

Annual Report

2016-2017



DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

Solutions for a Healthy Tomorrow





Welcome to our 2016-2017 Annual Report. These past two years have been exciting ones for Delta Health Alliance and our partners as programs continue to grow and new partners join us in regional efforts to improve the health and education of residents of the Mississippi Delta. As chairman of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to share with you this report of our progress.

Since September 2015, Delta Health Alliance has received 16 grants totaling almost \$42 million. Virtually all of these grants are multi-year and cover multiple counties in the Delta. We were selected for these grants from large, competitive pools of applicants due to the strength of our partnerships and ability to demonstrate outcomes from ongoing initiatives and previous programs. A summary of all of our grants and programs can be found on pages eight and nine of this report.

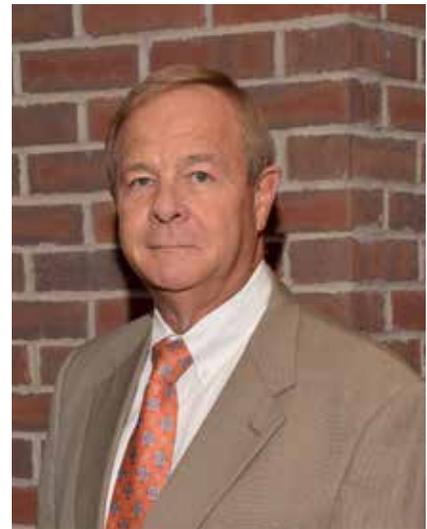
With this new funding, Delta Health Alliance will create a new Promise Community in the Deer Creek region of Washington County, encompassing the Hollandale and Leland School Districts, continue to upgrade our clinic facilities in Leland, implement a new program in four counties to combat violence against women, launch new initiatives aimed at providing more focused health care to patients with chronic diseases and outreach to individuals who are diagnosed with heart disease, and expand the behavioral health staff at the Leland Medical Clinic.

Two themes tie together these grants and our work. First, improving health care has to be done on multiple fronts – educating children and adults, expanding access to quality care, and reaching families in clinical settings as well as in their homes and communities. Second, improving health care over the long-term means building the capacity for communities and families to take responsibility for healthy lifestyles long after the funding from these grants has been spent.

The success of our work lies not only with the dedication of our staff, but also in the strength of our partners and collaborative efforts. It continues to be a tremendous privilege to work hand-in-hand with local organizations and individual leaders to serve the Mississippi Delta. It is my hope this report conveys to you the progress we are making collectively and the significant opportunities that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Bill Kennedy
Chairman, DHA Board of Directors



Bill Kennedy, Chairman
DHA Board of Directors

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About Delta Health Alliance

Delta Health Alliance is a non-profit, tax exempt organization that is changing health care and education in the Mississippi Delta by improving access to health services, promoting healthier lifestyles, and expanding educational opportunities.

Two principles guide our work in the Delta: using data to make decisions and building community partners to manage our programs.

Delta Health Alliance has been a leader in

- supporting and operating community-based clinics that serve as medical homes for patients;
- implementing new technologies such as electronic health records, health information exchange networks, and tele-health diagnosis and treatment centers;
- managing innovative education programs in community settings; and
- creating robust home visiting programs that address pre-natal and early childhood education challenges.

We seek to understand the fundamental causes of poor health and lack of educational opportunities in our region through comprehensive analysis of relevant data and statistics.

We fund programs that are built on the latest medical, public health, and education research.

We regularly assess the performance of these programs on the basis of objective measures that are produced and recorded as part of these initiatives – and we make changes based on those outcomes.

We do our work through community organizations, recognizing that long-lasting change occurs only when it is nurtured and supported by the members of these communities.

Our major funding partners have included the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including Health Resources and Services Administration, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Office of Adolescent Health, and Maternal and Child Health Bureau; U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service and Rural Development; U.S. Department of Justice; Mississippi Department of Health; Mississippi Division of Medicaid; Mississippi Department of Human Services; Monsanto Corporation; Save the Children; ACE Awareness Foundation and Delta Regional Authority.

Our headquarters in Stoneville, Mississippi often serves as a center for community-based collaborative programs and educational initiatives for partnering agencies and residents of the Delta.

Program Highlights for 2016 and 2017

Indianola Promise Community

KINDERGARTEN
READINESS



» Since 2013, the number of students ready to enter kindergarten has doubled.

3x
MORE LIKELY

READY FOR SCHOOL

» In 2017, kindergarteners were 3 times more likely to be ready for school than kindergarteners four years ago.

5x
MORE LIKELY

THIRD GRADE
READING

» In 2017, at-risk third graders were almost five times more likely to pass the state's third grade reading gate assessment on their first attempt than in 2015.

FIRST AND SECOND
GRADERS



ABOVE U.S. NORM

» During the 2016-2017 school year, Indianola had a record number of first and second graders testing above the national norm.

10

SUMMER CAMPS 2017

480

SUMMER CAMP
PARTICIPANTS

» 480 students, from kindergarten to 12th grade, attended ten different camps in 2017, featuring reading development, math enrichment, and college readiness.

» IPC Summer Camps reduce summer learning loss and give those participating students an advantage in the ensuing academic years, leading to long term educational improvements.

PROMISE SCHOOL
PARTICIPANTS



READING ADVANTAGE

» Rising kindergarten students who participate in the annual Promise School each summer develop an advantage in reading that lasts well into the elementary grades.

6:1

RETURN ON
INVESTMENT

» For every dollar invested in making sure students are kindergarten ready and read at grade level by the 3rd grade, there is a return of \$6.08 in both improved job opportunities and reduced need for other public services.

\$70
MILLION

PROJECTED
BENEFITS

» Since the beginning of the Promise Community in Indianola, more than \$70 million in projected benefits have been generated.

Leland Medical Clinic

- » Provided clinical services to more than 4,500 patients from July 2016 to July 2017.

4500

PATIENTS

- » Fully certified as a Patient Centered Medical Home Model clinic.



- » Over the last 12 months expanded services to include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, digital x-rays, mammograms, parent counseling, and behavioral therapy.

SERVICES EXPANDED

- » Provided behavioral therapy and allied health services to more than 1,600 patients from July 2016 to July 2017.

1600

BEHAVIORAL THERAPY AND ALLIED HEALTH PATIENTS

- » Patients controlling their diabetes and blood pressure has more than tripled in the last year.

IMPROVED OUTCOMES



- DIABETES
- BLOOD PRESSURE

Health Information Technology

- » Currently serving more than 454,000 patients across the state, an increase of 255% over the last two years.
- » Our system connects patients to 122 health care providers in 54 locations.

454000

PATIENTS

122

PROVIDERS

54

LOCATIONS

- » Pre-diabetic patients enrolled in a special program that connects electronic health records with health care coaches lose more weight and have better cholesterol and blood glucose results, showing they are improving their chances of not progressing to diabetes.

IMPROVED OUTCOMES



- WEIGHT LOSS
- CHOLESTEROL RESULTS
- BLOOD GLUCOSE RESULTS

- » The program helps eligible pre-diabetic patients avoid becoming diabetic through lifestyle changes and early interventions. For each patient who does not progress to diabetes, the state Medicaid program saves \$7,900 annually and a patient's long-term health is greatly enhanced.

ANNUAL MEDICAID SAVINGS

\$7,900
PER PATIENT

Program Highlights for 2016 and 2017

Imagination Library



» Currently providing free books to more than 3,000 children in Bolivar, Sunflower and Washington Counties.



» The 2017 enrollment represents an increase of nearly 1,700 children since 2013, or a growth of 120%.



» A participating child in the program is twice as likely to be kindergarten ready in reading and two and a half times as likely to be kindergarten ready in math.



Sunflower County Early Head Start



» Currently serving 200 children, age 0-3 years old, an increase of 51% since 2015.



» Spent more than \$1.5 million renovating and expanding six early education centers in Drew, Indianola, and Moorhead.



» Increased the number of nationally certified child care staff from 13 to 50.



» Assessments of children over the course of the 2016-2017 school year indicated gains in key areas of development from 39 to 45 percent.



Delta Home Visiting Initiative

» During 2017, parent educators met with 983 individuals and families.

983
INDIVIDUALS
AND FAMILIES

» Participants in the Leflore County home visiting initiative were 32 percent less likely to have low birth-weight babies and premature births.



IMPROVED OUTCOMES 

- LOW-BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES
- PREMATURE BABIES 

» Almost 90% of children in participating families in Indianola are meeting age-appropriate development benchmarks, a figure higher than the national average.

AGE-APPROPRIATE
DEVELOPMENT 

90%

ABOVE U.S. AVERAGE

» Preventing 100 premature births would save the state's Medicaid program more than \$4.6 million and improve a child's long term development.

POTENTIAL
MEDICAID SAVINGS

\$4.6
MILLION

As we were going to press, ...

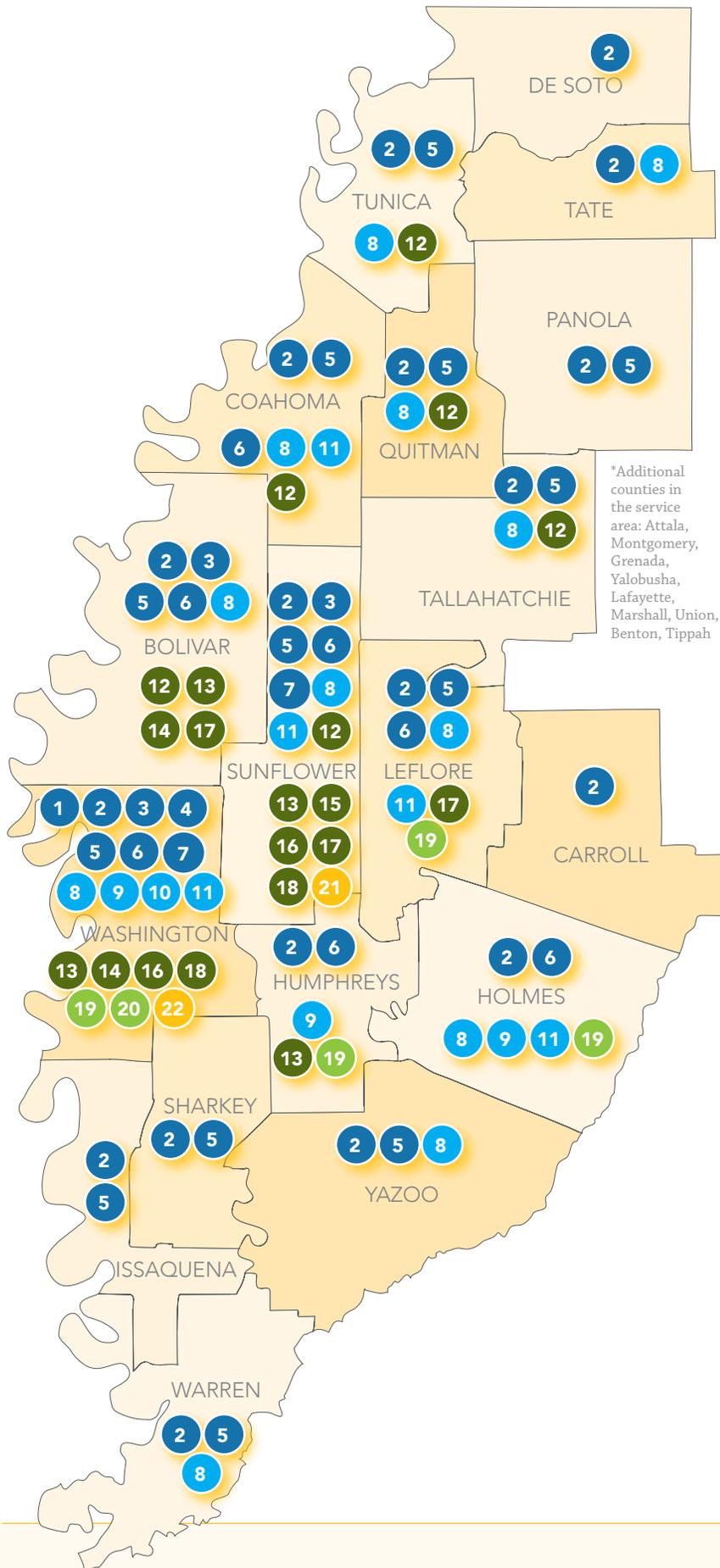
The U.S. Department of Justice awarded Delta Health Alliance a three-year, \$499,945 grant to create rapid response teams in four Delta counties to address violence against women.



Called the Delta Assault Response Team (DART) network, these teams will provide services for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in rural communities. This collaborative program is designed to operate in close coordination with existing victim service providers, state and local agencies, law enforcement, healthcare clinicians, housing officials, and neighborhood associations.

The four counties are Bolivar, Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington.

DHA Programs



IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

1. Leland Medical Clinic
2. The Delta Heart Health Network*
3. Delta Care Transitions
4. Small Provider Quality Improvement Program
5. Delta Futures Teen Pregnancy Prevention
6. Accountable Health Community
7. Deer Creek Behavioral Health Network

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

8. Electronic Health Services
9. U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
10. Delta Health Information Network
11. Medicaid Population Health Demonstration Project

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

12. Tobacco-Free Coalition
13. Imagination Library
14. Monsanto Nutrition Grant
15. Early Head Start Childcare Partnership
16. Delta DREAMS
17. Delta Assault Response Team Network (DART)

HELPING FAMILIES

18. Parents as Teachers
19. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy Start Collaborative
20. Universal Parenting Place

PROMISE COMMUNITIES

21. Indianola Promise Community (IPC)
22. Deer Creek Promise Community (DCPC)

IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

- 1. Leland Medical Clinic**, owned and operated by DHA since 2013, is the only officially recognized Patient-Centered Medical Home in the Delta. Our certified staff provides quality clinical services and behavioral health care.
- 2. The Delta Heart Health Network** is a rural health initiative designed to reduce cardiovascular disease among a targeted population group. This initiative is a collaboration between three rural healthcare providers that uses electronic health records and outreach workers to help monitor and improve patient care.
- 3. Delta Care Transitions** assists patients with chronic illness who are discharged from rural hospitals. The goal is to transition them into the regular outpatient care available in their communities and to reduce avoidable re-hospitalizations.
- 4. Small Provider Quality Improvement Program** enhances the health information technologies at the Leland Medical Clinic to improve patient experience and outcomes.
- 5. Delta Futures Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program** implements an evidence-based program in public schools and rural health clinics that provides education to reduce teen pregnancy and promote safe sex practices.
- 6. Accountable Health Community** is a collaboration among DHA and more than 20 social service organizations and clinics to create a network of support for patients who have chronic illnesses and typically frequent hospital emergency rooms. Patients are provided with a case manager who connects them with vital services to improve their care and avoid frequent hospital admissions.
- 7. Deer Creek Behavioral Health Network** uses telemedicine partnerships to create access for inpatient and outpatient mental health services, such as assessment and treatment, not otherwise available in the Delta.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

8. Electronic Health Services supports 78 providers in 12 counties across the Delta with more than 290,000 patient records in the system. The Electronic Health Records team assists with hands-on training, long-term service, meaningful use certification, and connection to Mississippi's Health Information Network.

9. U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development provides funding for DHA to assist rural clinics in the Delta by using Electronic Health Records to improve health information for patients by linking resources and care.

10. Delta Health Information Network provides upgrades to our Electronic Health Records network that improve clinical workflows and the ability of providers to communicate quickly and securely with each other and their patients.

11. Medicaid Population Health Demonstration Project uses population health management tools and patient-centered interventions through electronic health records to reduce pre-term births and to decrease the number of patients who progress from pre-diabetes to diabetes.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

12. Tobacco-Free Coalition is DHA's tobacco cessation project, providing education outreach throughout the Delta. The program has been recognized by the state Department of Health for exemplary service in providing education.

13. Imagination Library is a partnership with the Dolly Parton Foundation to improve school readiness of eligible children by delivering, free of charge, up to 60 developmentally-appropriate books to their homes. Readiness tests show that children enrolled in the program are significantly more prepared to begin kindergarten.

14. Monsanto Nutrition Grant helps DHA target childhood obesity by implementing programs in five schools to increase nutrition education, increase physical fitness activity, provide weekend meals to children, and build community gardens to create access to fresh foods.

15. Early Head Start Childcare Partnership is a community-driven program addressing the critical need for high quality, affordable early childcare. The program has upgraded private daycare facilities and funds Early Head Start for 150 children. In addition, staff coordinate health and nutritional services, vision, oral, and health screenings, and support parental involvement.

16. Delta DREAMS provides low-income families with financial literacy education and incentives for savings to enable them to purchase assets and build wealth.

17. Delta Assault Response Team Network DART is the network of partners Delta Health Alliance is creating to combat violence against women and provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

HELPING FAMILIES

18. Parents as Teachers works with families enrolled in Head Start to provide regular home visits by trained case workers, using the Parents As Teachers® curriculum. The goal is to ensure the children in these families are healthy and ready for kindergarten.

19. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy Start Collaborative expands the home visiting program and the services of Parents As Teachers® to address infant mortality and poor maternal and infant health outcomes. This project also includes a fatherhood initiative using the 24/7 Dad® curricula to complement the home visitation program.

20. Universal Parenting Place, located at the Leland Medical Clinic, provides a wide variety of services to support parents who need help with their child's development. The therapists on staff engage directly with parents and their children to overcome challenges, break destructive patterns, and ensure healthy families.

PROMISE COMMUNITIES

21. Indianola Promise Community was one of the early promise community grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Working with the Sunflower County School District, the Indianola public schools, and local partners, DHA coordinates the delivery of a pipeline of services for children and families to ensure that the children who attend these schools have greater opportunities for success through a data-driven approach emphasizing educational milestones.

22. Deer Creek Promise Community connects the Leland and Hollandale school districts with a similar pipeline of services for children and families. This new grant from the U.S. Department of Education provides funding to DHA to replicate and expand the programs implemented in Indianola to ensure that the children who attend these two school districts have greater opportunities for success.



Leland Medical Clinic
Supported by Delta Health Alliance

Leland Medical Clinic

Owned and operated by Delta Health Alliance since 2013, the Leland Medical Clinic provides clinical, allied health, and behavioral health services to individuals and families throughout Bolivar, Sharkey, Sunflower, and Washington Counties. For the last twelve months, the clinic has recorded more than 6,100 patient visits.

The clinic has achieved certification as a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. This national rating organization has been dedicated to helping improve health care quality since 1990.

The Patient Centered Medical Home approach means that the entire clinic staff, as well as the patient, work together as a team to focus on all aspects of the patient's health using enhanced technology and chronic disease management.

As a result, a larger number of patients are controlling their chronic conditions, with diabetes, blood pressure, and cholesterol tests showing marked improvement.

The clinic uses Electronic Health Records to facilitate delivery of care by allowing providers to spend more time examining the patient and less time on record keeping. The staff can connect electronically to pharmacies and area hospitals and patients have real time access to their own medical records via our online portal. The electronic patient portal is called "Follow My Health" and allows patients to communicate with the clinic staff through a computer or portable device using secure email. Patients can go online and request prescription refills and other services through a high-speed, secure data connection. Over half of the clinic's patients have been using the portal and it gives patients 24/7 access to clinic information, scheduling and other important services.

The medical clinic employs two nurse practitioners, a part-time physician, a dietician, three nurses, and two front office staff on a daily basis.

Over the last year, the clinic has completed renovations and upgrades costing more than \$2 million.

Clinical services now include management of acute and chronic illnesses, wellness exams and checkups, immunizations, pediatric care, work-injury treatment, drug testing, pre-employment and school physicals, digital x-rays, mammograms, full lab tests, and nutritional and exercise consultations.



Behavioral Health Services

One of the fastest growing initiatives of Delta Health Alliance over the last year has been Behavioral Health Services. In July of last year, clinic staff saw less than 30 patients. Twelve months later, that number had increased to 545. The professional staff now includes a psychiatric nurse practitioner, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, and nurses.

This explosive growth is attributable to a huge demand for these kinds of services that, until now, had never been available to many Delta residents. Not only do untreated mental health problems complicate a patient's ability to participate effectively in treatment plans, but they often go undiagnosed in patients with chronic conditions. For example, rates of depression across the lifespan of individuals with diabetes are twice the rate found in the general population.

Behavioral Health Services reaches individuals and families in the following ways:

ON-SITE SERVICES

- On-site services at the Leland Medical Clinic include child, adolescent, family and marriage counseling, medication management, EPSDT screening, developmental, behavioral and Autism screens and assessments, as well as occupational, physical and speech therapy.

SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

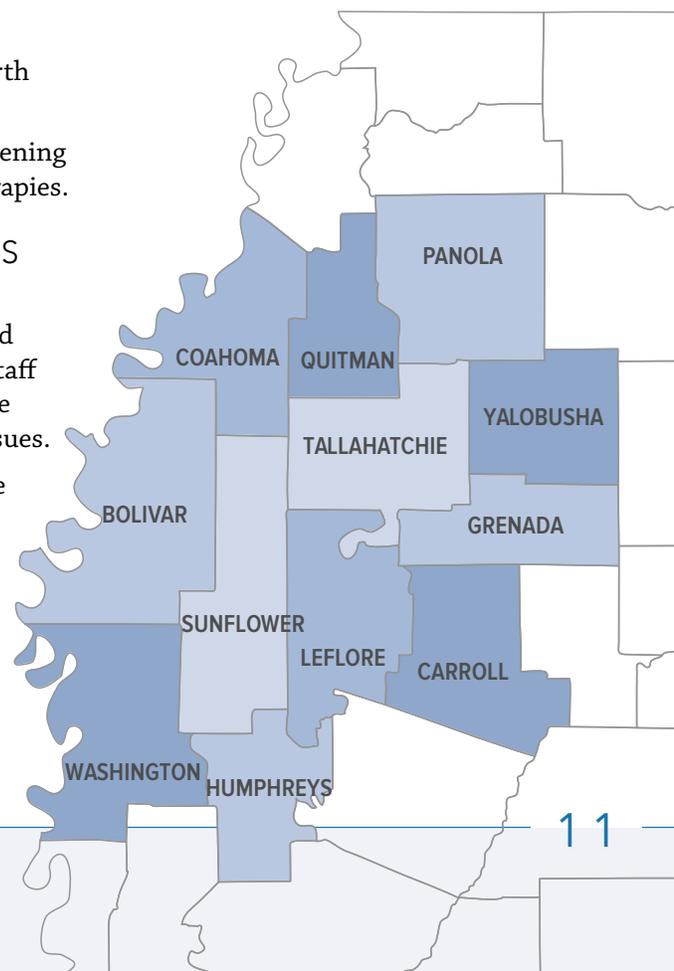
- School-based services that are currently being provided to eight school districts, including Sunflower Consolidated, Greenville Municipal, Western Line Consolidated, Hollandale Municipal, North Bolivar, West Bolivar, Coahoma County, and Leland Municipal.
- Services include developmental, behavioral and psychological screening and evaluation, occupational, physical, speech and behavioral therapies.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING AND SERVICES

- Early childhood screening and services is part of the Mississippi Department of Health First Steps program. Working through Head Start and other early childhood providers, Delta Health Alliance staff conduct comprehensive evaluations of children from birth to three years of age to identify any developmental or behavioral health issues.
- With the consent of the parents, trained professionals can provide speech, physical, occupational, or behavioral therapy services to the children, in their homes, at no cost to the families.
- Currently, DHA is on contract with the First Steps Program to service the following counties: Washington, Sunflower, Humphries, Leflore, Carroll, Bolivar, Coahoma, Tallahatchie, Quitman, Grenada, Yalobusha, Panola, and Montgomery.

DHA was notified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that it had received a three-year, \$900,000 grant to significantly expand the mental health and behavioral health services it provides to patients in Sunflower and Washington Counties.

The grant will cover additional counselors and will fund high-speed video connections between the Leland Medical Clinic, Parkwood Behavioral Health Center and Desoto Family Counseling Center so that patients in the Delta will have access to a variety of other specialists through video conferencing sessions.



Improving Health Care

Mississippi Delta Medicaid Demonstration Project

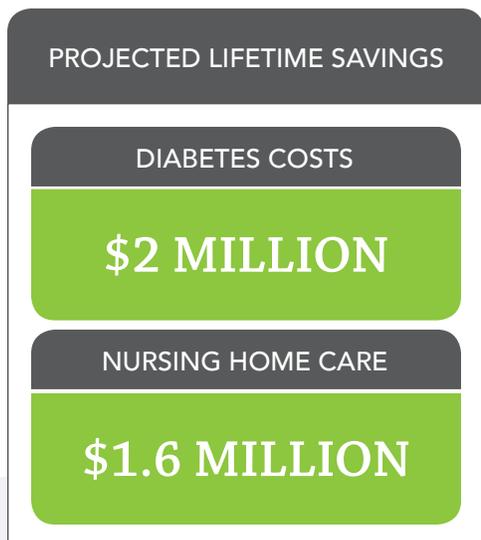
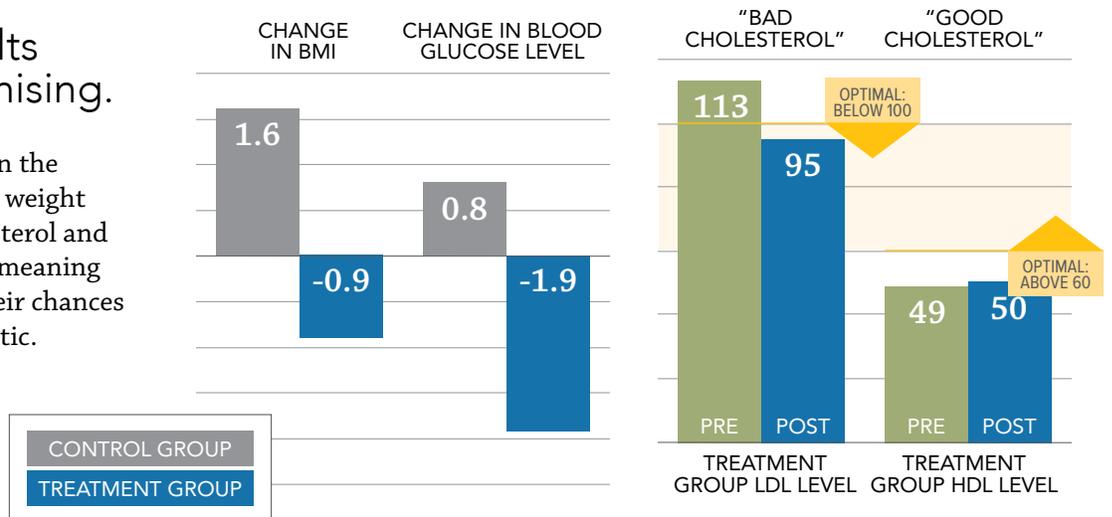
Delta Health Alliance has partnered with the Mississippi Medicaid Division and the Cerner Corporation to create a pilot project that will transform rural clinics in the Delta into medical homes, similar to the patient centered medical home model at DHA's clinic in Leland.

When up and running, eligible patients will be able to access care locally through one of these clinics as their permanent medical home, providing access to a wide range of preventative, general, and specialty care services. The clinics will operate through a team-approach to care, driven by the patient's needs and preferences, to better manage chronic care conditions and to prevent avoidable hospitalizations. These certified clinics are also serving as training locations and health-clinic incubation centers, to assist other providers in transitioning to the Patient Centered Medical Home Model to improve patient outcomes and care coordination, while decreasing overall costs of care.

Participants receive practical experience, tool kits, sample forms, and starter materials for replication of the model in their own clinic settings. Clinicians learn how to foster and develop a local network of health partners to facilitate neighborhood support, including implementing community gardens, encouraging municipal support of exercise programs and recreational facilities, and working with faith-based partners.

The early results look very promising.

Pre-diabetic patients in the project have lost more weight and have better cholesterol and blood glucose results, meaning they are improving their chances of not becoming diabetic.



For each patient who does not progress to diabetes, the state Medicaid program saves \$7,900 annually and a patient's long-term health is greatly enhanced.

Many patients in this program have health-related complications that would qualify them for nursing home care. In the first year of this demonstration project, five patients improved their health significantly, no longer needed care in nursing homes, and can live independently. This results in a lifetime savings to the state Medicaid program of \$542,800 for this group alone. With two other groups scheduled to join the program, the lifetime benefits will triple.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

The Delta Futures project is a comprehensive, three-year program designed to work with 11 public school districts, five private school districts, five local Rural Health Clinics, and over 30 community and faith organizations to prevent teen pregnancy and lower sexually transmitted diseases. During the first full project year, July 2016 to June 2017, program staff reached 3,182 participants across 12 Delta counties.

All of the curricula are evidence-based and developed to increase acceptance among the students. The courses utilized in schools have been approved for use by the Mississippi Department of Education and are coordinated with other risk-avoidance efforts that may already be underway in those settings. All program materials are medically accurate, age appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant, and inclusive of all youth in each community.

Moreover, this DHA program is unique in that the lessons and materials are taught by community health liaisons, professional staff trained just for this project. Early assessments show that after participating in the program, students report higher intent to use birth control, higher motivation to use birth control, and higher perceptions of risk from sexual activity.



- 11 PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- 5 PRIVATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- 5 LOCAL RURAL HEALTH CLINICS
- 30+ COMMUNITY AND FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

In 2017, the Office of Adolescent Health, with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, recognized the Delta Futures as a star program for outstanding program performance.



- 12 DELTA COUNTIES
- 3,182 PARTICIPANTS



Delta Heart Health
NETWORK

SUPPORTED BY DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

Delta Heart Health Network

The Delta Heart Health Network has been developed to specifically address cardiovascular disease and its impact on obesity in 21 counties throughout the Delta and in north and north central Mississippi. The project uses Electronic Health Records to identify patients who may be particularly at-risk for cardiovascular disease and analyzes gaps in their care. The initiative is a collaboration between Aaron Henry Community Health Centers, Mallory Community Health Centers, and the Leland Medical Clinic.

Clinicians across the service area have access to evidence-based, best practice standards of care for cardiovascular disease and can customize treatment plans to assist patients in making better health care choices, particularly those living in rural areas.

In addition, trained DHA staff work with patients between the hospital setting and out-patient clinic to facilitate improved care and to help manage medications. Finally, community outreach workers host education sessions and screenings in venues throughout the service area. Counties include Attala, Benton, Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, Grenada, Holmes, Lafayette, Leflore, Marshall, Montgomery, Panola, Quitman, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tunica, Union, Washington, and Yalobusha.



Accountable Health Community

Thanks to a new grant from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DHA has created the Delta Accountable Health Community to improve access to a broad range of health care services while lowering the cost for individuals in Bolivar, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sunflower and Washington Counties.

The goal is to reduce avoidable health care utilization, lower the cost of health care, and improve the health and quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by using a broad range of healthcare and community partners to assist patients with accessing needed services.

While planning for the project is still underway, DHA has already recruited 14 clinical delivery sites and 9 community-based organizations that will serve as partners in providing patients with health-related social needs while using new technologies, improved awareness and use of community services and support, and a more robust evaluation of health-related social services to improve care.

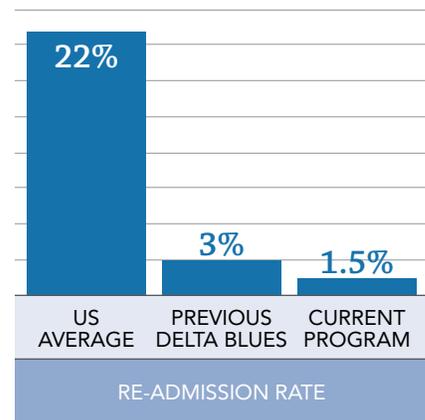


Care Transitions

The Delta Care Transitions program is a community-based project designed to improve health outcomes for at-risk, rural patients who transition from in-patient to out-patient settings. The goal is to reduce hospital readmissions, and thus cost, for patients with chronic illnesses who have a history of multiple hospitalizations.

Developed in partnership with South Sunflower County Hospital, Indianola Family Medical Group, and Leland Medical Clinic, the program assigns specially trained patient navigators to ensure that individuals receive appropriate post-discharge follow-up care, patient education, assistance navigating health care programs, and access to support services for family caregivers. In this way, patients seek follow up care from local clinics and physicians, rather than from hospitals. Two objectives are realized: patients receive care that is typically more personal and more timely while reducing the overall cost to the health care system.

South Sunflower’s biannual survey specifically commended the program for reducing the hospital’s readmission rate from 2014 to 2016. For the last year, the project has focused on patients with diabetes, chronic lung disease, pneumonia, and chronic heart disease. Of the 160 participants in the program, none were readmitted within 30 days of diagnosis.

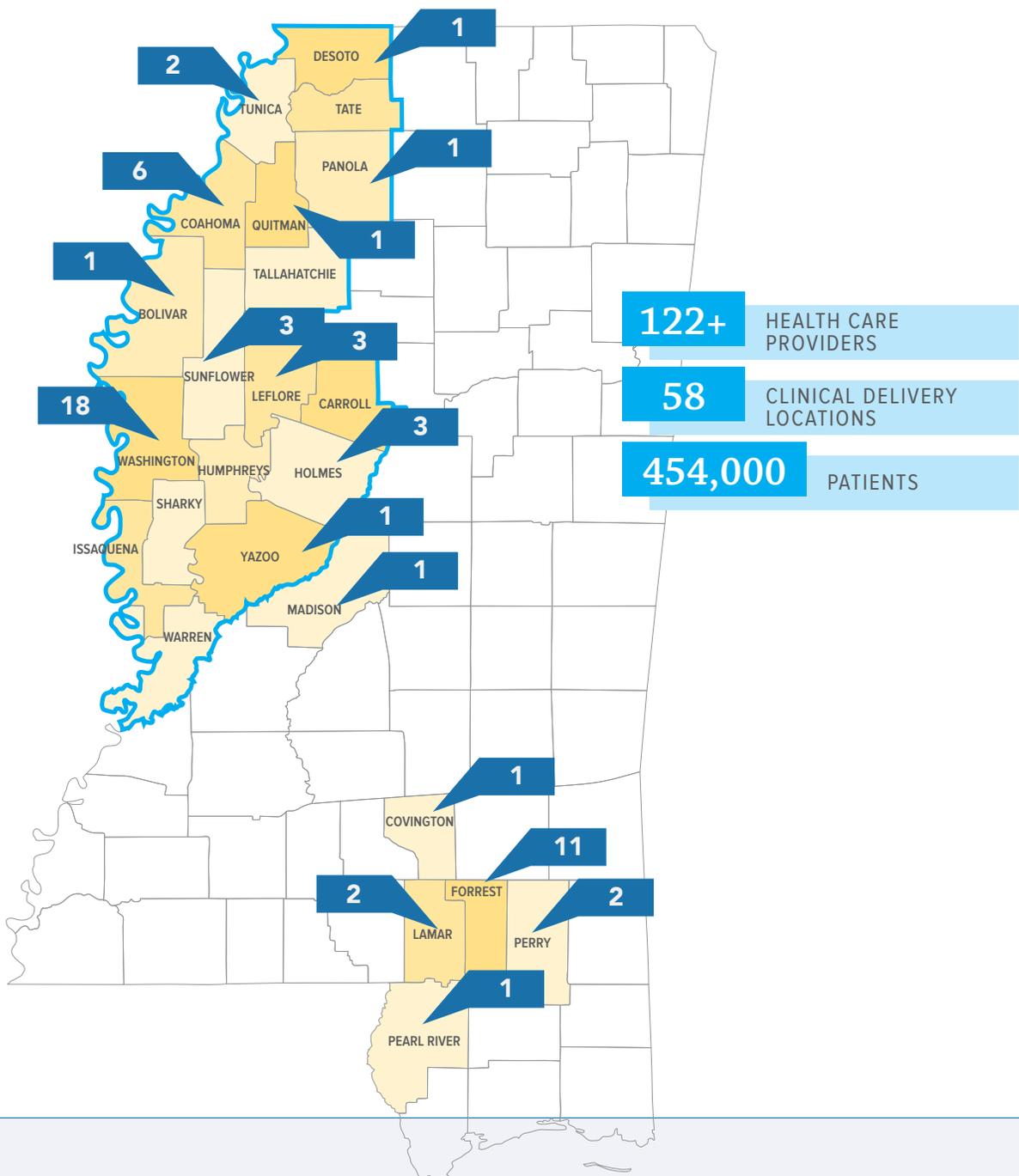


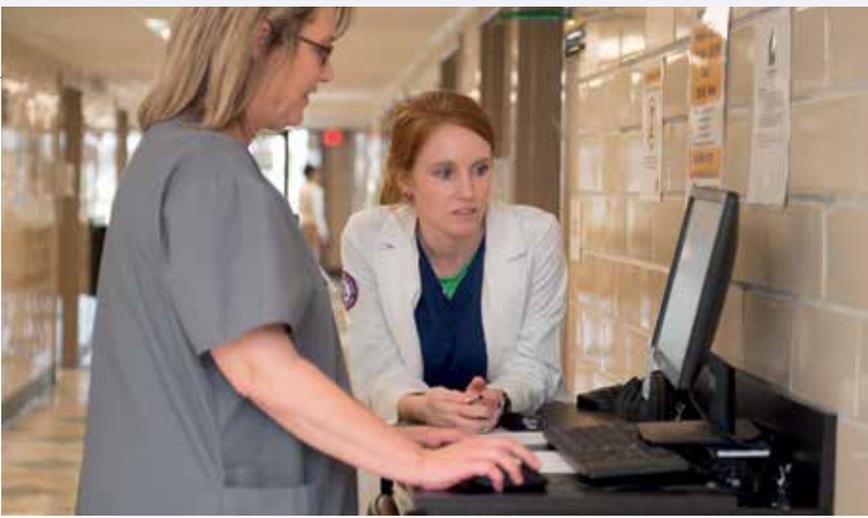


Health Information Technology

Electronic Health Records (EHR) started the revolution, access to health information networks sustained it, and now smart phones, tablets and powerful software are transforming the day-to-day practice of medicine.

Since Delta Health Alliance began to install Electronic Health Records in the Delta in 2009, our EHR initiative has grown into a state-of-the-art system that connects more than 122 health care providers in 58 clinical delivery locations with more than 454,000 patients across the state (279,000 in the Delta) into a seamless electronic recordkeeping and reporting organization that is at work 24/7.





Maintained and operated by DHA, the system allows patients to contact clinics anytime day or night, put in prescription refill requests, and check on appointments, while letting physicians and nurses have instantaneous access to patient records from any connected health care provider. The system also allows for filing prescriptions online, and consolidating of all billing and practice management into one comprehensive suite of programs. The system has been integrated at rural health clinics, private practices, hospital based clinics and other health related businesses.

Once patients are entered into the system and their records are uploaded, they can obtain treatment at facilities that have authorized access to our secure EHR network.

The system has better documentation than a paper system, fewer medical errors, and allows for an easier flow of communication between health care workers and facilities.

Having one system with multi-functions means fewer technical problems in situations where a clinic is trying to get different systems to work together. Moreover, because our EHR system is connected to the Mississippi Health Information Network, we are able to securely exchange pertinent patient data and referrals from other doctors, clinics and hospitals around the state that are also part of the network. Participating health care providers can exchange patient data from their EHR main screen easily and quickly.

For example, if one of our patients in Indianola had to be transferred to a participating hospital in Jackson, the health care team there could instantaneously view the patient's medical history through our EHR system. In addition, through the patient portal feature of our website, our patients have the ability to view, download and transmit their entire patient record to the provider of their choice.

The DHA system is supported locally; anyone who calls in with a technical problem doesn't get an overseas operator but a local person with the specific knowledge to help. DHA offers custom installation of turnkey and customized hardware and software programs, comprehensive training, the latest in security features, long-term service contracts, and a full-time HELP Desk.

Expanding Educational Opportunities



Sunflower County Early Head Start Child Care Partnership

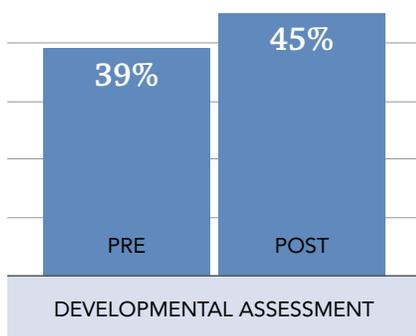
After receiving a multi-million-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, DHA worked with six child care centers in Sunflower County, along with other community partners, to create the Sunflower Childcare Coalition and operate a system of private day care centers that meet Early Head Start standards.

Today, these child care centers in Drew, Indianola, and Moorhead enroll 200 children, age 0-3 years old, an increase of 51% since 2015. More than 50 full-time teaching staff attend to the young children in renovated and upgraded facilities. Assessments over the course of the 2016-2017 school year indicated gains in key areas of development from 39 to 45 percent.

Each childcare center uses a standardized curriculum designed to ensure students are ready for kindergarten. A comprehensive teacher and staff development program is designed to refine and update classroom skills. Moreover, the centers coordinate health and nutritional services, including vision, oral and health screenings.

A separate initiative works with parents to ensure their involvement in the education of their children every step of the way. This collaborative program uses local partners, community leaders, and state agencies to help the childcare facilities and affiliated services work in a coordinated fashion.

Finally, performance measures have been established to ensure that each center meets academic and developmental benchmarks for the children enrolled in its program.



Imagination Library

Delta Health Alliance is now in the ninth year of our partnership with the Dolly Parton Foundation to operate the Imagination Library program in the Delta. Currently more than 3,000 children in Bolivar, Sunflower and Washington counties are receiving books, an increase of 120% over the 1,300 who were receiving books in 2013. In Sunflower County alone, more than 2,400 children have been part of the program since its inception.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, new kindergarten students at the elementary school in Indianola took a school readiness assessment. The results of the assessment give teachers and school officials information about the pre-reading and pre-math skills of each student, which they use to help design the kindergarten curriculum.

Meanwhile, as part of the kindergarten registration process, parents of these students completed a kindergarten entry survey that determined whether or not they participated in the Imagination Library program. With the kindergarten readiness scores from the assessment, we were able to compare the readiness scores of the group of children who received Imagination Library books with the group of children who did not participate in the Imagination Library program.



3,000 ENROLLED CHILDREN

120% INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT

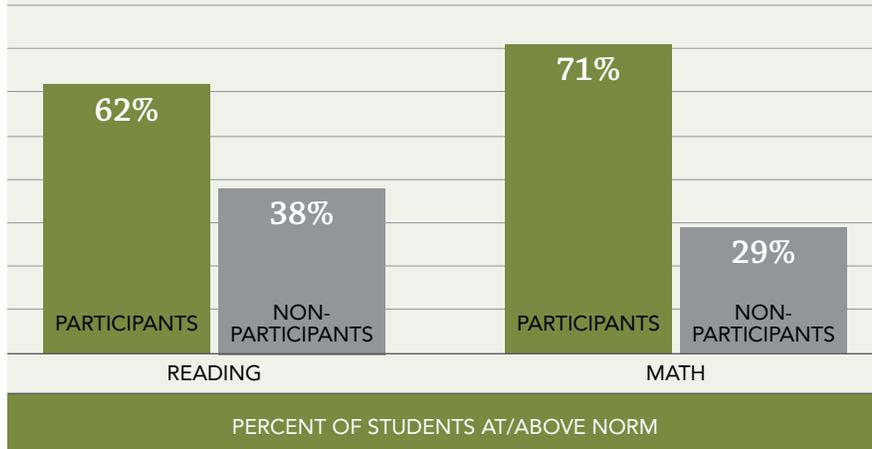
According to the data, a child who participated in the Imagination Library early reading intervention was nearly twice as likely to be kindergarten ready in reading as a child who did not receive the Imagination Library program.

These differences are even more pronounced on the pre-math portion of the assessment. Here, Imagination Library children were two and a half times as likely to be kindergarten ready.



Participating children, age 0-5, receive a free book each month.

Through the Imagination Library program, it is possible for a child to receive 60 early reader and picture books before ever entering kindergarten!



Expanding Educational Opportunities



Community Gardens

Delta EATS (Edible Agriculture Teaching Students) connects 5th grade students and curriculum with a school garden and opportunities to cook in an outdoor kitchen with harvested produce. This enhances academic achievement and cultivates an empowering opportunity for students to gain the knowledge and values to make food choices that are healthy for them, their communities, and the environment.

The DHA Delta EATS team is composed of the Delta EATS Program Manager, Education Coordinator, AmeriCorps FoodCorps and DeltaCorps service members, and Delta State University Dietetic Interns. Together, the team partners with schools administrators, food service and cafeteria staff, and 5th grade teachers to conduct numerous activities:

- Design, install, and maintain robust school garden sites
- Coordinate and teach weekly garden and cooking lessons for 5th grade that are rigorous and connected to academic standards for English and Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies
- Support School Garden Teams that guide each garden's vision and support activities
- Promote fruits and vegetables through regular taste tests, cooking with students, and promoting healthy foods bulletin boards
- Host Family Garden Nights to connect parents and the school community to the garden
- Provide summer garden camps for students at the school garden sites

Delta EATS uses best practices from model school garden programs from across the country in the areas of garden design, classroom procedures and management, garden rituals, and growing methods. One best practice is splitting each garden class into three small groups of 6-8 students. For each garden lesson, two small groups are each led by a trained Delta EATS team member, and the third small group is led by the 5th grade teacher. Our garden design also aligns with this practice as each small group has its own learning station, garden bed, and supplies. Delta EATS also uses the square foot garden method. This method not only helps maximize garden bed plantings, but allows for structured student procedures and incorporation of mathematics. Together, these best practices, and many more, allow for efficient and effective instruction for students.

We follow our four garden principles, SOW, GROW, KNOW, SHOW, which we all sing together at the end of every garden class.

*“To reap a harvest we must SOW.
It takes love to make things GROW.
Our roots are strong and this we KNOW.
When our blossoms start to SHOW.”*



Expanding Educational Opportunities



Dollars Reinvested in Education and Assets to Maximize Success

SUPPORTED BY DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

Financial Partnerships

In late 2015, Delta Health Alliance expanded its financial literacy initiative by creating the Delta DREAMS program.

Funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Delta DREAMS is a community-based approach for giving low-income families a “hand-up”.

Utilizing existing individual and community assets, the Delta DREAMS program strengthens Delta counties residents through the use of matched savings accounts called Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Along with financial education and the use of IDAs, Delta Health Alliance helps low-income individuals move toward greater self-sufficiency.

The Delta DREAMS (Dollars Reinvested in Education and Assets to Maximize Success) program is a collaboration between Delta Health Alliance, Indianola Promise Community and regional banking institutions, economic development agencies, service groups, housing authorities, community representatives, institutions of higher learning, and faith-based partners.

All partners are united by a shared vision of increasing economic self-sufficiency for impoverished families living in rural communities in the Mississippi Delta. The Individual Development Account (IDA) savings plan offers matching funds to qualified low-income individuals. Every \$1 dollar of earned income that a participant deposits into their IDA will be matched with \$2 from participating public and private funds, for a maximum individual match of \$4,000. Qualified expenses from an IDA can include post-secondary education or training, the purchase of a first home, or qualified business capitalization expenses. Participants will be required to complete financial literacy training, and will receive access to a wide variety of support services including assets specific training, financial coaching, credit-building services, credit/debt counseling, and assistance with tax credits and tax preparation.

Partners include Guaranty Bank, which provides matching dollars for IDA accounts; the Mississippi Community Financial Access Coalition and Sunflower County United for Children, which are providing financial literacy courses; and the Delta Housing Authority that are assisting in locating quality and affordable housing. Delta Health Alliance has now partnered with Mississippi State University to assist 400 low-income students with money for school and financial education. MSU and Delta Health Alliance will provide a total of \$1.15 million to assist low-income students through the MSU/DHA Delta DREAMS Savings Grant. The University will supply \$575,000 to match \$575,000 in Delta Health Alliance grant funds. The MSU/DHA partnership will then provide \$4 in grant funds for every \$1 deposited into the account by the student, providing the student with up to \$2,500 in grant funds to help with the cost of paying for college.



Tobacco Cessation

Operating in six counties, the DHA Tobacco-Free Coalition project has been recognized for Exemplary Service by the Mississippi Department of Health. Our staff work directly with schools and community organizations to prevent the initiation of tobacco use among youth, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, promote tobacco cessation services, and eliminate tobacco related disparities.

As a result of its outreach program, smoke-free ordinances have been adopted in the Delta municipalities of Coahoma, Friars Point, Clarksdale, Jonestown, Lyon, Marks, Sledge, Tutwiler, Sumner, Charleston, Beulah, Drew, Moorhead, Duncan, Alligator, and Indianola, as well as Coahoma County and Delta State University in Cleveland.

Hundreds of Delta high school and elementary students in Bolivar, Sunflower, Coahoma, Tunica, Quitman and Tallahatchie counties have learned about the dangers of tobacco use through a cessation and prevention program sponsored by Delta Health Alliance.

Tobacco prevention is also important because it relates so closely to the chronic diseases that are prevalent in the Delta. Teaching students the role that tobacco use plays in chronic illnesses and conditions such as obesity, asthma, hypertension and diabetes helps drive home the message that tobacco has no place in anyone's life.

MISSISSIPPI
tobacco
FREE



“What I know now is that smoking kills brain cells. That’s just one reason why everyone should be tobacco free. Smoking is not just a stupid thing to do, but it makes you stupid.”

Indiya, a 17-year-old rising senior at John F. Kennedy Memorial High School



Expanding Educational Opportunities



**COLLEGE
Promise
INITIATIVE**

SUPPORTED BY DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

College Day in the Delta

Tyrese Sutton understands that life is full of mistakes. Making them is easy, he explained.

Overcoming them requires an ability that many people lack.

“One has to have the ability to listen, the ability to hear what your teacher is telling you in high school and be able to learn from your mistakes,” said the 17-year-old senior from Simmons Junior-Senior High School in Hollandale. *“If you are willing to listen, you can avoid those mistakes a lot easier in the future.”*

“I told them that a college education is the first step to fulfilling their destiny. I talked about all the people who could have given up, but instead changed the world. When you’re from the Delta, programs like this can inspire and enlighten. It teaches them to live their dream.”

Greenville Mayor Errick Simmons

Tyrese, who plans to become an oral surgeon, was all ears in September at a College Day event sponsored by Delta Health Alliance and its College Promise Initiative at the Capps Center. About 80 high school students from Washington and Sunflower counties came together to better prepare for college.

From financial aid and scholarships to preparation for college entrance exams such as the ACT, the students gained knowledge that will assist them as they transition to the collegiate level.

“My wonderful school counselor told us how great this would be to learn about college,” said Devin Johnson, 15, a 10th grader at Simmons Junior-Senior High. *“I want to know the things I need to do to get ready for college. College aid is very important to me.”*

A panel comprised of educators and specialists involved with young people discussed the challenges of transitioning from high school to college; parental support; college assistance; and their own experiences to give the students an idea about life after high school.

Caleb Herod, a program director for DHA, said events such as College Day *“gives these kids the tools to get prepared for college and shows them what to do, what they need and what to expect once they’re in school.”* Students heard real life experiences from college students such as Jarrius Adams, a junior at the University of Mississippi who talked about making the best use of their time and the best ways to succeed in finding the financial resources to get to college. *“The money is out there, but it isn’t going to come to you,”* Jarrius said. *“You have to go after it. Don’t wait around. And don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it. If you want it bad enough, you will make it happen.”*



Delta Home Visiting

This is DHA's comprehensive initiative to directly address our region's high rates of infant mortality and poor maternal and infant outcomes. We have received funding for this initiative from several sources to provide coverage in Holmes, Humphries, Leflore, and Sunflower counties. The project now reaches more than 700 families. Over the last year, participating women in the program have fewer low birth-weight babies and fewer premature births than the population as a whole and almost 90% of children in participating families in Indianola are meeting age-appropriate development benchmarks, a figure higher than the national average.

The Delta Home Visiting initiative utilizes an evidence-based early childhood home visitation curriculum that builds strong communities, reinforces families and facilitates the development of children who are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. DHA's certified parent educator staff members work one-on-one with high-risk expectant mothers and parents of children ages zero to five to emphasize parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being. There are four interrelated components of the model, including personal home visits, group connections, screening, and easy access to a comprehensive resource network.

This DHA program also provides participants with access to other complimentary programs and services for pregnant women and for young adults who may soon start a family.

Parent educators, recruited from the communities they serve, receive extensive training and learn to work with and develop a relationship with parents to provide infants and young children with the stability and enriched environment they need to thrive. One key to the program's success is that the parent educators are from the same community as the families with whom they are working.



Delta Home Visiting Initiative
Supported by Delta Health Alliance

Fatherhood

The Delta Healthy Start Collaborative DHSC fatherhood initiative is designed to focus on the self-awareness, compassion, and sense of responsibility that every good parent needs. The program incorporates activities and information that focuses on the five characteristics vital to effective fathering:

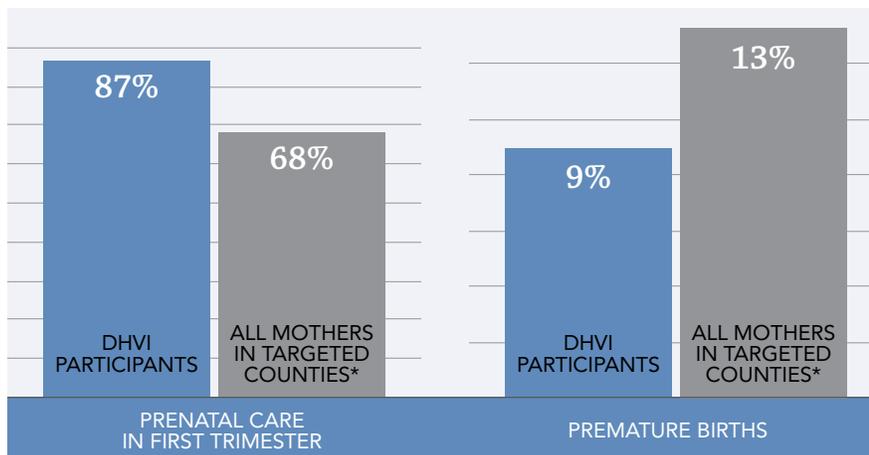
1. fathering skills
2. self awareness
3. care for self
4. relationship skills
5. parenting skills

The program uses 24-7 Dad™, an evidence-based curriculum designed by the National Fatherhood Initiative™.

Results of pre-post evaluations show:

37% of participants show a gain from pretest to posttest.

Of the participants that attended two meetings, **44%** show an increased score from pretest to posttest.



*Leflore, Holmes, Humphreys

UNIVERSAL
PARENTING
PLACE



Universal Parenting Place

Delta Health Alliance opened the Delta's first Universal Parenting Place (UPP) in the newly renovated wing of the Leland Medical Clinic on June 1, 2017, through a partnership with the Memphis-based ACE Awareness Foundation.

The Universal Parenting Place is a safe and secure space for parents to use with their children. They can talk, read books, do homework, play games or watch a movie. It is a great place for parents to simply relax with their children. In addition, because licensed counselors staff the center throughout the day, parents have access to professionals to help with questions or challenges they may have, no matter how large or small.

The UPP is open five days a week, professional staff is available whenever the center is open, appointments are not needed, and there is no cost involved. The center is offered to all in the community, no matter anyone's income. UPP sites are dedicated to delivering practical information, guidance, and emotional support for family-related issues or concerns. In addition to one-on-one parenting counseling, there are regularly scheduled open group sessions.

The ultimate goal is to support families in their efforts to prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which can have a lasting negative impact for children and their future wellbeing.

The pediatrician's office is the place to go for children's physical health, while the UPPs offer help for parents and caretakers who have concerns about their children's emotional and behavioral health.

In just the few months since the UPP opened its doors, the counselors have had more than 60 formal family therapy sessions with parents and children, while providing countless bits of advice and organizing very popular Zumba exercise classes, art classes for children, family movie and game days, and African drumming and dance sessions.



Girl Scouts in the Delta

Hiking, gardening, community service... and cookies. Don't forget the cookies. *"Those things make me want to be a girl scout,"* said Tiana Minton, a 10-year-old Carver Elementary School student. *"I really like it that the Girl Scouts do things to help our community. The things I learn, I can use the rest of my life."*

Through the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association in Indianola, along with the support of the Indianola Promise Community, girls such as Tiana are finding new avenues to learning and fun by way of a rejuvenated Girl Scout program, which had been in decline here in recent years. *"Girl Scouts just wasn't as active as it should be,"* said Marilyn James, the promise community's parent liaison. *"We wanted to build it back up and we're doing it through the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association because we already have an active base of women who can assist with the program."*

Celebrating more than 100 years of service, Girl Scouts has 1.8 million members nationwide and 800,000 adult members working primarily as volunteers. Through Scouts, girls discover the fun, friendship and power of girls working and having fun together. Through a variety of fulfilling experiences, such as field trips, skill-building sports clinics and community service projects, girls receive the tools they need to grow into successful young women and adults.

"Girl Scouts offers so many great things, from science and math programs to entrepreneurship," said James. *"Not to mention the leadership skills they learn and the ways to be proactive in their community and give back through service projects."*

So far, the Indianola Girl Scout program has recruited about 50 girls from Lockard and Carver elementary schools and Merritt Middle School, said James. *"We're going to jump off this summer to get the girls oriented with the program,"* she said. *"We'll have a big kick-off when school starts back to set goals and get aligned with the existing Girl Scout program locally and nationally."* Tiana is excited about the possibilities that Girl Scouts offers to her and her friends. She said she's looking forward to participating in service projects such as Indianola's community garden, growing vegetables and fruit that she can then help distribute to her neighbors. She said she's also excited about the reading and art components that Girl Scouts offers.



"I can't wait. I have friends and cousins who are going to be in it with me, so it's going to be really fun. I want to hike and see new places and earn badges. And I want to sell cookies. That's the best part."

Tiana Minton, 10-year-old
Carver Elementary School student



Indianola Promise Community

Goals of the Indianola Promise Community

Ensure Indianola children are ready for school

Ensure students who need help get help quickly

Ensure that young people stay in school through graduation and transition to post-secondary education



About IPC

The Indianola Promise Community, or IPC, consists of nearly 30 programs and initiatives that work together to expand the health care and educational opportunities for Indianola children and their families. IPC unites health care, education, government, community, and faith-based organizations to develop a “*pipeline*” of academic, family, and community resources, from prenatal care through high school graduation, creating a path for students to gain meaningful careers and earn financial independence.

Created in 2009 and modeled on the successful Harlem Children’s Zone in New York City, the initiative received a huge boost in 2013 when DHA was awarded a five-year, \$30 million federal grant to dramatically expand IPC’s footprint in Indianola. At the time, the grant for Indianola was the second awarded program that served a rural area. IPC offers a collective approach, with agencies and services complementing each other and working together in a coordinated fashion.

IPC is governed by a local Steering Committee and makes use of a broad number of task forces and committees that bring together a number of different community organizations to collaborate on goals and objectives.

IPC’s major partners:

- Sunflower County Consolidated School District
- Children’s Defense Fund
- Save the Children
- AmeriCorps*VISTA
- B.B. King Museum
- Teach for America
- City of Indianola
- Delta State University
- Sunflower County Childcare Association
- Sunflower County Ministerial Alliance
- Mississippi Center for Justice
- Sunflower County Freedom Project
- Mississippi Valley State University
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- On Track CDC

At the core of IPC is a disciplined commitment to analyzing each and every program, using data generated by the programs and compared against previously agreed upon performance measures. Each program is constantly monitored and evaluated, and changes are made as needed to improve outcomes.



Over the last two years, Head Start, Sunflower County Consolidated School District, parents and childcare centers in Indianola have come together to ensure that all children are ready for kindergarten.

IPC facilitated adoption by the centers of a standard, evidence-based curriculum and measurement tool to ensure a coordinated plan of early learning with the school district. Through home visiting, Imagination Library, and quality early care and education, IPC has doubled rates of kindergarten readiness. These gains provide the foundation for continuing academic achievement. At the end of Kindergarten, Indianola students had the highest literacy scores in the Delta.

This past summer, IPC hosted the largest and most engaged collection of summer camps ever, supporting reading development, math enrichment, and college and career readiness. Mixing learning with fun works – 70% of summer camp participants lost no ground in reading over the summer – a nationwide problem for low-income students.

How IPC Works

Books provided free on a monthly basis to children and their parents, for ages birth to five.



Special classes geared toward helping students excel academically and develop individual pathways to college, including academic tutoring and ACT prep.

Summer enrichment camps to prevent “summer learning loss” and special preparatory programs for children entering kindergarten and Head Start.

Classes for children age 3-8 who have communication deficiencies in speech and vocabulary as they prepare for kindergarten and first grade.



In-home visitation program by trained staff to help improve prenatal care, and the health and development of children.



Special outreach initiatives, designed for different age groups, focused on reducing alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse.



Outreach courses directed at teenagers to reduce pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.



Programs that encourage parents to become more involved in the schools and homeowners to become more involved in their neighborhoods.

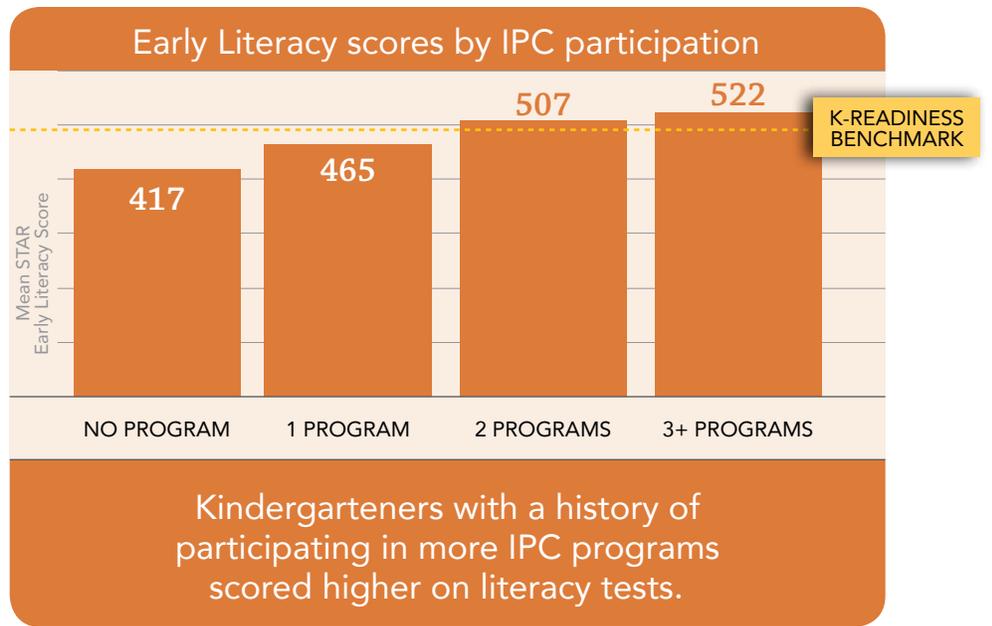


Parenting and family support initiatives to prevent and treat behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers.

The Payoff

It's not just one program that can make a difference, but multiple programs that complement each other and build on each other.

As the data show, kindergarteners with a history of participating in more IPC programs scored higher on literacy tests. Certainly being involved in one program helped, but joining two or three programs pushed the young students over the benchmark score that indicates an academic readiness for kindergarten.



Bringing multiple initiatives together to improve academic outcomes is accomplished in three different ways:

1. enrolling students in the programs where they need help,
2. coordinating and managing the transition from one grade to the next, and
3. aligning the curricula and assessment for all the programs so that all the coursework prepares the student for the next assignment and the next grade.



High school graduation rates at Indianola's Gentry High School have increased **16.7%** since the 2013/14 academic year.

This improvement is more than **2.5** times overall state increase and coincides with the implementation of our Indianola Promise Community.

Each student who drops out of high school creates a lifetime of costs of \$240,000 to taxpayers through social programs like Medicaid and TANF, as well as decreased tax contributions.

The graduation rate improvement has already prevented \$6,000,000 in projected benefits expenditures from 2013-17 and will add an additional 5% for 2017/18, generating projected savings of \$1,800,000.

PROJECTED SAVINGS 2013-18

\$1.8 MILLION

Indianola Graduates Speak Out



Julien Whitfield

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Mass communication & broadcast
journalism major
Indianola Gentry High School Class of 2016

"I used to be shy and quiet and behind the scenes, and that was fine with me. Then I joined the Indianola Youth Council."

At 14, Julien joined the youth program sponsored by the Indianola Promise Community and his world soon changed.

"In Youth Council, I feel like they saw something in me and taught me to speak out and really pushed me to be a leader and blaze my own trail."

Whitfield credits his involvement in the Youth Council, as well as IPC's Art of Living Smart Summer Camp, Children in the Zone Summer Camp and IPC Data Team as preparing him for life after high school: *"All of the programs have helped me tremendously in college in understanding the importance of talking with my professors and communicating with others."*

"I look back and know that I wouldn't be where I am today without my mentors."

Jayla Sibley

Senior
Indianola Gentry High School

Since the 9th grade, when Jayla joined the Indianola Youth Council, she has been involved in a cadre of IPC programs and projects, including serving as an intern with IPC's Parent Liaison Program and with the CARES (*Children Are Reaching Excellence with Support*) mentoring program. She was also a camper at Project RISE, or Reading Improvements for Success in Education; and served in the Mayor's Diversity Group.

One of her favorite accomplishments is the creation of the "Get Inspired" project to motivate youth to have a stronger voice in their community: *"The idea is to build leadership skills and create safe*



Everyone needs a mentor; a role model they can look to for guidance and help. Tatyanna Culpepper has been blessed with three. Growing up, and as she transitioned in 2017 from high school to a freshman in college, Tatyanna sought the counsel of her mother, along with a fellow college student from Indianola and an IPC project coordinator. *"All three have meant the world to me,"* said Tatyanna. *"I look back and know that I wouldn't be where I am today without them."*

Her mom has served as her "number one role model" followed by Samesa Hoskins, an older friend and student at Millsaps College; and Shequite Johnson, who served as IPC's community liaison for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program: *"Samesa and I served together on the Indianola Youth Council my 9th-grade year. Before I came to Millsaps, I went to her for advice on how to manage my finances and my time, and how to navigate myself through college life. To this day, she is a mentor to me."* Johnson, she said, has served as a "motherly role model along with my mom. She taught me how to be productive and organized."



zones for students to be able to just sit together and share their thoughts and be free to express their feelings and fears. I see young kids being led the wrong way, looking for the easy way. I see it on social media. But that's not life. Get Inspired is a way to help them find the right direction."

Through rallies and working with schools, Jayla wants to establish those "safe spaces" at Indianola's community garden, BB King Park, Gentry High School and Merritt Middle School. She plans to use social media in a more positive way to get more young people involved in her project.

Tatyanna Culpepper

Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi
Criminology major
Indianola Gentry High School Class of 2017

"I feel like I'm the best barber in the world, I want the chance to show people that."



Tar'Frederick Fant

Barber
Owner of Next Level Barbershop
Indianola Gentry High School Class of 2013

Two acronyms have had a big impact in Tar'Frederick Fant's life: GREAT and DREAMS, two of IPC's programs.

The first has allowed him to fulfill his quest of becoming a barber. The second is allowing him to ensure his journey continues. Through GREAT, or Getting Ready to Excel, Achieve and Triumph, Tar'Frederick completed a program of classroom study and practical experience that put him in position to become a state-licensed barber, all at no cost to him. The program has enabled Tar'Frederick to meet his goals and dreams of owning his own styling shop: *"I feel like I'm the best barber in the world, I want the chance to show people that. IPC and GREAT have been very important to me to get my start. I'm very thankful for them."*

To help ensure his success as a barber, Tar'Frederick also enrolled in the DREAMS program, or Dollars Reinvested in Education and Assets to Maximize Success. DREAMS provides matching funds to assist Sunflower County residents and business owners with the purchase of a first home, post-secondary education or training, or capital for a qualified business. For Tar'Frederick, the DREAMS program can mean as much as \$6,000 in combination with money he is saving himself.

In the fall of 2017, Samesa Hoskins found herself far from home. Yucatan, Mexico, was never in her thoughts as a teenager growing up in Indianola. But no matter the distance or where she finds herself, Samesa knows one day she'll be coming home.

A senior at Millsaps College in Jackson, the 21-year-old political science major traveled to Mexico through the school's fall scholarship program. Looking back, she said, the foundation for her success was laid through her involvement with IPC. From her service as president of the Indianola Youth Council to her summer internship, Samesa said those experiences have prepared her for the future: *"The best way to describe the impact it's had on me is: Confidence, awareness and support. If it wasn't for Youth Council, I wouldn't have the opportunities I have today. It taught me to have the initiative to do these things like the semester in Mexico."*



"Indianola is my home. I'll come back after college because there's a mission here that's not yet finished. I want to be part of that outcome by taking what I've learned and bringing it back to my community."

Samesa Hoskins

Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi
Political Science major
Indianola Gentry High School Class of 2014

Samesa joined the Youth Council just after her 17th birthday and quickly ascended to the group's top spot. The leadership skills she gleaned has helped her throughout college, she said. After she graduates, she said she may take a year off from her studies before going to law school. IPC and its dedicated staff have helped make it possible, she said, *"IPC unlocked the 'why' in my life. Why I want all these things. I couldn't be luckier to have had all these people from IPC who supported me along the way. They are sincere and they care about their jobs and I haven't seen many people like that."*

In addition to her service on the Youth Council and internship, Samesa took advantage of IPC's College Readiness/ACT Prep and BART (Becoming a Responsible Teen) programs, and she worked to help ensure the growth of Indianola's community garden. Combined, those programs have given her a unique and positive perspective on life. *"When it comes to awareness, my drive in life is to play it forward. I want to help and defend those who can't help themselves,"* she said. *"I want to come back to Indianola and get involved in government in Mississippi. We have to have more people taking a stand for what they believe. That's my goal."*

Celebrating Promise Community Week in Indianola

In her mind's eye, Valencia McKinney sees the world within the mammoth confines of New York City. Books and a suitcase are all she needs to get there. "I want to see how the world looks," said the third-grade Carver Elementary School student. "And New York is a good place to do it. I think it has a little of everything."

Valencia and about 130 other elementary school students made their suitcases as part of a literary event with the theme, "Oh, The Places You'll Go," from the famous Dr. Seuss book. The event was hosted by the Indianola Promise Community in partnership with the Sunflower County Consolidated School District, Sunflower County Public Library and the Indianola Literacy Coalition.

It represented one component of Indianola Promise Community Week, or IPC Week for short, an annual week-long showcase geared towards reinforcing ties with its various partners and introducing the promise community to residents who may be unfamiliar with its programs and services.

"Our hope is that our children will take a book and imagine what they can do through its pages," said Alexis Hynes, an IPC program coordinator. "We used this event to create activities from books and used books as tools to inspire them to do great things in their lives and go to new and exciting places."

Christina Smith, a third-grade teacher at Carver said she can't overstate the importance of good reading skills "to be able to compete in a world of so many. These kids learn that there will be bumps in the road, challenges along the way, but they can still be successful."

The Indianola Literacy Coalition is comprised of local teachers, businesses and community volunteers in partnership with the promise community to provide local children with books and to encourage them to read every day.

Now in its fourth year, IPC Week is a tool to share IPC's success with Indianola and its residents. This year's events were held from Sept. 1-8 and included:

- **Youth Empowerment Day** in partnership with Girl Scouts and the Sunflower County Consolidated School District.
- **CARES Pediatric Health Fair** in conjunction with the school district. CARES, or Children Are Reaching Excellence with Support, is a successful adult-student mentoring program offered at Lockard and Carver Elementary Schools.
- **Remembrance and Service Day/Career Fair** in collaboration with the school district, Girl Scouts and IPC's Social Services Collaborative.

"But the future can be for naught if students aren't healthy," said Yalanda Preston of the Delta Health Alliance, who coordinated the pediatric health fair. The fair included education about how to stay fit through yoga and proper nutrition, and warnings about the health risk of tobacco use.

"So many times, we don't focus on our children's health until they are sick," said Preston. "They need to get moving and learn early how to be healthy. If we want our children to do better in school, we need to teach them about a healthy lifestyle while they are young."



"It's really an entire community coming together to make sure our children are reading at the highest levels possible. Everyone understands that reading is the key that will unlock the future for our students."

Alexis Hynes, IPC program coordinator

Summer Camps in Indianola

In many ways, the work of the Indianola Promise Community is about breaking down barriers; removing the obstacles that prevent children in this Delta community from learning in a way that spells success. Many of the hurdles they face are overcome each summer at the IPC camps that continue to prove their value for hundreds of children.

IPC continues to refine the camps to ensure that the quality of each one is maintained at top levels and that they will be financially sustainable in future years. Professional development is offered to camp managers in the areas of project management, implementation, resource development, data collection, and grant and proposal writing.

Beginning its eighth year, IPC's camp program, now up to 12 camps in all serving more than 600 children ages 3-19, continues to grow because it provides children a safe haven during the summer months; helps curtail summer learning loss between academic school years; and serves as economic development drivers because they employ a significant number of Indianola residents.

IPC's newest camp – the Rising Third Grade Summer Camp --- focuses on one of the most critical points in a young student's life: the transition from second to third grade and meeting proficiency standards in reading.

"This is just another line of defense as children prepare for the third-grade reading gate assessment," said Anthony Powell, an IPC project manager who coordinates the summer camp programs. *"We want to make sure that when they get to third grade, they're as ready as they can be, and they're accustomed to their new surroundings as they leave Lockard Elementary School and transition to Carver Elementary School."*

"We found many children last summer who needed this support." said Powell. *"So we decided to add this camp to meet that challenge."*

The Rising Third Grade Summer Camp is an eight-week program that assists 45 students for four days each week, and includes breakfast and lunch. In addition to the primary focus on reading, the camp includes physical fitness, sports, science and robotics. Sponsored and operated by IPC, the camp has 16 teachers comprised of Teach for America instructors, AmeriCorps*VISTA members and college interns.

"We're going to reverse the trend of students failing the third-grade reading assessment by giving them the instruction, tools and equipment they need to succeed."

Anthony Powell, IPC project manager



Deer Creek Promise Community

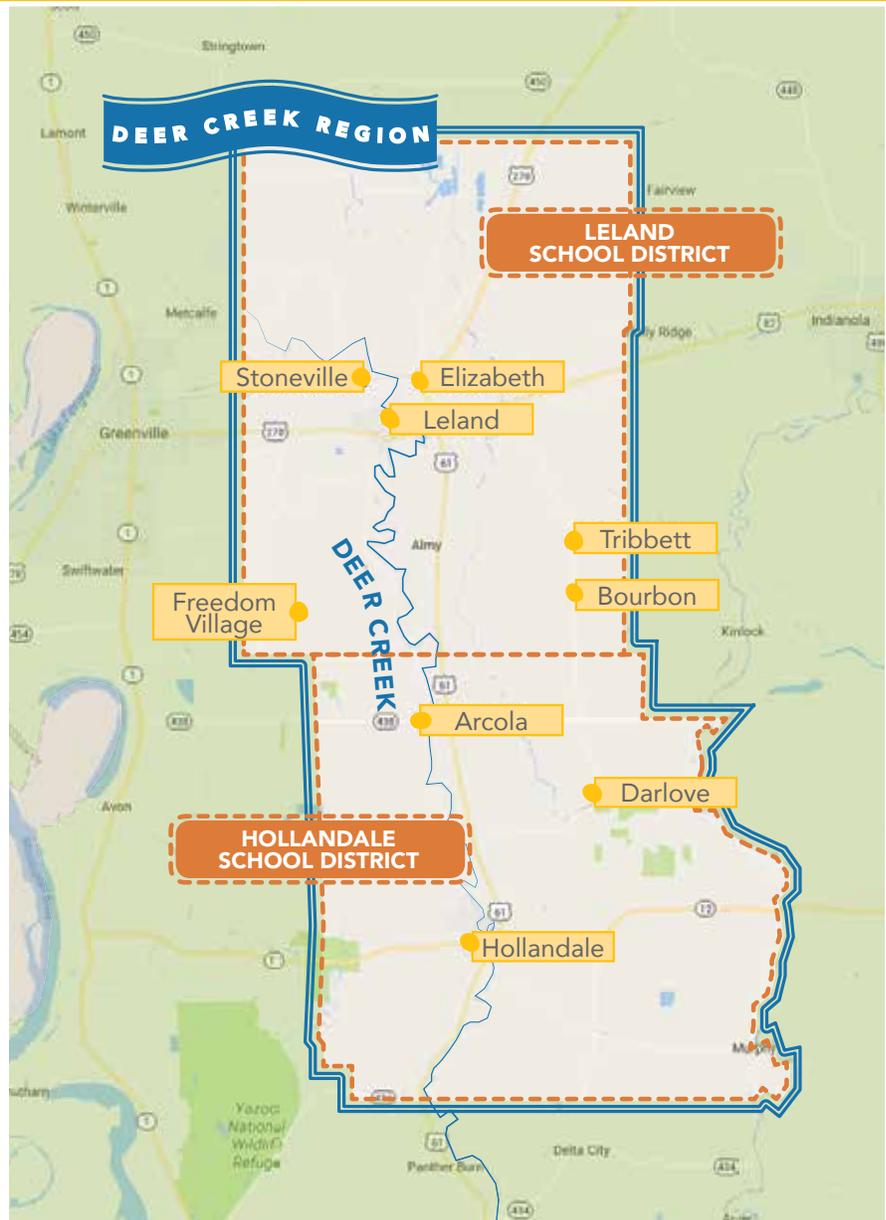


SUPPORTED BY DELTA HEALTH ALLIANCE

About DCPC

Similar to the Promise Community in Indianola, the Deer Creek Promise Community focuses on the students who attend the Hollandale School District and the Leland School District on the eastern side of Washington County.

As with IPC, the project is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant, and the one that funds the work in Indianola, are two of only three grants awarded to rural areas in the country.



As we were going to press, ...

Plans for all the various programs and initiatives were being finalized and agreements with a number of partners were being signed.

The goal of the Deer Creek Promise Community is to ensure that all children served by the Hollandale and Leland school districts

- are ready for Kindergarten,
- that students get help quickly,
- that young people graduate, and transition to post-secondary education.

Oftentimes it's not the one big thing that turns things around, but a lot of smaller things. That was one reason that the first step Delta Health Alliance took in kicking off the Deer Creek Promise Community was to donate half a dozen computers to the Hollandale's Torrey Wood Memorial Library.

A similar donation was made in nearby Arcola at the Community Technology Center.



"Most kids don't have access to a computer after school. It seems so obvious, but in this day and age, if you don't even have computers for students, well, it puts them at a distinct disadvantage. Now our students will have access to computers after hours. It's going to mean a lot to them. It all starts with the education of our children."

Helen Johnson, Hollandale's longtime city clerk

The Deer Creek Promise Community Steering Committee

Mrs. Lisa Bush, Leland

Mr. Edward Holmes, Leland

Mr. Joe Patterson, Leland

Mrs. Stephanie Patton, Leland

Ms. Maxine Harris, Arcola

Sen. Buck Clarke, Hollandale

Mr. Roy Schilling, Hollandale

Mr. Howard Sanders, Hollandale

Mr. Robert Burford, Hollandale,

Rev. Carl Dorsey, Hollandale

Mrs. Jobana Frey, Hollandale



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AmeriCorps*VISTA

Annie E. Casey Foundation

B.B. King Museum

Bolivar County Community
Action Agency

Burn Healthcare Institute

Capps Technology Center

Children's Defense Fund

City of Greenwood

City of Indianola

City of Leland

Delta Council

Delta Housing Development
Corporation

Delta State University

Dolly Parton's
Imagination Library

Entergy

Excel By 5

Girl Scouts - Heart of the South

Guaranty Bank and Trust

Hollandale School District

Indianola Mayor's Health Council

Indianola P-16 Council

Keplere Institute

Leland Deacon Alliance

Leland School District

March of Dimes

Mississippi Center for
Education Innovation

Mississippi Center for Justice

Mississippi Delta
Community College

Mississippi Department
of Human Services

Mississippi Low Income
Childcare Initiative

Mississippi State
Department of Education

Mississippi State
Department of Health

Mississippi State University

Mississippi Valley State
University

Monsanto

On Track Community
Development Corporation

Our House, Inc

Parents as Teachers

Parents for Public Schools

Pave /Med Ed Services

Renasant Bank

S & S College of Hair

Save the Children

South Delta Regional
Housing Authority

Sunflower County
Childcare Association

Sunflower County
Consolidated School District

Sunflower County
Freedom Project

Sunflower County
Ministerial Alliance

Sunflower County
United for Children

Sunflower Humphreys
County Progress, Inc.

Teach for America

Town of Arcola

Town of Hollandale

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services

U.S. Department of Justice

University of Mississippi
Center for Excellence in
Literacy Instruction

University of Mississippi
- Jumpstart

Urban Child Institute

Warren-Washington-
Issaquena-Sharkey
Community Action Agency, Inc.

Washington County
Economic Alliance

Washington County
Opportunities, Inc.

Washington County
Sheriff's Department

Delta Health Alliance

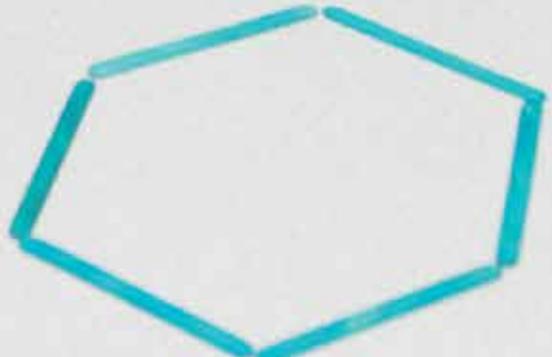
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