

A South County where all residents have an equal opportunity to lead a healthy life.



South County Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Year 2 Spotlight

Health Equity: A Key Goal

South County is made up of nine cities and towns. Residents experience both wealth and poverty which has led to health disparities.

Everyone in South County deserves the chance to live their healthiest life possible! With funding from the Rhode Island Department of Health, 56 partners across South County are working together to ensure inequities, caused by socially determined circumstances (e.g., race, address, income) are addressed.

Collectively known as Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds (HBHM), this collaborative is a long-term effort to ensure community health. HBHM has six overarching areas of focus, within which numerous initiatives are implemented.

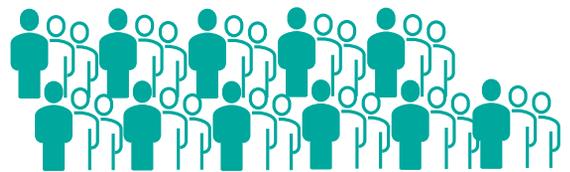


Critical to Success: Partnerships

Inter-organizational collaboration is an important component of successful efforts at improving community health. Establishing and maintaining relationships across organizations requires an investment of time and other resources.

Since 2015, the number of HBHM partners has doubled.

56 partners working together



Including **7 school systems**, over **15 healthcare organizations**, and numerous **community organizations**.

New partners include: Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI, Bradley Hospital, Continuum RI, Crossroads RI, Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County, Rhode Island DCYF, RI Food Bank, the RI Public Health Institute, and the South Kingstown Public Library

Resources Leveraged

The South County HBHM initiative has leveraged a diverse set of resources across various strategies.



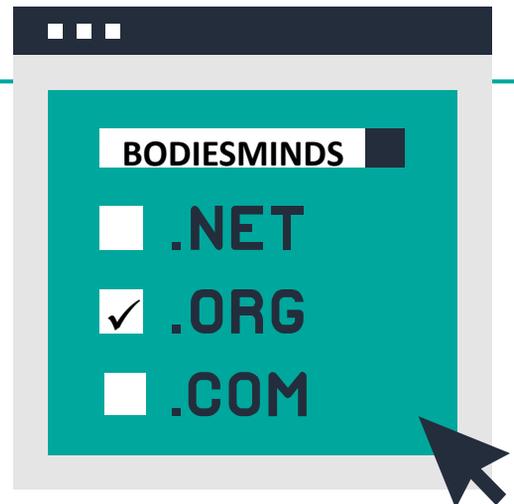
\$585,392

in leveraged resources
and in-kind contributions

Highlights include:

- RI Foundation provided **2 grants** valued at **\$151,347** to 1) implement **8 for 80+**: Promoting Positive Emotional Health in Children and 2) study of **emergency room use for behavioral health concerns** and potential use of **telepsychiatry** to address unmet needs.
- Southern RI Local Education Agencies Consortia and Washington County Coalition for Children received a 2-year grant worth **\$99,971** to implement **Youth Mental Health First Aid** in **8** school districts and surrounding communities
- Thundermist Health Center leveraged **\$50,000** of USDA/private foundation funding to promote fresh fruit and vegetable purchases at local farmers markets via bonus bucks; offer cooking classes; conduct Women Infant and Children's (WIC) enrollment outreach, and secure a consultant to pursue food policy systems.
- University of Rhode Island leveraged **\$27,000** to host a MHFA Instructor training, provide participant manuals, and roll out MHFA trainings for staff and faculty on campus.
- Narragansett Prevention Partnership leveraged **\$1,760** to design the **Elephant in the Room** campaign.

An important step in enhancing community health is increasing awareness of the problem(s) and related solutions. HBHM media and awareness activities have several purposes: 1) increase familiarity of strategies and available opportunities in the schools and communities, 2) strengthen residents' understanding of the issues at hand and 3) garner the support of diverse stakeholders (including residents and decision makers) to ensure policy and environmental changes are made to support healthy behaviors.



Since March, **bodiesminds.org** has been accessed by over

1000 unique users

3,591 page views

Community Engagement

Health disparities are both an outcome and a result of poverty. The investment of resources and design of interventions by South County agencies and institutions to address them requires a deep understanding of the root causes. To be successful, there has to be both a concern for the reasons in which they happen and an awareness of the community dynamics in which they occur. The **Data Dive** is an effort to develop a replicable model for 1) collecting small geography data concerning health and public safety, 2) developing knowledge of community dynamics, and 3) engaging both institutions and community members to work together to devise interventions. The model will be tested in five neighborhoods in conjunction with each community health center.



This year, residents from Block Island, Bradford, and Peace Dale collaborated to identify and address health challenges in their neighborhoods.

A number of successes have been celebrated in Year 2.

Westerly

POLICE

Department

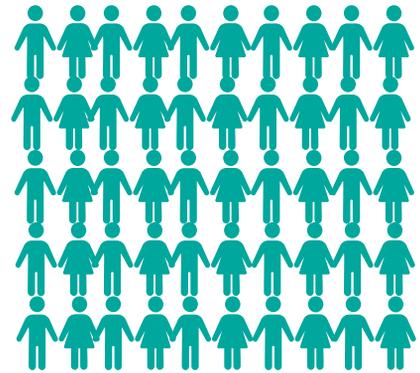
Has become a significant HBHM partner. This year, they began to refer substance users to **The Journey to Hope, Health & Healing**, an outpatient treatment center offering help to people addicted to drugs and alcohol.



Despite challenges in obtaining local-level data, **community profiles** have been created in three communities: Bradford, Peace Dale, and Block Island.

Funding was secured to pay for summer camp scholarships for over

50 Bradford and Peace Dale youth.



Summer Camp

Food Access

Accessing food, especially healthy food, is a challenge for far too many Americans. Numerous individual- and community-level factors make food insecurity a persistent problem throughout the country, including South County. Access to affordable, healthy food plays a role in food security, especially among WIC and SNAP recipients. Food access is shaped by the retail food environment, including the availability of grocery stores, corner stores, and other food outlets such as farmers' markets. As part of HBHM, Thundermist Health Center is leading efforts to improve food access for South County residents at farmers' markets. The Center supports greater redemption rates of WIC and SNAP benefits on fresh fruits and vegetables using incentive funds.



7

South County *farmer's market*
now accepting
WIC/SNAP/Senior
Coupons and Bonus
Bucks incentives

SNAP Sales

at South County Farmer's Markets increased 87% between the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 market Season from \$6,001 to \$11,193.



Overall Sales:



\$71,995

in credit card sales

\$11,193

in SNAP sales

\$4,447

in credit card sales



3 pop up markets attracted about
100 people each time

Over

200 people impacted

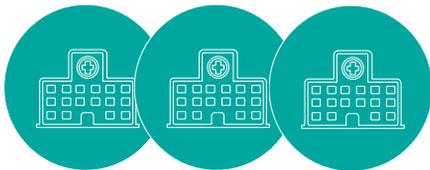


By food
access efforts

Child Development

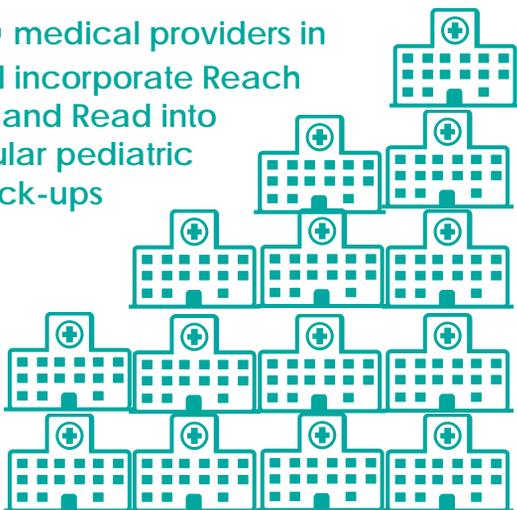
The first five years of life offer a critical window for learning as rapid brain development happens at this time. When children are read to, they are exposed to more words which increases the likelihood that they will start school on track and reach their full educational, social, and life potential. **Reach Out and Read** is an evidence-based program incorporated into regular pediatric checkups. It builds on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to ensure children develop critical early reading skills.

3 new sites



brought on in Year 2

14 medical providers in total incorporate Reach Out and Read into regular pediatric check-ups



656 children reached

1,741 books purchased with HBHM funding

5210

messaging campaign

Focuses on increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles.

5 or more fruits & vegetables per day

2 hours or less of recreational screen time;

1 hour or more of physical activity everyday

0 sugary drinks and more water.

HBHM is working to **saturate the 5210 message throughout South County**. This year, partners and staff have successfully implemented practice and environmental changes, including:

- **28 schools** communicating the 5210 message; **18** of which have integrated it into their curriculum
- **23 community organizations** sharing the message through materials
- **7 preschools** using materials in classrooms
- **7 healthcare centers** giving out materials and incorporating new practices
- **6 food pantries** displaying posters and giving out healthy recipes
- **3 sites** implementing Boks before school running and exercise program

This year, an estimated **15,900** people have been exposed to the 5210 message



Changes Made to Support 5210 Behaviors



1 school adopting a **grab-and-go** breakfast smoothie station to increase **breakfast participation**

1 school offering less “**lookalike**” cereals to reduce confusion over healthy vs. unhealthy options



3 providers prescribing the outdoors and one who is known to join patients and families on guided walks



youth mental health first aid

One in five Americans has a mental illness and oftentimes may not get help until it is too late. Today’s society is largely unaware of the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses. Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is designed to introduce adults to risk factors and warning signs of mental health concerns, build their confidence to recognize symptoms, and identify common treatments.

This year, trainings targeted a diverse range of community members from teachers and school administrators to law enforcement, nurses, counselors, and librarians. As a result:

- **15 trainings** were provided and
- **184 adults** were certified
- **97%** of attendees strongly agreed or agreed they were more confident in their ability to recognize signs of a mental health crisis
- **95%** of all attendees strongly agreed or agreed they felt more confident in their ability to offer a distressed person basic “first aid” level information and reassurance about mental health problems.



Of all people with chronic mental health disorders



show symptoms by age 14



show symptoms by age 24

This year, **URI** has rolled out Adult MHFA for Higher Education on campus. **11 staff** and **4 community members** were **trained as instructors**. Having URI staff trained not only increases capacity to offer trainings, but also helps provide an important **safety net** for the 18-24 population on the state's largest university campus.

In addition, the **Westerly School System** has **committed to training all staff** and is looking into **requiring YMHA certification** as a requirement for **employment**.

Washington County is a federally designated "mental health shortage area." As a result, residents experiencing a crisis have few options for same day psychiatric assessments or linkages to treatment outside of Emergency Departments.



This year, **HBHM** began replication of the RI Youth Suicide Prevention Project model to **streamline screening, triage, crisis assessment, mental/behavioral health treatment, and follow-up services.**

- **13 individuals** received a same or next day assessments
- **2 area PCP trainings** were held on protocols for the new project

ELEPHANT In the Room

HBHM partners have joined together to increase awareness of important behavioral health issues, including depression, suicide, binge drinking, and opiate overdoses in our region. Using 'Elephant in the Room' campaign materials, partners have presented data on these issues throughout the community.

To date, over 3,000 rack cards have been distributed highlighting important local data and action steps. Ready-to-use presentations and videos have been shared with over 50 partners.



Project LAUNCH

Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health

What happens in very early childhood may set the stage for everything that follows: whether a child is physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively healthy throughout childhood and adulthood. Yet, coordinated efforts to identify problems and promote wellness often don't start until a child reaches school.

Project LAUNCH promotes the health and well-being of children from birth to age 8 through a variety of programs and services, as RI does not offer home visits and has very specific services. Screenings are conducted in childcare, school, and pediatric care settings, integration of behavioral health into primary care settings, mental health consultation, and family strengthening and parent skills training.

This year, Rhode Island's Department of Health and Bradley Hospital began to implement **Project LAUNCH** in South County through Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds.

- **1 training** for area primary care providers was held to promote Project LAUNCH
- **2,000 flyers** were distributed to local physician practices, schools, other community organizations

INCREDIBLE Years

Incredible Years (IY), a parenting program with 30+ years of research supporting its effectiveness, puts the ideas of **Project LAUNCH** into action. **IY** promotes children's social, emotional, and academic competence while preventing and/or treating emotional and behavioral difficulties.

An IY Group for parents of preschoolers was launched in February 2017 in Westerly. This **20 week** program has been successful. A mix of **12 parents** (at risk parents and others for support) have created support systems for one another.

- **6 parenting meetings** held
- **6 local early childhood educators/licensed clinicians** were trained as IY parent group instructors

QPR Question, Persuade, and Refer

HBHM has worked with various community organizations to commit to implementing **QPR** Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention. **QPR** is a 1-2 hour educational program to teach lay and professional individuals the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond.

16 instructors from community organizations, including local health care, clergy, and social service organizations, have committed to training 100 people in QPR over the next 2 years (by Spring 2019).

Moving Forward

Multi-strategy program, policy, and environmental change interventions such as HBHM are challenging. These efforts require an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, non-profits, and residents to achieve significant and lasting social change. Partners must abandon their individual plans and collaborate on a common agenda, shared measurement, and alignment of efforts. HEZ funding has provided the foundation for partners to establish relationships and build integrated systems. During Year 3 of the grant, partners will continue to leverage resources and facilitate conversations focused on establishing systems that link food providers, mental health support, social service, and healthcare agencies to improve access for all South County residents.

We're in. Join us

Community involvement is vital to sustain the exciting work of HBHM. For more information, call Susan Orban, HBHM Director by phone at (401) 788-2347, email at sorban@southcountyhealth.org or visit the www.bodiesminds.org page.

Acknowledgements

This report was authored by:

