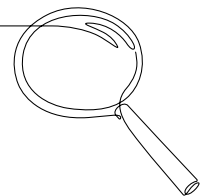
With the Foundation's support, community partners across the state are transforming health and health care.

Meeting Today's Needs While Looking to the Future

Our grants are more than projects. Funding enables our partners to be forerunners of health care done better. Our grantees leverage technology to reach more people. They extend the value of services and supports to deliver more effective care to the most vulnerable.

Their successes become models for sustainable systemic change. We are helping these partners do more and do better.

Focused Goals



We aim for the future while making a difference today. Long-term change takes time and measured progress. Our grantees meet these larger goals and bring about the change we are seeking.

Funding Categories



Access to Care

Support safety-net providers in providing primary physical and mental health care. Implement evidence-based or innovative models to increase accessibility of health care services.



Building a Stronger Workforce for Health

Support projects to increase the number of health care professionals. Support health care career development through evidence-based or innovative approaches to advance skills.



Improving the Quality and Value of Health and Health Care

Support quality improvement projects that yield cost and resource efficiencies through innovative approaches and solutions.



Investing in the Health and Well-Being of South Carolina Children and Families

Support projects that tackle barriers to good health and lifelong well-being that begin in childhood.



Special Projects

Support projects to inform, influence and support our areas of focus and our mission. These projects may fall outside of an established area of focus, yet would generate value-added information relevant to the health needs of the economically vulnerable population in South Carolina.

Health Priorities



Mental Health

We're building resilience for individuals and families by strengthening the mental health workforce, improving quality of care and enhancing collaboration.



Oral Health

We aim to improve the oral health care system by increasing access, enhancing workforce development, and supporting quality and innovation.



Diabetes

In partnership with Diabetes Free SC, we're aligning the efforts of diabetes-focused community partners across the Palmetto State.

We support evolving approaches to meet the needs of our communities. Funded projects are improving access to care, removing barriers to health and expanding reach through innovation. We are helping key stakeholders address structural determinants of health equity and finding solutions.



A photograph of a man and a young boy brushing their teeth in a bathroom. The man, in the foreground, is smiling and looking towards the boy. He has a beard and is wearing a light-colored shirt. The boy, in the background, is also brushing his teeth and looking down. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "ORAL HEALTH".

ORAL HEALTH

Oral Health

Funding Impact: Oral Health

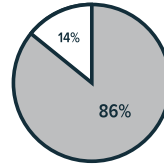
Oral health is a pressing issue for all South Carolinians, particularly the economically vulnerable. Poor oral health can diminish overall quality of life. It can lead to chronic disease, increased health care costs and decreased employability prospects:



In South Carolina, **1.6 million people** live in an area where **there are not enough dentists**.



Far too many **children** in South Carolina have **untreated** cavities — as many as **20 percent** in some counties.



Among **adults** enrolled in Medicaid, **86 percent** did not have a **dental visit** in 2023.



Using a **1:1,800 ratio** of dentists-to-population (the desired private practice rate), South Carolina is short **430** dentists. If you remove the five highest-need counties from that calculation, South Carolina needs **759** dentists.

This speaks to the incredible maldistribution of dentists in favor of our urbanized areas (Charleston, Dorchester, Beaufort, Richland and Greenville).



Good oral health leads to good overall health.

Funded projects in oral health are meeting the following goals:

Improving Access

Expanding access to oral health services, particularly for children living in low-income families, through prevention, treatment and education to improve oral health outcomes

Increasing Workforce

Building a dental workforce that is increasingly diverse and equipped to meet the needs of underserved populations across the state

Enhancing Quality and Value

Fostering a culture of quality improvement and innovation throughout South Carolina to demonstrate improved health outcomes and lowered costs.



26

Active projects



30

Counties



10

Services for children



14

Services for adults through
safety-net providers



2

Major projects for
population-level oral
health improvement

Together:

- We're increasing access and availability of preventive oral health through integration into the school and health center settings.
- We're growing an awareness of the vital role oral health plays in overall health.
- We're training current and future dental providers.
- We're creating innovative approaches to improve access and outcomes.

Oral Health

Increasing Access to Comprehensive Oral Health Care for Underserved Populations: Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services

Oral health is a vital part of a person's overall well-being. But many South Carolinians face roadblocks when they try to access care. This is especially the case in Charleston County. According to the United States Census Bureau, 11.6 percent of Charlestonians live in poverty. Many low-income people are moving to areas of the county with more affordable rent. These areas often lack public transportation. As a result, residents may be unable to reach or pay for the resources a dental home can provide.

Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services (OLMCOS) is uniquely positioned to address these barriers. Its clinics in downtown Charleston and Johns Island offer free dental services to residents who have low incomes or are uninsured. Its Johns Island location is the only free dental care facility within a 15-mile radius and is a lifeline to low-income residents who need a dental home.

The Foundation supports OLMCOS' mission of helping the economically vulnerable receive dental care. Through a grant from the Foundation, both organizations are fulfilling their shared goals of expanding South Carolina's dental workforce, improving access to quality care and adapting to the state's evolving oral health care needs.

OLMCOS used a portion of the grant to hire a dental assistant and a dental hygienist at its Johns Island location. These full-time workers brought the clinic a level of stability and cohesion that attracted more volunteers to run the ongoing programs.

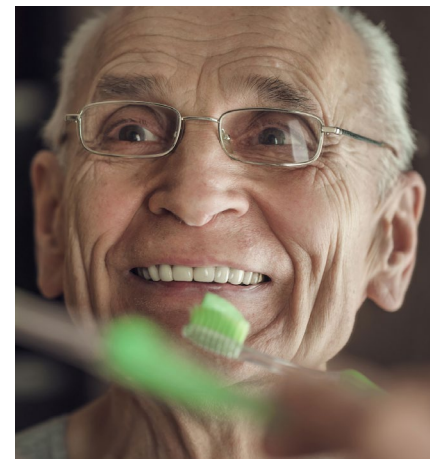
OLMCOS' larger workforce has improved low-income residents' access to care and educational resources. By increasing staff, OLMCOS can serve at full capacity, reaching 40 patients each week. Last year, OLMCOS saw 1,419 patients. Eighty-seven percent of these patients returned to OLMCOS after their first visit to receive continued care and preventive education. This marks a dramatic increase in OLMCOS' patient retention rate, which was 46 percent before the grant.

These numbers show how OLMCOS' increased service capacity has encouraged more at-risk residents to make OLMCOS their dental home.



“OLMCOS’ dental program addresses health inequity within low-income communities by providing access to affordable and comprehensive oral health care to neighbors in need. Through holistic and personalized treatment, we are able to improve overall oral health and the knowledge necessary to self-manage oral hygiene for an average of **2,000 individuals annually.**”

— Dr. Ashlee Franklin
Dental Director, Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach



Oral Health

Moving forward, OLMCOS will expand and improve the services it offers to low-income patients by purchasing panoramic X-ray machines and 3D printers. The X-ray machines will save time and expense by detecting tooth decay in its earliest stages. OLMCOS will use the 3D printing technology to create dentures for patients in-house more efficiently, which will enable more patients to receive services. OLMCOS will be the first nonprofit in the area to provide dentures at no cost to patients.

By growing the state's dental workforce and improving access to care, OLMCOS and the Foundation are addressing oral health needs by lowering the cost of care to community members. They are also helping low-income South Carolinians regain their smiles, an outcome that has the potential to create lasting change in people's lives.

"Juan* came to our dental clinic one afternoon in extreme pain due to an untreated facial injury. He had been hesitant to seek treatment because he was uninsured. Through regular visits following his initial treatment, Juan's injury healed within two months. He is now a regular patient at our dental clinic. He is grateful to be receiving routine oral health care for the first time in his life."

— Care team member at OLMCOS

*Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the person's privacy.





MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health

Funding Impact: Mental Health

The mental well-being of families and youth has long-lasting ramifications for individuals, families and communities. We have focused efforts on a family mental health approach, particularly the importance of mental health during the formative years, with an emphasis on prevention, early detection and connection to services.

Mental health statistics in the state point to the impact on our youth:



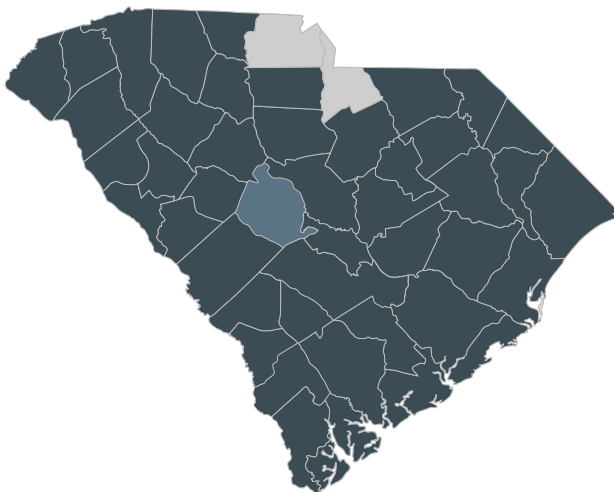
Suicide is **the third-leading cause of death** in South Carolina among young people **ages 10 – 24**. Compared to neighboring states, South Carolina has the **highest** youth suicide rate.



Twelve percent of children in South Carolina have reported experiencing **depression** or **anxiety** in 2020, a **55 percent increase** from 2016.



Of the **46 counties** in South Carolina, **44** are noted to be **mental health** professional **shortage** areas.



**Health Professional Shortage Areas:
Mental Health, by County, 2024 — South Carolina**

- Whole county is shortage area.
- Part of county is shortage area.
- None of county is shortage area.

Mental Health

Funded projects in mental health are meeting the following goals:

Improving Access

Increasing access points across the mental health continuum in South Carolina so more communities are seen, served and supported

Enhancing Quality and Value

Fostering a culture of quality improvement and innovation in mental health and related systems to maximize limited resources, reach more geographic areas, and improve earlier identification and intervention points



21 active projects across all 46 counties

Together:

- We're creating solutions for earlier intervention and identification of mental health risk.
- We're increasing connection points to mental health services through schools, parental supports and workforce.



Geographic isolation and a shortage of qualified workers stop many South Carolinians from accessing mental health care. This means **2.3 million** South Carolinians live in an area that doesn't have enough mental health professionals to meet demand.



Mental Health

Epworth Center for Counseling Expansion

The American Academy of Pediatrics identifies mental health as the largest unmet need for children and teens in foster care. These youth, who have experienced abuse and neglect, are at a higher risk for developing mental health problems.

The Epworth Center for Counseling, a branch of the Epworth Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing, provides comprehensive support to foster youth and families who are struggling with their mental health. This support includes individual and family psychotherapy, peer support groups, parenting guidance, and life skills education.

Epworth and the Foundation are working together to address the geographic and staffing barriers that prevent young people in foster care from getting help. A 2023 grant from the Foundation is allowing Epworth to establish new counseling centers in the Upstate and Lowcountry. These centers are modeled on the successful Epworth Center for Counseling Midlands, which was funded by the Foundation in 2019.

Located in Anderson, the Epworth Center for Counseling Upstate opened in April 2023.

This center has hired five staff members: a clinic director, a clinic counselor, a clinic scheduling coordinator, a training and compliance manager, and a family engagement coordinator.

The center is the only private, nonprofit counseling center in Anderson County and serves foster families in the Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg and Rock Hill areas. To overcome service barriers, it holds evening and weekend hours and offers its clients a telehealth option. Together, Epworth's Midlands and Upstate centers provide services to an average of 461 people each year. Twenty percent of these clients are involved in foster care or the child welfare system.

Epworth has strategically created locations in underserved areas to extend a vital helping hand to young people who might otherwise be unable to access life-changing care. These centers alleviate the state's shortage of mental health workers by connecting youth and families to qualified professionals who have experience with the foster care system.

Moving forward, Epworth will continue to address the state's mental health worker shortage. Staff will supervise new clinicians and help them complete their licensure requirements. Epworth will continue to expand its services into other underserved communities. With the Foundation's support, Epworth will open a counseling center in the North Charleston area in 2025.

"Through our partnerships with the South Carolina Department of Social Services, pediatric practices, local churches and other community service organizations, the Epworth Center for Counseling is making huge strides in providing services to those who have previously not had opportunities to receive counseling in their communities. The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation has enabled Epworth to establish a counseling program in the Upstate that will have a positive impact on the lives of citizens across the area for years to come."

— Beth Williams
President and CEO, Epworth
Children's Home

"My daughter has come such a long way because of the counseling she received at Epworth's Upstate center.

"She feels a sense of safety now and can cope with situations and feelings much better. The effect on her was simply wonderful."

— Parent of teen

Mental Health

The University of South Carolina Institute for Families in Society Raising Adolescents To Be Tomorrow's Leaders

Lexington One School District (LOSD) is on the front lines of the mental health crisis facing South Carolina's youth. Of LOSD students, 62.2 percent have experienced at least one adverse childhood event and 43.6 percent live in poverty. These factors increase students' risk of having mental health issues. In fact, since the 2015 – 2016 school year, LOSD's counselors have completed 1,604 secondary suicide risk assessments.

Through the Raising Adolescents To Be Tomorrow's Leaders (RATL) project, the University of South Carolina's Institute for Families in Society (IFS) joined forces with LOSD to build a stronger support network for these students. The RATL team is using a Foundation grant to implement brief parenting supports with the Teen Triple P Positive Parenting Program in LOSD schools.

Triple P is an evidence-based resource for parents. Triple P guides parents on their journey to understand and address their teens' mental health needs and other common challenges facing parents of teens. Triple P has been shown to improve teens' behavior and parent confidence and competence.

As a part of the grant, LOSD counselors and social workers have provided brief parenting support to more than 150 parents of teens. Using a 1:1 consultation model, LOSD staff have supported parents as they learn how to use Triple P intervention techniques at home. LOSD is also facilitating Triple P seminars at schools. These seminars reach parents who are interested in getting parenting tips in a group setting.

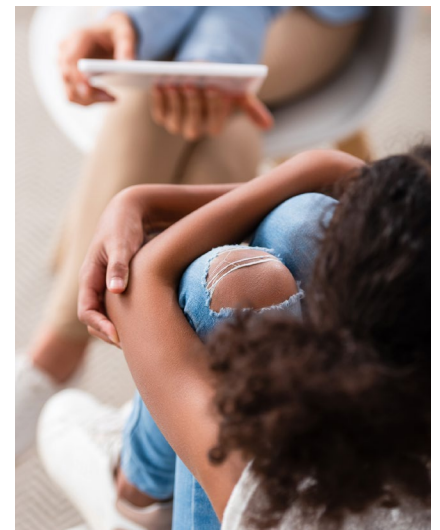
By providing early, caregiver-based intervention for teens, the RATL team hopes to decrease the likelihood that teens' mental health problems will escalate to the point of hospitalization or disciplinary action.

Moving forward, LOSD is expanding what they learned through the RATL project to include providing support for parents of elementary school-age children. As RATL is the first project in the state dedicated to delivering voluntary parenting support for teens through school settings, the RATL team hopes this project will serve as a model for other school districts that wish to improve their students' mental health.

"RATL's goal is to improve teen mental health by focusing on parents and caregivers as the agents of change. RATL makes the high-quality, evidence-based Triple P model available to parents of middle and high schoolers. This model enhances access, decreases the stigma surrounding mental health and equips parents with the knowledge they need to help their children."

— Cheri Shapiro, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for
Families in Society

Associate Professor, The
University of South Carolina
College of Social Work



DIABETES



Diabetes

Funding Impact: Diabetes

More than half a million South Carolinians are living with diabetes. Each year, close to 25,000 people in the Palmetto State are newly diagnosed with this condition. It is one of the most pressing issues facing our state today.

In partnership with Diabetes Free SC (DFSC), we're aligning the efforts of diabetes-focused community partners across the state. Funded partnerships and statewide collaboration are focused on three strategic directions:

- To improve pregnancy outcomes and the health of women with or at risk for diabetes
- To prevent diabetes and its complications in adults
- To reduce lifelong risk of diabetes in children

Funded projects of DFSC are meeting goals of removing barriers to diabetes care management by:

- Improving access.
- Investing in children and families
- Enhancing quality and value.
- Expanding evidence to support system change.

DFSC is a statewide initiative that aims to transform the health of South Carolinians, with a particular emphasis on promoting equity and reducing disparities in access and quality of diabetes prevention, education and care.

Launched in 2020, DFSC aims to support and align existing efforts against diabetes to gain efficiencies of scale and foster collaboration.



SNAPSHOT OF DIABETES IN SOUTH CAROLINA



Diabetes

Management of Maternal Diabetes

Half of South Carolina adults have diabetes or prediabetes, and pregnant women with the disease face unique challenges. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*, diabetes during pregnancy can increase a woman's risk of serious health problems. It can also increase the likelihood that the baby will be born with fetal abnormalities or develop diabetes later in life. These outcomes can be prevented or mitigated through frequent and ongoing specialized prenatal care and tight glycemic control.

Unfortunately, South Carolina women often run into barriers when they try to access care. In many parts of the state, there are no maternal care facilities within a 35-mile radius. Expectant mothers in these areas often have to commute to multiple appointments at different locations, making getting the right care difficult. Many women also lack access to resources — such as healthy food, low-cost insulin and continuous glucose monitors — that benefit in the management of their diabetes.

To address these barriers, the Foundation and DFSC launched the Management of Maternal Diabetes (MOMs) program in 2020. MOMs is offered through Prisma Health Midlands in Columbia and Sumter, Prisma Health Upstate in Greenville, and the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. MOMs helps women manage maternal diabetes through a team-based, patient-centered model of care. This integrated care model unites specialists and other care providers — including maternal-fetal medicine physicians, endocrinologists, nurse practitioners, diabetes educators, dietitians and community health workers — into a single team that works together to help patients navigate the complexity of a high-risk pregnancy. By integrating specialists who focus on diabetes and pregnancy into one team, MOMs prioritizes patients' needs and improves outcomes for mothers and newborns.

MOMs teams make sure patients can get most of the care they need at a single location.

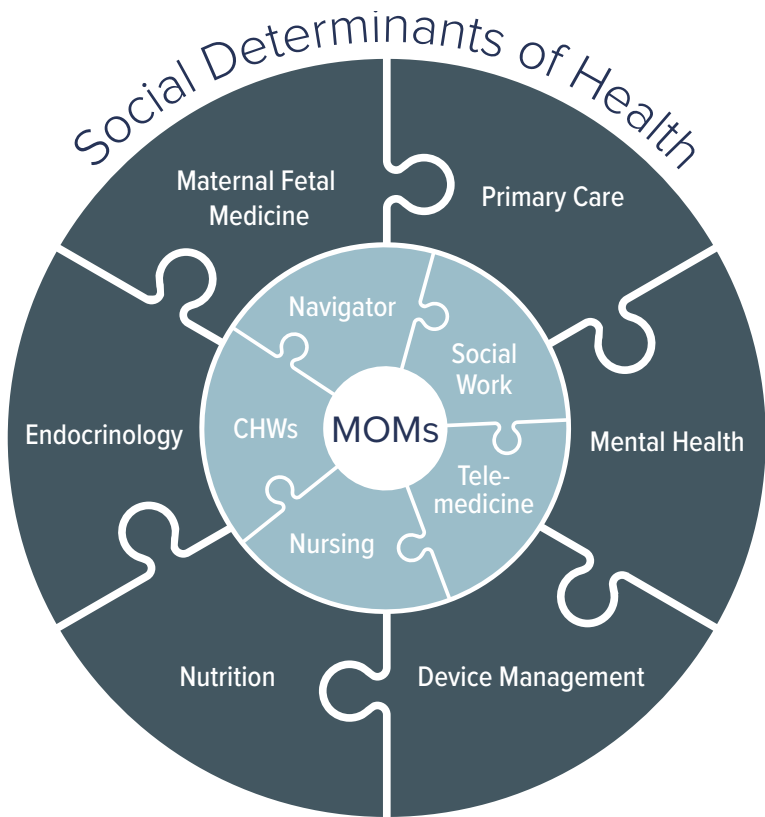
The MOMs model consolidates services to increase efficiency and to make it feasible for patients to receive this specialty care. Through frequent checkups and close patient monitoring, teams can identify and treat issues quickly before they escalate into an emergency. Teams also ease the logistical barriers many women face during pregnancy. For example, nurse navigators can coordinate a patients' labs and ultrasounds. Diabetes educators can teach women how to use continuous glucose monitors. Community health workers (CHWs) can make sure women have access to resources such as low-cost insulin and healthy food. And MOMs' telehealth services can reach women around the state who may be unable to commute to in-person appointments. Additional services include retinal screenings and dental care to contribute to better outcomes.

MOMs teams empower women through education. The women who enter the MOMs program have different levels of experience with health care and diabetes. No matter where patients are on their journey when they reach out to MOMs, care teams provide them with the in-depth training and tools they need. At each checkup, they teach patients about healthy habits, techniques and services that will help them manage their diabetes. MOMs' ultimate goal is to empower women to self-manage diabetes for life, an outcome that will help both them and their children.



Diabetes

To date, MOMs has provided care and early intervention to 2,000 women across the state. Many of these women had no access to vital services before MOMs. Evidence from the programs demonstrates that MOMs has improved maternal blood sugar control in its patients and resulted in fewer cesarean sections. It has also decreased the risk of fetal abnormalities in newborns. Furthermore, MOMs is providing key assistance to the state’s health care system. More than 30 obstetric practices and 150 providers in South Carolina are referring patients to MOMs partners.



Moving forward, MOMs is preparing for long-term sustainability. It is using the data from the program to measure potential impact and cost savings statewide. The information generated by the MOMs model is informing practice changes to how diabetes standards of care are being implemented in order to achieve better outcomes for both mom and baby.

*The CDC is an independent organization that offers health information you may find useful.

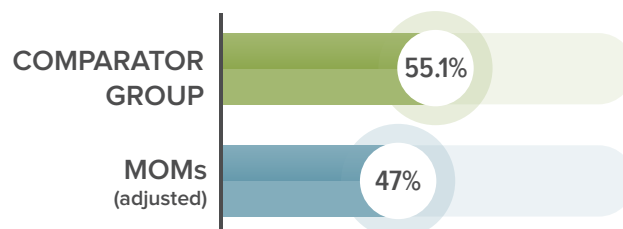
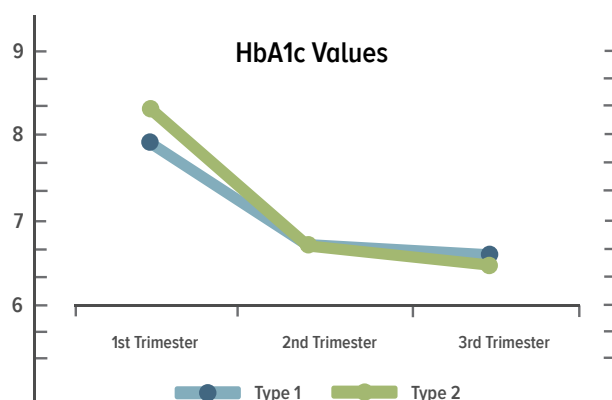
Support Delivered to MOMs Patients	TOTAL
Total Patients Receiving Support	2,391
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH SUPPORTS	
Fresh product boxes	3,299
Snack bags	5,884
Hygiene or food pantry bags	997
Transportation assistance	505
DIABETES TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPLIES	
Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs)	4,320
Average glucose log reviews per week (remote patient monitoring)	202
DIABETES CARE	
Diabetes education sessions	14,252
Enrollment in BCBS Women's Health Initiative diabetes programs	482
DIABETES EYE CARE	
Retinal screenings	382
Sight saves	23
MENTAL HEALTH SCREENS	3,200

Diabetes

The Outcomes Are Clear

Mother's Risk of Complications Lowered

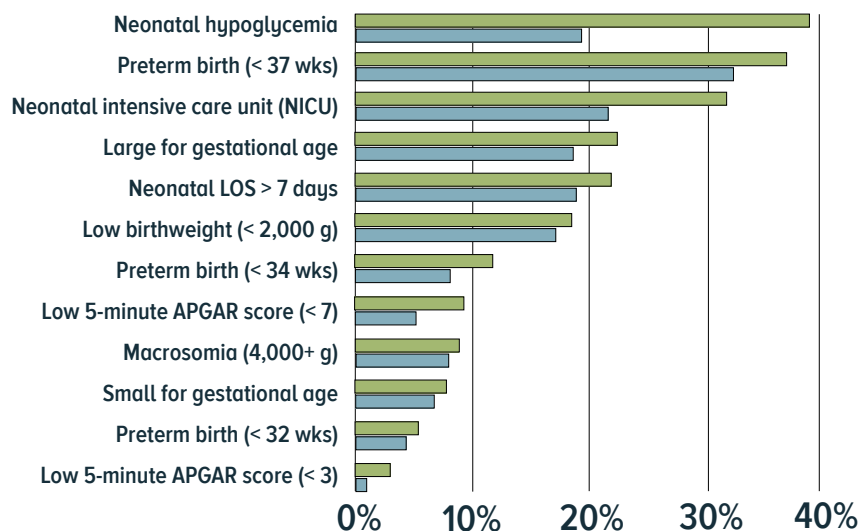
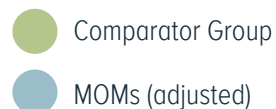
By improving maternal blood sugar control, MOMs reduces the risk of cesarean sections.



The rate of C-sections was 8 percent lower in MOMs patients as compared to women with diabetes not in MOMs.

Newborns Get a Better Start

By helping women with diabetes control their blood sugar during pregnancy, MOMs decreases the risk of health issues in newborns.



Diabetes

Success in Managing Maternal Diabetes

Patient Story

Kianna Moss credits the MOMs program with saving her and her baby girl's life. Twenty-seven weeks into her pregnancy, the Spartanburg mother experienced diabetic ketoacidosis, a life-threatening complication of diabetes. That crisis led her to the MOMs program at Prisma Health's Greenville location. The MOMs program provided Moss with a team of specialists who closely monitored her blood sugar throughout her pregnancy.

The MOMs team also identified potential issues before they escalated, adjusted Moss's medications, helped her navigate

the health care system and taught her how to self-manage her diabetes.

"Without the MOMs program, my child wouldn't be here, and I might not be either," said Moss. "The MOMs program gave me an understanding of what my health meant and how to make the right choices. They were partners in my health and really listened to my concerns. Now I know the lifestyle choices that will keep me living healthy."



Diabetes

School-Based Wellness

Wellness initiatives lead to active and motivated kids, engaged teachers, and a culture of wellness.

For Buffalo Elementary School in Union County School District, wellness initiatives have become part of its identity. In 2024, it was named an America's Healthiest School for School Health Services and Promotion of Physical Activity by Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

"Wellness is not just an add-on for us," explains Buffalo Elementary School Principal Stacy McAbee. "It's deeply embedded in our culture and community. Our staff and students recognize the importance of physical activity, mindfulness and overall well-being."

There are more than two dozen ways that Buffalo Elementary has embraced wellness. Some of them include:

- Physical activity rewards and incentives for achieving academic and behavioral goals.
- A teacher-led walking club for students.
- Wellness team collaboration with the School Improvement Council.
- A cafeteria staff that encourages students to choose fruit and allows them to return for extra.
- Walking breaks during the school day.
- A Clemson Extension School Gardening for SC Educators school garden kit.

The school is working to connect its campus to a nearby sports complex. It would be part of active transportation routes for staff and students.

"Our morning walking club, active rewards like game days and extra recess, and an amazing garden for teaching healthy eating are all part of the commitment," says McAbee.

"We're also examining the root causes of problems and ways to address the underlying issues. Communicating with families and supporting positive habits at home are essential in this process and where it connects."

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation works with more than 1,000 schools across South Carolina. It has received the National Healthy Schools Award in recognition of its efforts.





EVOLVING APPROACHES

Evolving Approaches

The Foundation supports and develops solutions to barriers that can keep individuals and communities from accessing quality health care. These obstacles may include social factors such as geographic location, financial costs, education and awareness.

Our funded projects in this area of evolving approaches aim to help accelerate progress on complex issues and allow our grantees to try different approaches to get better outcomes. In this way, they are equipped to find ways to use existing resources more fully and to increase the value of their services.

With a focus on economically vulnerable populations, grant partners are improving access for those in greatest need by:

- Expanding the health care workforce.
- Using technology to improve efficiencies.
- Using data to measure and drive change.

In addition to grantmaking, the Foundation contributes deep local expertise and insight for health improvement, statewide planning, and innovation for systemic support.

Serving the most in need

We serve 900,000 low-income uninsured individuals.

Low-income uninsured individuals are those with an income at least **138 percent lower** than the federal poverty level, which is less than **\$18,754** for an individual or **\$38,295** for a family of four.

One in 5 South Carolina residents are on Medicaid.

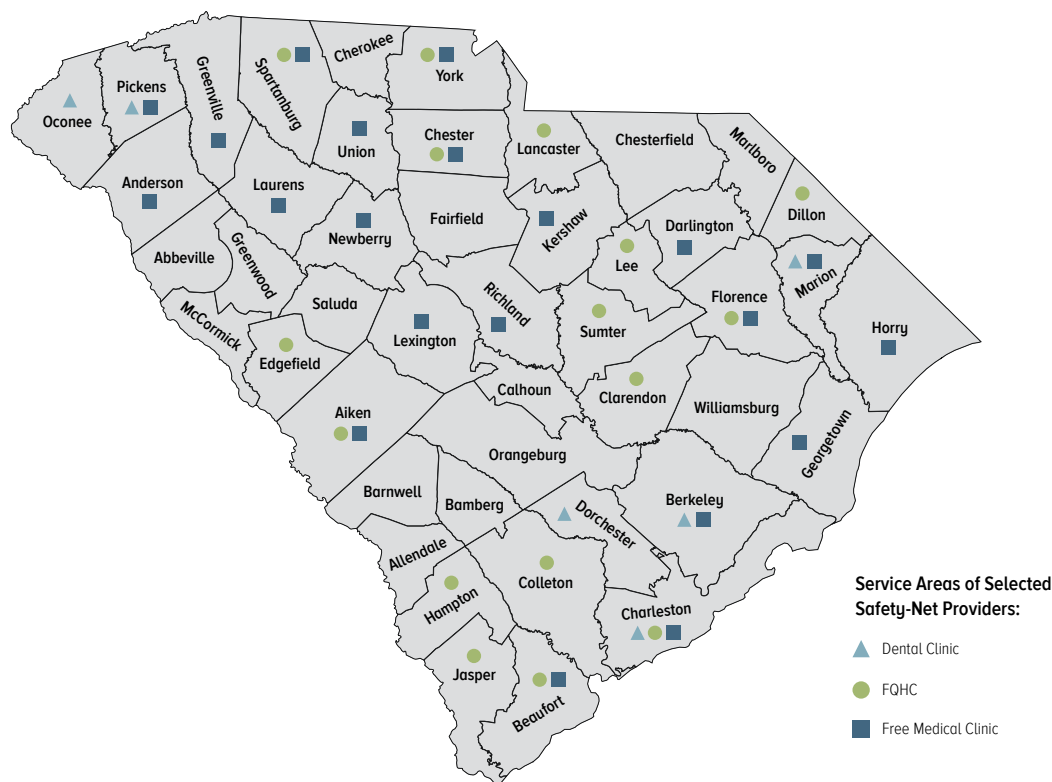
In South Carolina, **47 percent** of births are **covered** by Medicaid.



Evolving Approaches

Improving Access to Clinical Care

Organizations that provide direct access to care are safety-net providers, including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), free medical clinics and dental clinics. These community-based resources are meeting health-related issues on a greater level than ever before. Receiving adequate clinical care leads to improved quality of life.



Connecting to Services

By removing barriers to health and addressing fundamental needs, health outcomes can be improved. These projects are a catalyst, affecting people today and creating a ripple effect for generations to come.



40

Active
projects



37

Counties



Improved access across the
state through **resource hubs**
and **technology**

Evolving Approaches

Impact America: Vision Care for Kids

FocusFirst: Increasing the Reach of a High-Tech Vision Care Initiative

Vision is a vital part of a child's health and ability to learn. Early vision screenings can detect eye problems before they lead to worse health outcomes, including permanent vision loss. After receiving treatment, children with vision problems are much more likely to be successful in school.

However, many children in South Carolina face barriers to vision care at a crucial time: when they first enter school. Only 36 percent of South Carolina children ages 0 to 5 receive vision screenings. And only 40 percent of children who are diagnosed with vision problems get the care they need.

Impact America and the Foundation are reducing the barriers that cause this lack of access. With help from a Foundation grant, Impact America is increasing South Carolina children's access to eye care through its FocusFirst initiative.

FocusFirst gives free vision screenings to children ages 6 months to 5 years in early child care centers, Head Start programs and pre-K classrooms. It uses a state-of-the-art Spot Vision Screener, which was purchased with the help of a 2019 Foundation grant, to detect a wide range of vision problems. Through a partnership with Sight Savers America, FocusFirst connects the children who fail the screening to local eye care professionals for follow-up care.

With support from a Foundation grant, FocusFirst screened 24,466 children at 469 early child care centers in the state. This number includes the state's Head Start centers, where 54 percent of children have been screened. Impact America has referred 2,018 children for case management and follow-up care.

By giving these children the vision care they need early in their lives, Impact America and the Foundation are setting them up for success in school and beyond. Moving forward, Impact America will continue to expand its successful screening program to reach other children.

"FocusFirst is an essential service that gives young children vital vision screenings early in their development. These early screenings allow us to identify and address potential vision problems before they get worse.

"The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation has helped us increase our program's capacity, expand our volunteer network and make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of children across the state. Together, we have empowered these children with the vision they need to thrive in school and beyond."

— Ty Jackson
Senior Director of Programs,
Impact America



Evolving Approaches

South Carolina Veteran Coalition: Veterans Service Project

Veterans often face challenges when they transition to civilian life. While most South Carolina veterans are leading successful and fulfilling lives, there is a significant subset who face challenges that can affect their well-being. These veterans often require specialized support and resources to address issues such as mental health and economic instability.

The South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs (SCDVA) recognizes the importance of proactive intervention to prevent these challenges from escalating. By focusing on serving transitioning veterans early in their adjustment process, the department aims to provide essential support, education and resources that can help them navigate this change smoothly.

With help from a Foundation grant, SCDVA is aligning resources and helping veterans overcome these challenges through the South Carolina Veteran Coalition, which is powered by Combined Arms.

Combined Arms is a technology solution that unites veteran service organizations (VSOs) to support veterans and their families. It functions as a "one-stop shop" that streamlines a veteran's ability to connect with VSOs. When a veteran creates a profile in the Combined Arms platform, he or she can search for and contact a variety of VSOs from across the state. Having access to multiple VSOs on a single platform makes it easier for veterans to get in touch with resources that meet their needs. The VSOs on Combined Arms help veterans with career support, health care, housing, transportation, mental health, finances and more.

To date, there are 786 veterans in the Combined Arms system, with 106 active partners addressing nearly 1,400 referrals.

SCDVA created the Palmetto Pathfinder Program to strengthen the coalition's ability to provide veterans with ongoing support. Made possible by a Foundation grant, the program puts veterans who are transitioning to civilian life in touch with peer support mentors, or pathfinders. Pathfinders create referrals and leverage local resources for veterans through Combined Arms. They also help veterans make personal and professional development plans.

SCDVA has trained 221 pathfinders from across the state. The pathfinders have successfully connected 249 veterans with VSOs.

By using technology to align resources and facilitate ongoing mentorship, SCDVA and the Foundation are removing barriers to care and helping veterans thrive as they readjust to civilian life. And when veterans thrive, entire communities can benefit from their experience, strength and resilience.

"The South Carolina Veteran Coalition integrated all veteran-serving organizations in the state. This statewide network removed many of the obstacles veterans face when they look for help. This year, the Palmetto Pathfinder Program is providing individualized support and mentorship to our veterans as they readjust to civilian life.

"With assistance from our coalition pathfinders and partners, we are meeting our strategic goal of helping veterans reach their full potential."

— David Rozelle
Director of Operations, SCDVA



The background of the image shows the back of two people. On the left, a person has dark, curly hair. On the right, a person has long, straight, light-colored hair. Their arms are visible in the lower half of the frame; the person on the left is wearing a yellow and white striped shirt, and the person on the right is wearing a grey shirt and a white wristband. A semi-transparent teal horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the text "ACTIVE GRANTS" in a white, sans-serif font.

ACTIVE GRANTS

Active Grants

Access to Care

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
A Child’s Haven	Flourishing Families Healthy and Whole	06/2023 – 05/2026
Affinity Health Center	Improving Diabetes with Community Health Workers	07/2024 – 06/2027
Beaufort Jasper Hampton Comprehensive Health Services	School-Based Oral Health Initiative	06/2020 – 08/2025
Beaufort Jasper Hampton Comprehensive Health Services	Improving Diabetes with Community Health Workers	07/2024 – 05/2027
CareSouth Carolina	Community Health Workers Reducing Diabetes in South Carolina	07/2021 – 12/2024
CareSouth Carolina	Improving Diabetes with Community Health Workers	07/2024 – 06/2027
Clemson University	Regional Integrated Life Cycle Diabetes Program for Women	06/2022 – 05/2025
Health Sciences South Carolina	Improving Surgical Outcomes in Patients with Diabetes by Perioperative Optimization	06/2021 – 05/2025
Healthy Learners	Serving More Children through Regional Network Expansion	06/2023 – 05/2026
Healthy Learners	Increasing Dental Access to Students in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties	06/2024 – 12/2025
HopeHealth	Improving Diabetes with Community Health Workers	06/2024 – 06/2027
Impact America	FocusFirst: Increasing the Reach of a High-Tech Vision Care Initiative	06/2023 – 05/2025
Lions Vision Services	Vision for South Carolina: A Collaborative Vision Health Initiative (VFSC)	01/2022 – 12/2024
Mental Illness Recovery Center Inc.	Transitional Living Program for Female Youth	01/2024 – 12/2026
Oconee Memorial Hospital Foundation	Phase Two: Community Dental Clinic	06/2024 – 06/2027
Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach Services	Increasing Access to Comprehensive Oral Healthcare for Underserved Populations	06/2023 – 05/2025
Prisma Health Midlands	Women’s Health Initiative: Women in Control of Diabetes	06/2022 – 05/2025
Prisma Health Midlands	Management of Maternal (MOMs) Midlands	01/2024 – 01/2026

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.

Active Grants

Access to Care

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
Prisma Health Upstate	Wellness and Empowerment for All Women	06/2022 – 05/2025
Prisma Health Upstate	Management of Maternal (MOMs) Upstate	08/2023 – 08/2025
Reach Out and Read	Expansion of Oral Health Initiative	01/2024 – 12/2026
Rural Health Services	Women’s Diabetes Initiative	06/2022 – 05/2025
South Carolina Department of Public Health	SC Oral Health Action Network	01/2021 – 08/2025
South Carolina Free Clinic Association	Advancing Free Clinic Care through a National Data Improvement Project	01/2020 – 12/2025
South Carolina Free Clinic Association	Take Care South Carolina	01/2024 – 12/2025
Tandem Health	Community Health Workers Reducing Diabetes in South Carolina	07/2021 – 06/2025
Tandem Health	Improving Diabetes with Community Health Workers	06/2024 – 06/2027
Medical University of South Carolina	Improving Oral Health Outcomes through Integrated Care: Co-Location of Dental Hygienists in Primary Care	01/2020 – 01/2025
Medical University of South Carolina	MENTORS	01/2022 – 06/2025
Medical University of South Carolina	Women Against Diabetes through Empowerment	06/2022 – 06/2025
University of South Carolina Center for Community Health Alignment	Community Health Workers Reducing Diabetes in South Carolina	07/2021 – 12/2024

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.



Active Grants

Building a Stronger Workforce for Health

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
Aiken Technical College	Equipment Upgrade for Dental Assistant Program	06/2023 – 05/2025
Central Carolina Technical College	Titan Simulation Center Equipment Project	06/2024 – 05/2025
Columbia International University	Advanced Degree Counseling Initiative	01/2023 – 12/2025
Edward via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine	Underrepresented Physician Primary Care Scholarships	01/2022 – 12/2030
Florence-Darlington Technical College	Little Smiles Initiative: Empowering Oral Wellness	01/2024 – 12/2024
Greenville Technical College	Dental Programs Equipment	12/2023 – 12/2024
Horry-Georgetown Technical College	Dental Sciences Lab Equipment	01/2024 – 12/2024
Midlands Technical College	Equipment Upgrade for the Dental Clinic at Midlands Technical College	12/2023 – 12/2024
Newberry College	Simulation Equipment for Expanded Nursing Program	06/2024 – 06/2025
Spartanburg Community College	Equipment for Dental Assisting Program	01/2024 – 12/2024
South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium	Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Fellowship Program Exploratory Workgroup	01/2024 – 12/2024
Tri-County Technical College	Equipment for Expanded Dental Program	06/2024 – 06/2025
Trident Technical College	Improving Oral Health Equipment for Dental Programs	12/2023 – 12/2024
University of South Carolina College of Nursing	Nursing Faculty Fellows Pipeline Pilot Program	01/2022 – 12/2024
University of South Carolina Center for Community Health Alignment	The Community Health Worker Institute	01/2023 – 12/2025
University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville	Levi S. Kirkland Scholarships	01/2021 – 12/2030
University of South Carolina School Behavioral Health Team	SC School Mental Health Internship and Educational Program	06/2021 – 05/2025
University of South Carolina Upstate	Developing Nurse Faculty to Strengthen the Nursing Pipeline	01/2022 – 12/2024

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.

Active Grants

Improving the Quality and Value of Health and Health Care

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
American Cancer Society	Prevention and Screening Learning Collaborative and Intervention	12/2023 – 12/2024
Mental Health America of Greenville County	Capacity and Quality Improvement for 988 Implementation in South Carolina	06/2022 – 05/2025
SC Thrive	Increase Use of Thrive Hub for Foundation Grantees and Safety Net Health Clinics	07/2024 – 12/2025
South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services	Establishing a Center of Excellence in Addiction	01/2023 – 12/2024
South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health	Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Rural Counties	06/2024 – 05/2025
University of South Carolina Center for Community Health Alignment	Phase 2: Proposal to Establish and Launch a Collective Strategy to Address Social Determinants of Health	06/2024 – 06/2027

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.



Active Grants

Investing in the Health and Well-Being of South Carolina Children and Families

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
Alliance for a Healthier Generation	Building a Bridge for School and Community	06/2023 – 05/2026
Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation	Kids in Parks: Statewide Expansion in South Carolina	06/2022 – 05/2026
Boys & Girls Clubs of America	National Youth Mental Health Partnership	11/2023 – 7/2027
Children’s Trust of South Carolina	Positive Parenting to Support Adolescent Mental Health	06/2023 – 05/2026
City of Spartanburg	“Hello Family” Pay for Success	01/2020 – 09/2026
Communities in Schools of South Carolina	Student Mental Health Initiative	01/2022 – 12/2024
Communities in Schools of South Carolina	Social Emotional Learning Supports for Students in Low-Income Communities	01/2023 – 06/2026
Epworth Children’s Home	Epworth Center for Counseling Expansion	04/2023 – 03/2027
Fetter Health Care Network	School-Based Oral Health Initiative	01/2023 – 12/2024
FoodShare South Carolina	Supporting a Statewide and Community-Centered Food Distribution Network & Diabetes Prevention Model	06/2020 – 05/2025
Health Care Partners of South Carolina	School-Based Oral Health Initiative	01/2023 – 12/2024
Healthy Learners	Creating Community Capacity to Support Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing	01/2022 – 12/2024
Institute for Child Success	Mapping Local Opportunities to Improve Social Drivers of Health for Children	12/2023 – 12/2025
Landmarks for Families	Expanding Services to Youth in the Lowcountry	01/2022 – 12/2024
National Alliance on Mental Illness South Carolina	SC Youth-Centered Mental Health Awareness & Education	06/2022 – 05/2025
ReGenesis Health Care	School-Based Oral Health Initiative	06/2021 – 05/2023
South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association	Regional Awareness, Readiness and Training	06/2024 – 05/2027
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	Zero Suicide Communities of Care	01/2021 – 12/2024

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.

Active Grants

Investing in the Health and Well-Being of South Carolina Children and Families

Grantee	Project Title	Grant Period
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	Roads 2	01/2022 – 12/2024
South Carolina Department of Public Health	Improving Fitness of SC Public School Students	01/2020 – 12/2024
South Carolina Department of Social Services	Parent Peer Mentor Program Implementation focused on Reunification	02/2023 – 01/2026
South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers	SC Safe Babies Court Team Collaborative	10/2021 – 09/2024
South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers	Establish and Launch State Performance Standards for South Carolina Children’s Advocacy Center Services	06/2024 – 05/2029
South Carolina Office of Rural Health	Community Health Transformation	01/2021 – 12/2024
Spartanburg Academic Movement	Spartanburg Movement 2030	01/2024 – 12/2028
Medical University of South Carolina	School-Based Oral Health Atlas	06/2021 – 05/2026
Medical University of South Carolina	Prevention and Treatment of Diabetes Through a School Wellness Model	06/2023 – 05/2026
University of South Carolina Center for Community Health Alignment	EACH Mom & Baby Collaborative	01/2021 – 12/2024
University of South Carolina Institute for Families in Society	Raising Adolescents to Be Tomorrow’s Leaders	01/2022 – 12/2024
Wholespire	Collaborating to Connect Coalitions to Health Initiative	01/2021 – 01/2025

This list includes active grants as of fall 2024.





BEYOND GRANTMAKING

Beyond Grantmaking

The Foundation is a partner to organizations across the state through its funding and its network. By connecting innovators in health care to each other and through our relationships across the state, the Foundation provides more than grantmaking.

Our health care expertise and regional insight aid partners in finding success. Remaining close, we help problem-solve along the grant cycle.



“Partnerships with funders such as BlueCross are transformative for communities. The Foundation’s commitment to community, its deep expertise in health care and its acknowledgement of the pivotal role of nonprofits in developing community-based solutions all contribute to long-lasting, positive change.”

— Ericka Plater
Executive Director, Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach, Johns Island, South Carolina



“The Foundation goes above and beyond to provide proactive and innovative support to address the critical health needs of our state.”

— Maya Pack
Executive Director, South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health, Columbia, South Carolina

Connect With Us

Our Foundation Staff

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