

LEON LOWENSTEIN FOUNDATION

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

# Increasing childhood vaccination rates with the “Big Blue Bus”

Chiricahua Community Health Center  
Benson, Arizona | cchci.org

## The Challenge

Childhood vaccine rates were declining and then the issue compounded with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## The Solution

The health center parked the mobile units next to fixed clinics as a safe place to bring children (under 5 years) for vaccines, laboratory testing, and assessments. The ongoing flexibility of mobile units meets the needs of the time and move with mobile populations. A valuable asset to health centers and communities.

## The Impact

- August 2019 to August 2020, childhood **vaccine rates increased 9%**
- An additional **5.5% increase** by June 2021
- Service area spans 4 million acres and a 100-mile border with Mexico

## 2021 Health Center Data

- 29,895 total patients
- 60% racial and ethnic minority patients
- 15.6% of patients best served in a language other than English
- 19.9% of patients are uninsured
- 41.3% of patients have Medicaid/CHIP insurance
- Special populations served: people experiencing homelessness, migrant and agricultural workers, and residents of public housing



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The Chiricahua mobile clinics have made a lasting impression on the rural community. In many ways, the mobile clinics have become Chiricahua Ambassadors, some even call them ‘Hope on Wheels’ because children and families of Cochise County know that if they see the ‘Big Blue Bus’ they will not be turned away.

**Dennis Walto**

Chief of External Affairs and  
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