



Institute for H.O.P.E.™
School Health Program

SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Dear MetroHealth School Health Community

This has been an unprecedented year for school health. The pandemic continues to disrupt the lives of children. School, often the most stabilizing force in a child's life, has undergone dramatic change. Required to close completely at the beginning of the pandemic, schools across the country pivoted to virtual or hybrid learning, back to in-person, and back again to virtual learning with intermittent temporary closures. More and more children faced food and housing insecurity, financial and family instability. Grief, loss, limited social connection and constant uncertainty preceded a steep decline in the emotional and mental well-being of children. As schools closed, school-based health centers also closed. Early data showed the pandemic exacerbating existing disparities in access to care, with a sharp increase in the number of children falling behind on immunizations and preventive care and unable to access services.

The experience of the pandemic has reinforced the imperative to center community efforts on meeting the needs of the whole child. The Ohio Department of Education describes this 'whole child approach' as broadening the school focus beyond academics. Including meeting the social, emotional, physical and safety needs foundational to a child's intellectual and social development and necessary for students to engage in learning. The Whole Child Framework provides a blueprint for creating communities where children are healthy, feel safe, are supported, develop strong relationships, are challenged, and engaged in learning that is relevant and meaningful.

We continue to rely on the community support that allows us to collaborate to meet the needs of the whole child. The commitment of our school and community partners and the leadership of The MetroHealth System in response to the pandemic has been nothing less than extraordinary. MetroHealth's early adoption of telehealth allowed us to continue to meet the needs of students virtually while schools were closed. And the dedication and strategic planning of our school and community partners allowed us to transition from telehealth back to in-person care as soon as the doors were open again.

We anticipate that the pandemic will continue to challenge us in ways we cannot predict. The entire team at the MetroHealth School Health Program remains grateful for the many partners in this journey. Navigating a complex healthcare system remains an obstacle for children to obtain the care they need. Our team is committed to overcoming any obstacle to provide compassionate, competent, comprehensive care for our community's children – when and where they need it.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Maier, MD, MPH

Medical Director

MetroHealth School Health Program





COVID-19 Consulting / Updates

The MetroHealth School Health Program, like many other organizations, has undergone significant change since the beginning of the pandemic. When schools closed, leadership understood that the program would need to adapt. Clinical services transitioned to telehealth, and the immediate needs of school partners and community members took precedent over in-person clinics.

Early in the pandemic, very little was understood about the significance of the virus for children or even how the infection could be spread. Schools were facing complex decisions about closing, reopening and which policies and procedures to adopt to keep children, teachers, and school staff safe.

In response to numerous requests for more data and science-based recommendations, the Duke University School of Medicine and the Duke Clinical Research Institute developed the ABC Science Collaborative. This multi-state, multi-institutional consortium pairs scientists and physicians with school and community leaders to understand the most current and relevant data



about COVID-19. Duke University and the University of North Carolina School of Medicine lead the program, which receives its funding from the National Institutes of Health.

MetroHealth School Health Program Medical Director Dr. Vanessa Maier was asked to join the collaborative as a Regional Lead. “Being a part of the ABC Science Collaborative has been instrumental in allowing us to learn from the experience of scientists and community leaders from across the country” says Dr. Maier. “Every community is unique, and the needs will be very different from one community to the next. Being able to compare data from diverse communities across the country helps us get a better understanding of what might be most effective in our community to keep everyone safe.”

Dr. Maier has found that her role with the ABC Science Collaborative informs the consulting she provides as COVID Medical Director for Breakthrough Schools and The Intergenerational Schools. “I always want to ensure that the information we provide is supported by the best scientific evidence. Sometimes we are asked questions in areas where there just isn’t enough evidence to say one way is better than another. We have to say, ‘We don’t know yet.’ But those questions can then guide the next research study.”

Our Partners

Clinical Services

Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Cleveland Heights – University Heights School District
Urban Community School
Positive Education Program

Prevention Programming

Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Cleveland Heights – University Heights School District

Consulting Services

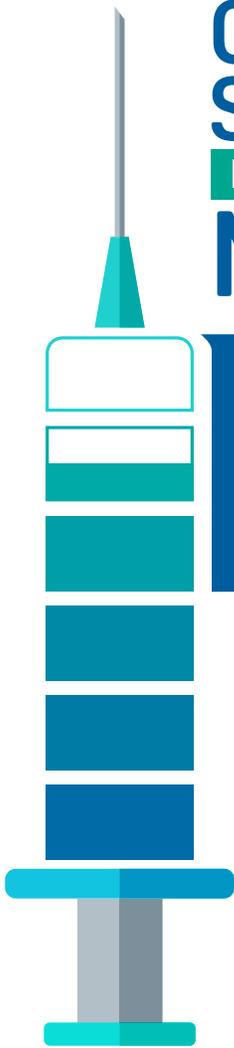
Urban Community School
Bay Village School District
Intergenerational Schools
Breakthrough Schools



CLINICAL SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS



2,256
Students Enrolled



72% Up to Date on
Required School
Immunizations

97%
more likely to have
completed a well-child
visit when compared to
a group of youth who are
not enrolled in SHP

4,890



1,126 Visits



LEARNER DATA ▶

4

Nurse
Practitioner
Students

13

Family Medicine
Residents

8

BSN Nursing
Students

1

Medical
Students

2

Psychology
Residents

Prevention

The School Health Program is no stranger to prevention work in the schools, thanks to our Students Are Free to Express (SAFE) Project. The SAFE Project sessions are usually delivered in classrooms and in person by our incredibly talented teaching artists. However, due to the COVID-19 disruptions to in-person learning, many of the SAFE Project sessions were converted into virtual sessions and available to students and virtual classrooms. We were able to connect with many students and teachers this way, and received great feedback about having the ability to engage with SAFE in this remote way. The teaching artists and SAFE Project team worked hard to make sure the program was still available despite the effects of COVID-19.

In addition to SAFE Project, the 2020-2021 school year brought us the opportunity to expand our prevention partnerships into the first cohort of Say Yes schools. We worked very closely with Family Support Specialists and school administrators to make sure our sessions were helpful for the students. Our prevention team enjoyed getting to (virtually) know students of all ages from all over Cleveland. We conducted over 70 sessions and connected with over 900 students, as well as staff, and caregivers. We also had fun inviting Ideastream to join one of our high school sessions and join in the conversation about stress and coping. We look forward to expanding our prevention programming and hopefully getting to meet our students in person this school year.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our team was ready to respond to the mental health needs of our patients. We continued to screen high school students for anxiety and depression, and provided virtual mental health consultation through members of our team. We have seen a lot of stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will keep connecting with our patients to make sure they can feel heard and supported during this period of adjustment back to in-person instruction and living with a 'new normal.'

Mission

Improve access to health care by partnering with the community, to advocate for and support the health and well-being of our children.

Funders

Anonymous

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CareSource

The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation

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Say Yes Cleveland

The Sherwin-Williams Foundation

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Three Arches Foundation

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