



Mental Health Services in Bulloch County

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CONTENT

Background on Mental Health

As of 2019, nearly **1 in 5** American adults live with a mental illness.¹ Less than **45%** of adults receive adequate treatment.¹ According to NCBH, **77%** of US counties experience a severe shortage of mental health workers.² The increasing demand for behavioral health professionals and services due to the Covid-19 pandemic will only exacerbate the shortage.³⁻⁶

Ratio of Population to Mental Health Providers ⁷

Bulloch County	Georgia	The US
1,100:1	730:1	290:1

Who Are We?

Driven by the need to provide help for residents of rural and low-income communities with shortages of mental health professionals, Aurela Nikaj and Kadiatou Diallo participated in a service-learning (S-L) project as part of the Public Health Funding and Grants (PUBH-9135-01F) course, taught by Dr. Yelena Tarasenko in summer 2020.

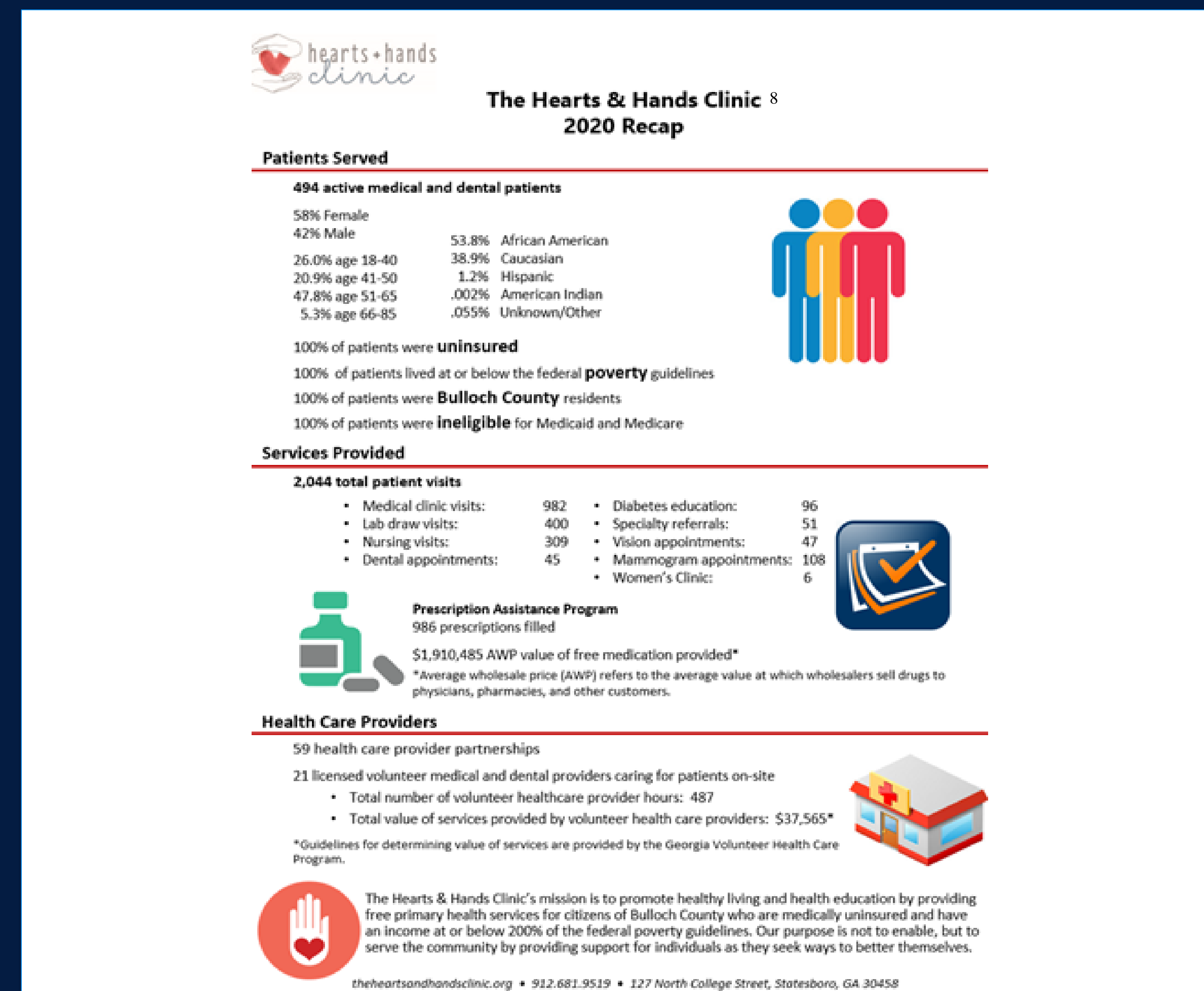
Community Partner and Its Mission

As part of the S-L project, we collaborated with the community partner in Bulloch County, The Hearts and Hands Clinic. The clinic's mission is to provide free health services for Bulloch County residents who live in poverty and are medically underserved. Among a wide range of free services, the clinic provides counseling and prescription medications to its patients with mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression.

THE PURPOSE OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

- The S-L project's purpose was to secure funding for the clinic, enabling it to expand its staff and offer free mental health services for underserved communities in Bulloch County.
- Our objective was to prepare and submit a grant application for Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation (i.e., potential funder).

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY PARTNER



REFLECTIONS

Rewards of Participating in the S-L Project:

- ❖ Applied course knowledge to real-life challenges amid COVID-19.
- ❖ Enhanced our critical thinking and problem-solving skills.⁹
- ❖ Acknowledged the incredible work of the Heart and Hands Clinic for vulnerable residents of Bulloch County.
- ❖ Most importantly, increased a strong belief in the importance of partnership and collaboration with the community.

Challenges:

- ❖ Occasional technical issues (typical for remote communication between partners).
- ❖ Not being able to visit the clinic in person and discuss logistics and needed procedures throughout the grant application process.

SERVICES ACTIVITIES

Activities Included During the S-L Project:

- Introduction to concepts of grant applications and writing.
- Weekly virtual meetings with Dr. Tarasenko and the Executive Director of the clinic, Ms. Kara Holland.
- Identifying sources of funding in public health.
- Identifying required documentation for grant application.
- Writing the letter of intent to Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation (i.e., the potential funder).
- Developing/implementing the budget plan.
- Submitting the grant application to Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation.

IMPACT OF DEVELOPED PROJECT ON COMMUNITY

- Expanding the mental health services in Bulloch County.
- Expanding medical counseling and medications provided to patients with depression and anxiety disorders.
- Raising mental health awareness in Bulloch County
- Bridging the gap between mental health and the underserved communities.
- Training public health students and sharpening their skills in community engagement and grant writing.

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