



2020

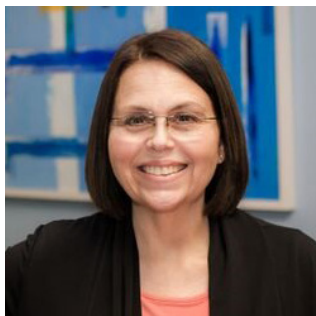
COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

.....

EVERY ADOLESCENT EMPOWERED TO BE HEALTHY, SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL

LETTERS FROM LEADERSHIP

Letter from Executive Director



Isolation, school closings, the loss of family, grief and uncertainty. As we look back at 2020, we must take time as a community to heal and grow from these collective experiences. COVID-19 further exposed the deep-rooted inequities that exist not only nationally, but in our own Charlotte neighborhoods. While we all experienced COVID-19, we have not experienced it in the same way. The ramifications of this pandemic were felt disproportionately among our youth, people of color and low-income families due to systematic social and economic inequalities present in our everyday lives and environments. This directly contributes to poor health outcomes, gives rise to unhealthy behaviors, and limits the ability to get the help and support teens and young adults need to thrive.

Access to healthcare and the trauma-informed models applied at Teen Health Connection are addressing these disparities. Over the past year, we have remained steadfast in delivering adolescent medicine and behavioral health services. We did not waver when Charlotte's teens and families needed us most. In 2020, over 70% of those we served were people of color. It was from your support and advocacy that we began serving teens 29 years ago. As we have all been challenged by the impact of COVID-19, it has been your ongoing commitment to the comprehensive healthcare needs of teens and young adults that has provided so many with access to lifelines of care.

As you read through our 2020 Community Impact Report, I am certain you will be proud of the difference we have made together and hope that you will be inspired to stay energized as we strive toward our vision of every adolescent empowered to be healthy, safe and successful.

Libby Safrit, MA LPA HSP-PA Executive Director

Letter from Medical Director



If I were to choose one word to describe our work in 2020 and our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be Adaptation. As the pandemic spread and shutdowns were ordered, we were able to quickly launch our virtual practice. This enabled us to remain open, providing a variation of in-person and virtual visits, when many other healthcare practices were forced to turn patients away. Our nurses were also on the phone triaging patients, giving them virtual guidance and support if they tested positive for COVID-19, while also stepping in to help other areas of Atrium that were impacted by COVID. It was "all hands-on deck" as we operated in disaster mode system wide.

As difficult as it was for us, it was far harder for adolescents at home to adjust to the pandemic. Many of the patients we saw reported three or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). We saw more patients with anxiety and depression; more reproductive health needs; and made far more mental health referrals. Like pediatric and adolescent health practices across the country, we also saw a decrease in well visits and vaccinations as families became wary of healthcare facilities. These visits are especially critical for adolescents and young adults, as they allow us the opportunity to make sure our young patients are doing well emotionally as well as physically.

Fortunately, we're finally seeing a glimmer of hope and light with COVID-19 vaccination efforts increasing. I'm happy to report that our teammates were among the first to get vaccinated for our patients' protection. And the expansion of our virtual practice has expanded our reach of services, so that we can now meet adolescents and young adults where they are in addressing their physical, psychological, and social-emotional needs. Teen Health Connection is the only adolescent and young adult practice of its kind in the Charlotte region, and we're proud to meet the needs of youth in our community.

Shamielka Virella Dixon, MD Director, Adolescent Medicine

WHAT DID COVID-19 MEAN FOR TEENS?

Teens. They have unique developmental challenges and opportunities very different from the ones they experienced in childhood and those they will confront as adults. At this stage of life, teens invest more of themselves into their social connections. They begin to separate from their parents. They (safely) experiment and take risks on their own. They continue to achieve important developmental milestones such as social skills, empathy, and a sense of identity. Milestones are achieved in the context of peers, families, and communities. For teens, schools are more than a place to earn course credit. Friends are more than someone to sit next to. Sports are more than physical exercise. Graduation is more than a document. These are the things teens need to grow into healthy adults.

Only 12.9%* of all COVID-19 cases occurred among children and adolescents under 18 – but ALL of them were impacted by the pandemic.

– American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association, 2020

Trauma, adversity, and stress during this developmental stage can have lifetime consequences. In their own words...

"It's all very unclear and that leads to stress. It can be overwhelming."

"Applying to college is extremely stressful. Extracurriculars are so important but everything is cancelled."

"It's gotten harder to keep up in school, I didn't use to struggle like this."

"We may still get COVID-19 no matter what we do."

"It's my senior year and I don't want to miss out on all the things I've worked so hard for."

"I am not friends with a lot of people anymore."

* Teen Health Connection Teen Focus Group, Spring 2020



Teen Health Connection has transformed.

In 2019, we overhauled our offices, treatment rooms, and teen-centered workspaces. We were excited to welcome our patients into our newly renovated, integrated practice. And then 2020 unfolded... For the safety of our patients and their families, Teen Health Connection rapidly transitioned its adolescent medicine, behavioral health services and prevention programs. Patient care was accessible in-person, virtually or through hybrid schedules throughout the pandemic. This allowed Teen Health Connection to continue providing care during early nationwide shutdowns without cancelling an appointment. The 2019 renovation expanded treatment and therapy rooms, improved capacity for socially distant COVID-safe patient care, and facilitated safe COVID-19 patient testing.

Now and into the future, in-person and virtual care will remain available at Teen Health Connection, connecting more teens to the services they need.

"It is imperative that we preserve the medical home... during this crisis... Since the onset of the pandemic, a significant drop in well-child visits has resulted in delays in vaccinations, delays in appropriate screenings and referrals, and delays in anticipatory guidance to assure optimal health. As the U.S. continues to follow guidelines during this pandemic, pediatricians are here to take care of our children and adolescents in multiple ways."

– American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021

WHY IS ADOLESCENT MEDICINE IMPORTANT?

At Teen Health Connection, we do more than treat illness. We promote wellness.

40% of parents in a national survey reported cancellations or delays in their children's routine healthcare services over the pandemic (*Pediatrics, 2020*).

Adolescent medicine helps to make sure teens hit their developmental milestones and grow into healthy adults. Checking in on these milestones is as important for a teen as it is for a young child. With schools, prosocial activities, and workplaces physically closed, normal pathways to advice and support were not available for many teens and families. In 2020, our medical team had an opportunity to check in with the thousands of patients served by Teen Health Connection. Providers asked critical questions about their patients' emotions, their relationships, and their involvement in activities. They gave patients and parents reliable information about the pandemic and strategies to cope.

- 70% of Teen Health Connection's medical patients are insured through Medicaid.
- Teen Health Connection is a medical home and provides specialty care for ALL teens, including youth in foster care.



At Teen Health Connection, we screen patients for behavioral health symptoms and risk factors during their visit to guide interventions and care delivery.

Our data show that throughout the pandemic, teens have struggled:

- **51% of patients experienced 3 or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**
- **32% reported symptoms of a potential depressive disorder (PHQ-2)**
- **10% reported potentially problematic substance use (CRAFFT)**

A behavioral health triage clinician was available to respond to patients with elevated screening scores and to provide consultation with patients and community teens in person or by phone.



COVID-19 AND ADOLESCENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

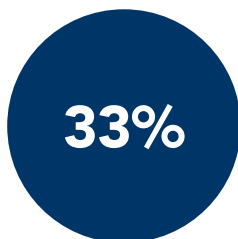
While teens and young adults were said to be the least directly impacted by the COVID-19 virus physically, their wellbeing was greatly compromised.

In the six months immediately following the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States, utilization of Teen Health Connection's behavioral health services increased by 64%.

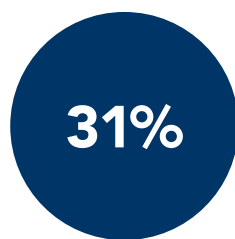
Our team delivers trauma-informed, evidence-based treatments specialized for adolescents. We believe that successful therapeutic growth includes family and supportive adults whenever possible. Tools and resources are available for parents to support the therapeutic process.



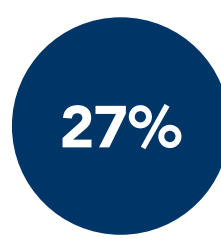
The most common behavioral health diagnoses among teens in 2020 included:



**Depressive
Disorders**



**Adjustment
Disorders**



**Anxiety
Disorders**



**PTSD and other
Trauma Specific
Disorders**



SPOTLIGHT ON: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRIAGE

- Behavioral Health Triage was critical in Teen Health Connection's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A behavioral health specialist is available by phone or in person for patients and families to provide screening and assessment, brief intervention and psychoeducation, and to make referrals for behavioral health or community services.
- 1,686 triages were provided for teens, family members, and concerned citizens across the community.

"For many teens, this is their first major experience with grief and loss. Teens have lost family members, their "rites of passage" like graduation, their sense of stability and control in their life. This may be their first experience adjusting to life-altering changes. Grief over their experiences and their loss of experiences is very real. We need to recognize teens for the strength they have shown."

– Betsy Thompson, LCMHC, Program Coordinator of Behavioral Health Services

"I need someone to talk to my teen daughter. To help her break through this crisis she is dealing with. She needs someone she can trust, relate to, who will talk to her about the future."

– Teen Health Connection Parent Needs Assessment, Spring 2020

HEALTH EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

COMMUNITY PREVENTION AMIDST COVID-19

Self-isolation and quarantine put a spotlight on the potential for teen substance use and the everyday risk factors that exist at home. Home-based prevention strategies were more important than ever. Teen Health Connection implemented several community prevention strategies aimed at these risk factors.

- Public service announcements played on 6 Beasley Media Radio Stations.
- Billboards were installed reminding parents to talk to their teens about underage drinking and to secure prescription drugs in their homes.
- 25,000 prescription bags were printed and distributed through Harris Teeter Pharmacy with information on safely disposing of prescription medications.



PARENT EDUCATION

Many family memories were made in 2020. At the same time, bringing families together under one roof created new family demands and expectations, leading in many cases to a strain on these relationships. Parents are a teen's first line of defense. At Teen Health Connection, we recognize parents and caregivers as critical to healthy teenage development. In 2020, parents needed support to make their new family realities work.

Teen Health Connection overhauled its parenting programs to meet these changing needs of local parents.

A look at Teen Health Connection's 2020 Parenting Initiatives:

- Parenting education went virtual. Online workshops and support groups were regularly scheduled and available on request for local community groups.
- A COVID-19 Workshops Series tackled topics such as:
 - Parenting Without a Village: Supporting our Families through the Stress and Uncertainty of COVID-19
 - Teens, Technology, and COVID-19: Raising Mindful Digital Consumers during a Pandemic
 - Building Resilience to Face Life's Uncertainties

"These classes help you regain a true vision of how to focus on the importance of relationships with your family members and how to best remain calm and in control of your emotions. They give you really effective ways of parenting a teen. What you learn you are able to implement immediately."

– Charlotte parent

TEEN LEADERSHIP

Leadership and prevention programs are teen-led and adult guided, emphasizing teen empowerment, substance use prevention, and leadership skill development. As schools moved to remote learning and families isolated, Charlotte teens craved meaningful connection and interaction. These programs provided fun, safe, alcohol- and drug-free virtual environments for teens to engage with each other, take risks, and grow.

Teen Advisory Board

The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) represented 27 distinct local middle and high schools. TAB members met virtually to participate in prevention workshops; practiced important skills like public speaking, project planning, and teamwork; and carried out many of Teen Health Connection's community prevention campaigns.

"Because of TAB, I discovered that I want to become a leader in the future. I want to be someone who other teens look up to."

– TAB participant



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) recognized TAB's virtual "Social Norms" media campaign as an exemplar of virtual prevention for coalitions across the country challenged by COVID-19.

Empower: Teen Leadership Summit

The 2020 Empower: Teen Leadership Summit was originally planned as an in-person, over-night Summit at Queens University. Speakers and program leaders adapted materials to facilitate a meaningful, virtual experience for attendees, including four days of virtual workshops, national speakers, discussion, and fun activities.

"This week [at Summit] was amazing for my daughter. She missed the in-person fun of last year, but it allowed her to make wonderful connections with teens from all over. She wouldn't have traded it!"

– Parent of Summit attendee

92%

of participants across teen programs committed to being alcohol, tobacco, and drug free for the next year.

LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT



I'm very proud of my time with Teen Health Connection and consider it an honor to serve as board chair – especially this past year. I became connected as part of my job nearly 30 years ago when the organization was first launched, and as a parent of a teenager at the time, Teen Health Connection was very helpful and enlightening. It has been rewarding to see the organization come into its own as one of Charlotte's vital healthcare resources.

So as we now face the challenge of rebooting – of figuring out our 'new normal' – I immediately think of our teens. Because as difficult as the pandemic has been for adults, it's been much more so for adolescents. This is a difficult time under normal circumstances, fraught with emotion as teens struggle toward independence and adulthood. It's been magnified by COVID-19, which dashed so many plans and upended so many lives. The challenge for our teens now will be balancing expectations of what they thought their adolescent years would be like, and what is their reality.

As this happens, Teen Health Connection must be there to help our teens get back up and redefine what their adolescent years will be. Our job now is to remain nimble and listen carefully to teens and parents to determine their needs as Charlotte rebounds from the pandemic. And then adjust to serve those needs.

The challenges facing Teen Health Connection and our community today are more expansive than when we were founded. For solutions, leadership and the board are looking to our mission as we revisit and refine our Strategic Plan, a living document that keeps us focused and on course. There will be no sweeping changes, but rather fine-tuning for mission-focused impact with increased awareness of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues, which are central to our being.

Teen Health Connection's model of integrated adolescent medicine, behavioral healthcare, parent education and youth leadership has never been more relevant – or necessary. I hope you will join us in building the connections among adolescents, parents and the community that will help our teens successfully navigate the new normal.

Jane Llewellyn President, 2020 Board of Directors

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jane Llewellyn, President
Community Leader

Michelle Boyd
Charlotte AHEC

Todd Paris
MassMutual Carolinas

Holly Wenger, Vice President
Duke Energy

Billy Carberry
Kates Kesler (Accenture)

Nicole Ramsdell
Belk, Inc.

Kristen Washam, Past President
Elliott Davis

Gabi Culpepper
Dickens Mitchener

L. Michelle Reese
Community Leader

Eric Runge, Treasurer
OrthoCarolina

Maureen C. Karhut
Attorney

Tracie Taylor
Atrium Health

Ryan Kilmer, Secretary
UNC Charlotte

Megan S. King
Camp Southern Ground

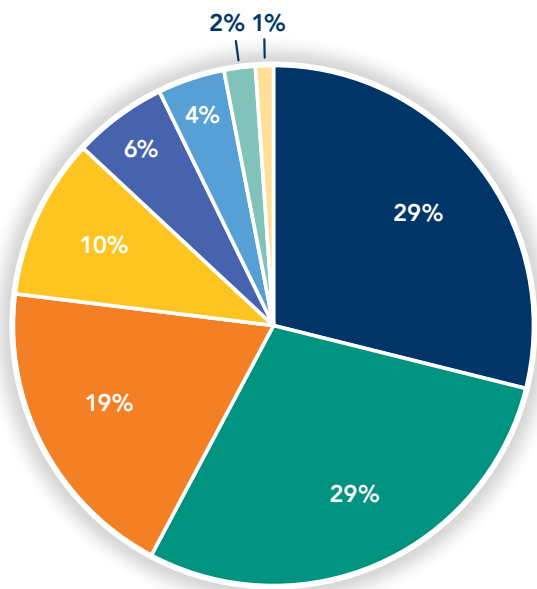
Stephen Valder
Pediatrician

Marion R. Bish
Leadership Consultant

Brian Middleton
Atrium Health

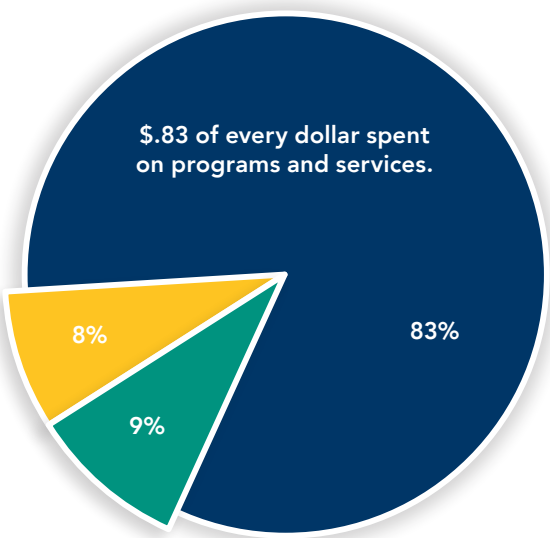
FINANCIALS

INCOME / REVENUE



- Government Grants & Contracts (29%)
- In-Kind Goods & Services (29%)
- Program Services (19%)
- Individual Donations (10%)
- United Way of Central Carolinas (6%)
- Other Income (4%)
- Charitable Foundation Grants (2%)
- Corporate Grants, Sponsorships, Matching Gifts (1%)

EXPENSES



- Program Services (83%)
- Fundraising (9%)
- Management & General (8%)

Audited Financials & 990 available on website or by request.

JOHNSTON-ZIEGLER YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

The Johnston Ziegler Youth Leadership Award is a merit-based scholarship that recognizes a local high-school senior who, like Dr. John Johnston and Barbara Ziegler, has demonstrated outstanding leadership, advocacy, or service for adolescents. The selected youth receives a \$2,500 educational scholarship to the college or university of their choice.

Thank you to our 2020 winner, Jules Oringel (Providence High School), for her outstanding work to end gun violence and create safer schools for our community’s teens!



Mission Statement:

To improve the health of adolescents by providing adolescent medicine and behavioral health services, education, advocacy, leadership development, and research through connections among adolescents, parents and the community.



3541 Randolph Road, Suite 206 | Charlotte, NC 28211 | 704-381-TEEN (8336) | TeenHealthConnection.org

* Pictures throughout this report are TAB members or were taken by local teens as part of Teen Health Connection's 2020 Teen Photography Contest. Winners of the contest will have their work displayed at Teen Health Connection. Thank you to all the teen artists who participated in this contest!