



CENTER FOR RURAL AND
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

A large graphic element featuring the year '2021' in a bold, dark red, sans-serif font. The year is centered within a white circle that has a thick teal border. A thick, dark red curved line enters from the left and passes behind the circle. A thick, tan curved line enters from the bottom right and also passes behind the circle.

2021

REPORT

A horizontal decorative bar at the bottom of the page, composed of four segments of different colors: teal, tan, dark red, and white.



**FROM
EVIDENCE
TO IMPACT**

OUR MISSION

Accelerate the development and support of rural and primary care education, delivery, and sustainability in South Carolina through clinical practice, training, and research.

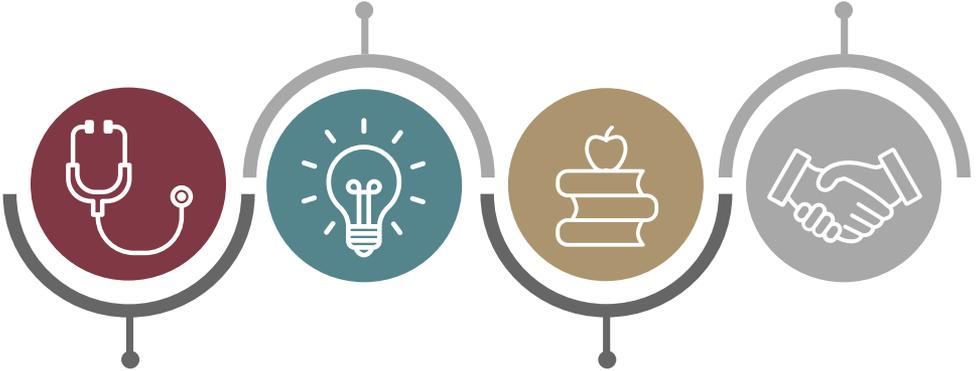
OUR GOAL

Our goal is to support our rural areas of the state through sustainable healthcare delivery; training and other educational initiatives; innovative programs; and robust research & evaluation. We seek to ensure all rural communities in the state have access to high quality and value healthcare.

OUR WORK

INNOVATION

**STRATEGIC
WORKFORCE**



**CLINICAL
OUTREACH**

**EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT**





MEET OUR TEAM



Kevin Bennett, PhD
Director



Michele Stanek, MHS
Associate Director



Megan Weis, DrPH, MPH, MCHES
Director of Community Engagement



Patricia Witherspoon, MD
Medical Director



Alanti McGill, MPH
Program Manager



Samantha Renaud, MA
Research Program Manager



Andrea Mitchell, MPH
Program Manager



Songyuan Deng, PhD
Research Associate



Samantha Barnum, MPH
Rural Research Coordinator



Samantha Smith
Operations Manager



Brittany Wesley
Business Manager

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DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear Partners,

Once again, health providers and hospitals were tested and pushed to the limits this year, especially those operating in rural South Carolina. The persistent disparities in rural health outcomes were only worsened with the new Delta variant of COVID-19. Fortunately, rural communities continue to display resilience in the face of these challenges and there is a growing awareness of their needs. The SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare is excited to continue our work with these communities to close this gap.

Towards this end, new programs and partnerships were developed in 2021, including:

- Mobile Health Unit Enhancement Program – providing technical assistance, support, and an enhancement grants program for mobile units in the state to expand their service delivery in rural and underserved areas.
- Hosting the first learning collaborative where CRPH funded programs came together to network and knowledge share.
- Expanding our impact on maternal and child health issues, including partnerships with the UofSC College of Nursing and Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
- Broad call for proposals from community and healthcare organizations across the state to develop and implement innovative programs for delivery and education, specifically focusing on behavioral and mental health.

We are also happy to announce several additions to our team this past year, including Samantha Smith (Operations Manager), Andrea Mitchell (Program Manager) and Samantha Barnum (Research Coordinator). We all look forward to continuing to serve our rural communities across this state!

Kevin Bennett, PhD



KEVIN BENNETT, PhD
DIRECTOR



CRPH IMPACT

44

active funded programs

Service locations in

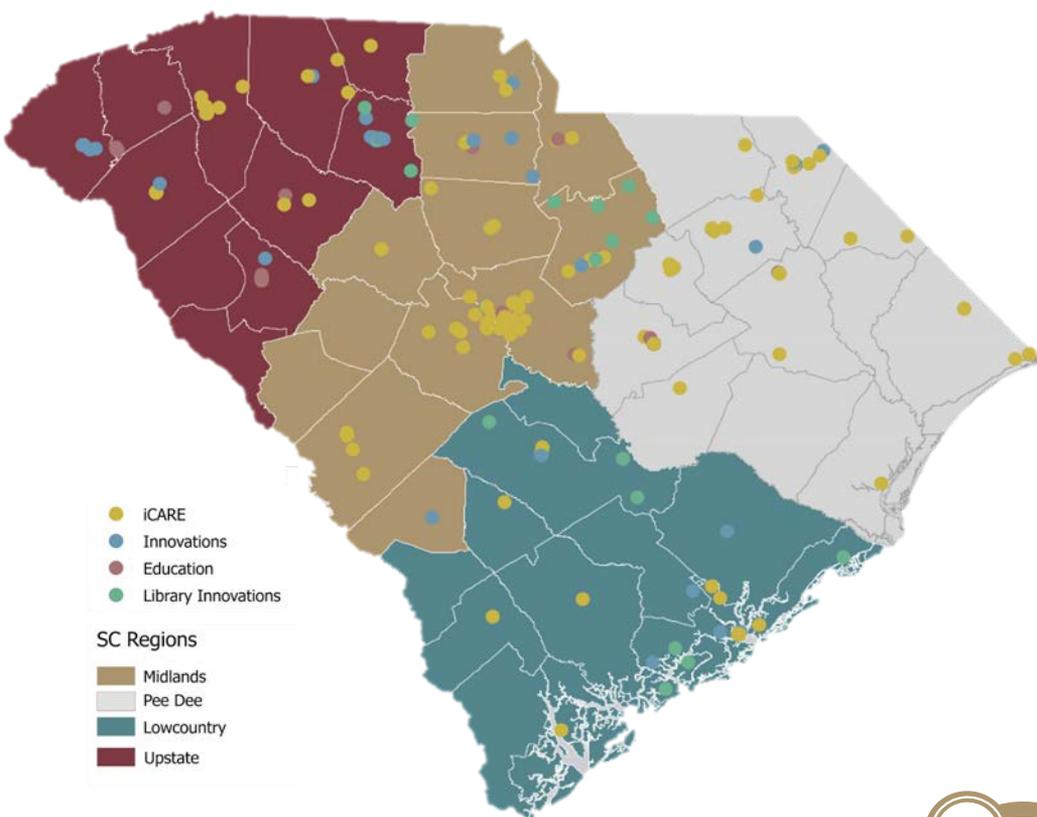
37

counties in South Carolina

5

awarded Rural Innovations Programs in 2021

CRPH ACTIVE PROJECT SERVICE LOCATIONS



ACCESS TO CARE: iCARE

ABOUT ICARE

Established in 2017, iCARE is one of the CRPH's signature programs. These collaborative projects provide local specialty healthcare to rural communities by employing telemedicine and other innovative models.

4,800

Over 4,800 Rural patients received care locally through iCARE projects

277K

iCARE helped South Carolinians avoid more than 277,000 miles of travel



“As a result of the [Antimicrobial] Stewardship teaching, one of our rural partners was able to quickly identify and treat a child with a drug-resistant infection”

- Pamela Bailey DO, MPH
Co-Program Director of ASC SC

iCARE PROJECT SERVICE LOCATIONS





BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

As patients often seek care for physical symptoms related to mental or behavioral issues in a primary care setting, integrating behavioral health services in primary care settings is an effective strategy for providing more immediate access to behavioral health services.

The CRPH continues to support the need for accessible behavioral health services through funding made available for telepsychiatry programs. Adult and child telepsychiatry consultations are offered at CareSouth in their Society Hill, Hartsville, and Latta locations with plans of expansion to further decrease travel distance for patients, and increase patient access. In addition, geriatric and dementia evaluations are offered in Winnsboro along with teletherapy services.

The CRPH also supports McLeod Family Medicine and the Seneca Family Medicine Residency Program in implementing a collaborative care model to integrate behavioral healthcare into primary care. The collaborative care model allows these programs to increase access to behavioral health care for rural and underserved residents of South Carolina while increasing training opportunities for family medicine residents. In addition, this provides an opportunity to retain graduates to serve in areas of critical need that suffer from a workforce shortage of health care providers.

RURAL INNOVATIONS PROGRAM

The rural innovations program provides resources and support to organizations with innovative ideas to improve care and address unmet needs for rural South Carolinians.

26

projects
since 2018

16

active
projects

more than
\$2.4
MILLION
invested

23

counties with
service locations

“

Clemson Rural Health is excited to receive this funding so that we can expand access to medication assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder and hepatitis C treatment via mobile health clinics. Our unique, nurse practitioner led model will decrease financial and transportation barriers for patients who need it most through the Upstate and Midlands of South Carolina

- **Caitlin M. Kickham MS, APRN, FNP-C**”

Associate Director, Clinical Operations at Clemson Rural Health



RURAL INNOVATIONS PROJECT SERVICE LOCATIONS

● Innovations

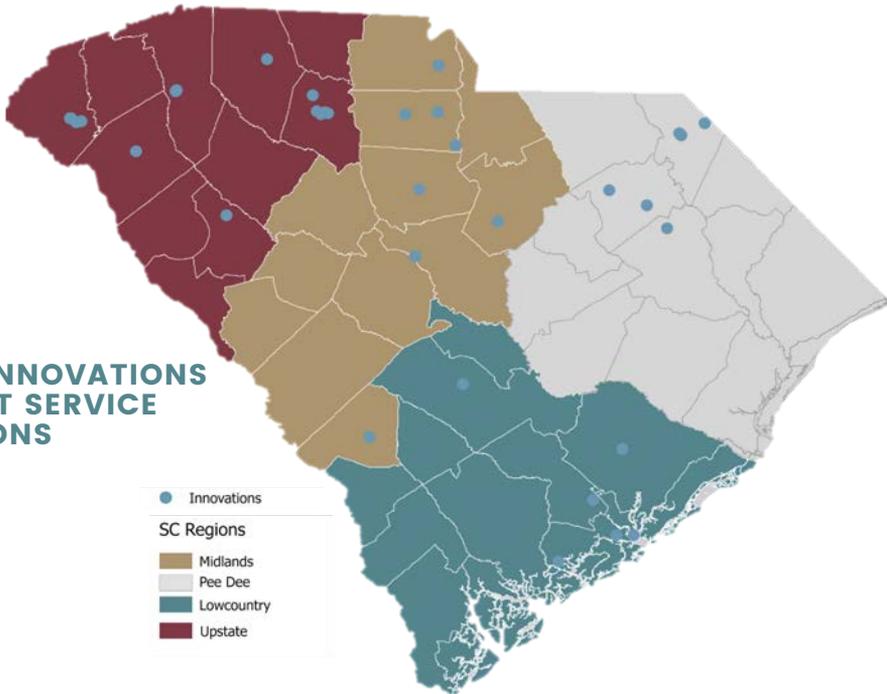
SC Regions

Midlands

Pee Dee

Lowcountry

Upstate



LIBRARIES & HEALTH

Launched in October 2020, the Rural Libraries and Health Cooperative Agreement program supports innovative pilot projects to test alternative models of community care and healthcare engagement via a library system. Libraries are a natural partner in increasing access to care and services due to their reach, accessibility, and roles as trusted community institutions. Rural populations often must travel for access to many essential preventative services. Leveraging library locations will provide vital opportunities in these under-resourced areas.

The awarded programs aim to increase access to a variety of services, including telehealth, behavioral health, health screenings, and women's health with the ultimate goal of connecting community members to the appropriate services for consistent and sustained preventive care and treatment.



Close to **15,000 residents** were reached through Lee, Union, Kershaw, Orangeburg, and Charleston counties with screenings, referrals to health and social services, direct services, health education, and healthy food initiatives.

“

In 2021, Kershaw County Library added a Library Social Worker through a cooperative partnership with the SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare. With ongoing guidance and support from Access Kershaw and the collaborative network provided by the SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare, the Library is becoming established as a source for solutions to the challenges that most impact the health and wellbeing of our community. To implement new areas of service like this, public libraries in rural areas need supportive partnerships. Support from [CRPH] and Access Kershaw has made this program possible.

- **Amy Schofield** Director, Kershaw County Library ”

PARTNERS:

- Charleston County Library
- Kershaw County Library
- Lee County Library
- Orangeburg County Library
- Union County Library



EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Developing rural health leaders, in and out of clinical settings, is essential to successfully build healthy rural communities. CRPH's educational partnerships span across multiple disciplines to meet the multi-faceted needs of rural populations. Through connections with partner organizations and academic institutions, CRPH supports training and capacity-building for existing health champions in rural communities as well as developing a workforce pipeline of medical and allied health professionals through experiential learning and lessons from the field. These are a few of the supported educational programs:

13

CHWs received rural health specialty training

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH ALIGNMENT

The Center for Community Health Alignment (CCHA) has spent the past year developing and piloting a rural health specialty training for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in rural areas. This training is targeted for those working with individuals from rural areas to build capacity for CHWs and strengthen the workforce of CHWs working in these areas.

27

social work students in rural field placements

UofSC COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

The UofSC College of Social Work has been a long-standing partner in connecting undergraduate social work students to unique rural field placements. Through this fieldwork, students gain practical skills while being exposed to rural health settings. This year, 27 social work students were placed in rural serving organizations. Students placed with these organizations were able to gain experience providing mental health services, community outreach, home health services, and tele-mental health services.

89

professional attendees from across the state

TRAUMA-INFORMED TELEHEALTH TRAINING

The College of Social Work developed a training curriculum on integrating trauma-informed care and telehealth. This training describes how COVID-19 pandemic transformed the healthcare delivery landscape and to identify and employ trauma-informed principles that are applicable to technology-based interventions.

NURSING PROGRAM SUPPORT

The rural counties of Sumter, Clarendon, Lee, and Williamsburg have experienced an acute shortage of nurses, especially those holding a BSN. To help alleviate this challenge, a new program at UofSC Sumter enables students to earn a UofSC Aiken's Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree while completing their classes and learning clinical skills in Sumter. This program's innovative hybrid model will produce locally trained nurses who can stay in the region upon graduation.

A critical component to this degree is the training received in a high-quality Simulation Lab. Through grants by the CRPH and other partners, nursing students at UofSC Sumter now have access to a complete nursing simulation lab including both adult and pediatric patient simulators.

In 2021, the program accepted 8 students into the first cohort of the USC Aiken at Sumter program. For 2022, there are currently 29 students on track to apply for 16 open slots and the program is slated to continue expanding as interest continues to grow. These students will be actively using the simulation lab equipment as part of their hands on educational training throughout the 2.5-year program.



DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Research and Evaluation team performs many functions, including:

- Serving as an external evaluator for several grants funded programs
- Assessing outcomes and impact for our funded programs
- Conducting data analysis to understand need for services, workforce, and other resources across the state
- Partnering with other colleagues on external grant submissions and projects
- Collating and aggregating data for use by our rural communities

SC RURAL HEALTHCARE RESOURCE DASHBOARD

Our team continues to improve the SC Rural Healthcare Resource Dashboard. Using the feedback from our 2020 stakeholder interviews, the newly updated dashboard is even easier to use. In addition to regular data updates, we have created new user guides, updated documentation, added new variables, and improved data organization. We were also able to develop and deploy new features such as the ability to download data, print formatted tables, and create customized tables based on location and data of interest.



VIEW, COMPARE, AND EXPORT DATA

- ✓ Demographics
- ✓ Healthcare Resources
- ✓ Socio-Economic Indicators
- ✓ Health Behaviors... and more!



Learn about community access to health including facilities and providers



Discover how the many definitions of rural are represented in our state



Compare the health conditions and behaviors of multiple communities

STRATUS: THE STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

Collaboratively developing a sustainable, strategic plan is essential for the long-term viability of rural programs. However, this is a difficult process, even for well-established programs. This is due to a number of factors, from time and available resources to the constantly changing landscape of rural needs. To alleviate this barrier, improve program success and ensure investment sustainability, CRPH developed a collaborative model for annual strategic sustainability planning, called the Stratus Toolkit.

The Stratus Toolkit is based on the Georgia Health Policy Center's Sustainability Framework and Formative Assessment Quick Course. To make the process accessible to programs, Stratus breaks the process into short, easily achievable tasks. These are accompanied with detailed instructions, tailored for both program leaders and contributors. Simple worksheets are provided for each task which outline the function of each task and who should be responsible for them. Once these are complete, the CRPH facilitates a team discussion with Stratus participants. Simple charts and descriptions compare worksheets to highlight strengths and opportunities of the program. This discussion forms the basis for the program's Action Plan, a clear roadmap that defines next steps and responsibilities to set the program up for long-term success.



GROWING OUR FOOTPRINT

In 2021, the CRPH worked to foster new and innovative relationships across the state in order to connect and strengthen the mission of our funded programs. Additionally, our contracted evaluation work, data analysis support, and grant submission collaborations have allowed CRPH to grow existing partnerships and expand our work capacity.



Mobile Health
Unit RFA



DHEC Library
Expansion



SCTA Telehealth
Survey



Connecting
with HBCUs



Connecting with
Clemson University



Connecting
with PCC



Robert Wood
Johnson
Foundation



Medical Legal
Partnership



Blue Cross Blue
Shield of South
Carolina

DEEPENING THE BENCH

RURAL HEALTH INTEREST GROUP

The Rural Health Interest Group (RHIG) at the UofSC School of Medicine aims to educate **medical students** on the unique opportunities in rural healthcare. They learn from experts in the field about the needs of rural populations and how evidence-based and innovative projects are operationalized in rural areas to overcome obstacles to providing care to these areas. The RHIG also has a national presence and is involved with organizations such as the National Rural Health Association.

RURAL INTEREST GROUP

The Rural Interest Group (RIG) is an **undergraduate, graduate, and professional student** organization at UofSC that aims to offer a platform for students from all disciplines to learn more about rural communities. Using guest speakers, the club educates students about rural healthcare, economy, education, culture, policy, and government. Additionally, the group helps students enrich their education and understanding about rural communities, develop a broader understanding of all issues which impact the rural setting, and learn about policy and legislation that may impact rural communities.

RURAL HEALTH DAY 2021

Rural Health Day 2021 took place on Thursday, November 18th, 2021, and focused on celebrating the power of rural and honoring the community-minded spirit that reigns in rural communities. The RIG hosted an event asking students to write what rural meant to them onto a poster. The event also had jumbo-sized Jenga with rural health facts on each block to engage student interest and expand their knowledge of rural health.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we look into 2022 and beyond, we are working to continue the work that has made such a large impact to date. The center has evolved and expanded over the past few years, and we are now positioned to be able to do more than ever before.

Specifically, we have a goal of working towards expanding the collaborations across our funded programs, so they can work together to better impact the communities they serve. We envision this would include the incorporation of mobile health units, telehealth modalities, and other efforts into existing programs.

We are also working to develop programs that fill in gaps of care, delivery, and outcomes across themes. Specifically, we have identified maternal and child health as an area poised for improvement and innovation. We have begun working with providers to support a maternal-fetal medicine project based in Sumter, that will serve the rural residents of the surrounding areas. This program can easily be replicated and expanded to other hubs across the state as it evolves. We are also working with the College of Nursing to increase placements of obstetric-focused APRNs into rural communities – either in practices or via mobile modalities, to care for women and reduce their travel burdens.

We are also seeking to expand our educational outreach across the state. We are working with several existing groups to support the training of providers (MDs, DOs, Pharmacists, APRNs, PAs) and other providers (Nurse Midwives, Social Work, Community Health Workers). Learn more about our upcoming work on our website at www.scruralhealth.org.

2022 DIRECTIONS



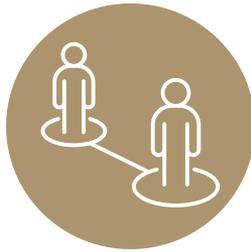
Build mobile health unit capacity across the state



Expand delivery of healthcare services via non-traditional access points



Increase support of maternal and child health across the care continuum



Expand efforts to improve access to behavioral health services for rural patients

COLLABORATIONS

PRISMA HEALTH.



UNION COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM
CONNECT. DISCOVER. THRIVE.



UPPER MIDLANDS RURAL HEALTH NETWORK



Research Center for
Transforming Health



SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF
RURAL HEALTH

Investment. Opportunity. Health.



LEE COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

SOUTH CAROLINA
Telehealth
ALLIANCE

 **tandem health**

McLeod Health

 **School of Medicine
Columbia**

CLEMSON
UNIVERSITY



United Way of the Lowcountry, Inc.

TRI-COUNTY HEALTH NETWORK



**RURAL &
MINORITY**
Health Research Center



SOUTH CAROLINA CENTER
FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES



CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY HEALTH
ALIGNMENT

diabetesfree^{sc}



CENTER FOR RURAL AND PRIMARY HEALTHCARE



www.scruralhealth.org



Growing Rural Podcast on Spotify & Apple Music



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[@SC_CRPH](https://twitter.com/SC_CRPH)

A decorative graphic in the bottom left corner consisting of overlapping circles and arcs in teal, dark red, and gold. A large teal circle with a white border contains the year '2021' in a bold, sans-serif font. The '2' is gold, the '0' is teal, the '2' is dark red, and the '1' is grey. Another teal circle is partially visible below it, and a dark red arc is to the right.

2021