

WEST VIRGINIA: MOBILE HEALTH CARE PCA& HCCN CONFERENCE GALLERY WALK (2023)



PROJECT AIM

West Virginia is unique in the challenges we face. Geographical, poverty, food insecurities, transportation barriers, lack of broadband, and smaller schools make providing health care to the neediest even more challenging. The residual effects from the opioid crisis have also impacted students. By collecting and disseminating the current data on mobile utilization other, health centers can make informed decisions. The information provided will include but not be limited to start-up and maintenance costs, staffing costs, expected life span and useful clinical data. Challenges and barriers will be highlighted with successes. Delivery of this information will be provided in a report for all health centers, including the forum at this year's School Based Health (SBH) Conference where CEOs that employ mobile units will share a more in-depth look at mobile units while providing a time for Q&A. Too often methodologies and practices in other states are not replicable in WV due to its uniqueness as identified earlier. This project will provide health centers with knowledge about how to be successful in delivering high-quality, cost-effective care to students in our most rural schools.

Larger schools are favored for SBHCs. Sustainability is challenging for small schools that don't meet the threshold for services based on investment. WV has several hundred small schools that make it very challenging to set up a SBHC. The duplication of equipment as well as the preparations for occupancy make small schools unlikely a SBHC can be sustained. Mobile units will allow more children to receive services that they are unable to receive due to transportation issues, distance to health care, or costs for families. While telehealth services are increasing nationally, WV doesn't have the infrastructure particularly in very rural, geographically challenged areas which creates a digital divide and increasing disparities for communities and students. Adequate health care is the first step in mitigating the adverse childhood experiences that a significant number of children have encountered in WV. Most SBH clinics often provide much more than just health care. SBH providers become another caring adult in the lives of children which they so desperately need. SBHCs are known to provide food, clothes, backpacks and other essentials in their attempt to meet students' needs.

The West Virginia Primary Care Association (WVPCA) is the state affiliate for the National SBH Alliance which gives 25 other state affiliates easy access to the findings of this project. This work would be shared with the Alliance which provides technical assistance for the development of SBHCs. Also, through the BASECAMP platform, affiliates communicate with each other regularly inquiring about different subjects and responses are posted for all to see. All materials produced and lessons learned would be shared with other states through this platform. Additionally, the WVPCA CEO is our region's representative with the PCA Leadership Committee and will be able to share through those channels.

The impact of this project has been primarily measured by the increase in the number of mobile units in service and the number of students, teachers and school administrators that use the mobile service. The increase in the number of mobile units have in turn, provided more information to enhance cost effectiveness and the quality of care. Educational outcomes such as attendance, behavior and improved course work have also been monitored for improvement over time, though this data was not collected for this initiative.

CURRENT STATE OF MOBILE

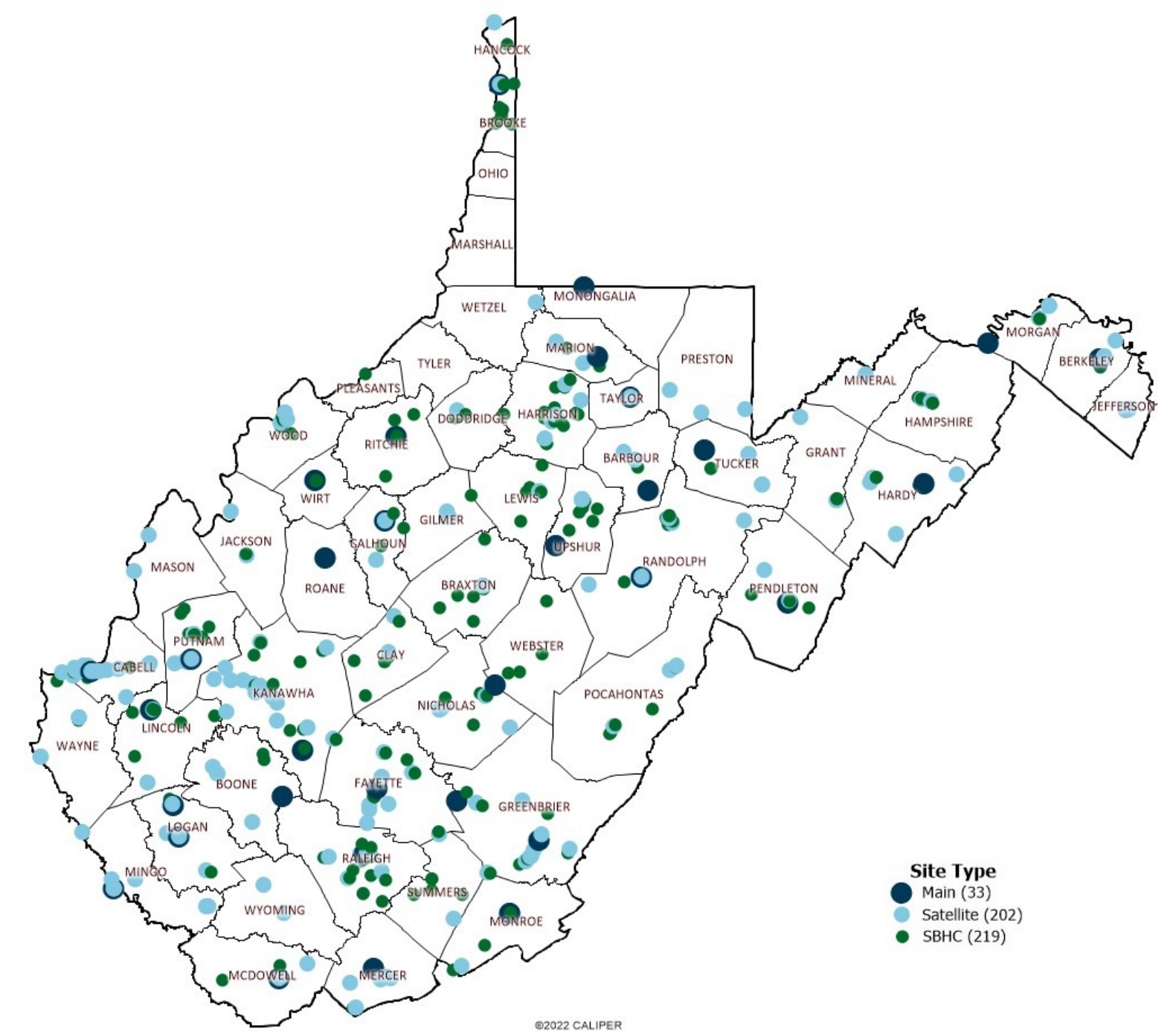
The WVPCA has over 215 School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) that offer an array of primary care and/or behavioral health. Currently, seven (7) health centers use mobile units which includes: six (6) units for primary care, and one (1) for dental services. Two health centers provide mobile dental equipment which is transported between schools.

Family Care Health Centers is most invested in the use of mobile units. They have expanded to four (4) units to address primary care and behavioral health to 23 schools in three counties. They also deliver dental services in a separate unit.

New River Health Association is looking to replace their dental mobile unit that is no longer viable. They have since bought limited mobile dental equipment that is moved between schools but is very time consuming.

Change Inc, Cabin Creek Health Systems, Tug River Health Association, and Mountain Laurel Integrated Health System all have one mobile unit a piece and use it for primary care in different ways but include, pop-up events, regular visits to designated places to meet homeless population needs and screenings and vaccinations.

Shenandoah Community Health has ordered a mobile unit for schools.



IMPACT SO FAR

At the start of this grant, CCHN sought to measure the WVPCA's goal was to increase the number of mobile units and the number of community health centers using mobile units using education, health center's lived experience and providing resources. This will increase access to care by bringing health care to people, locally. This is a long-term goal but there is evidence that progress is being made already from our baseline of seven health centers and seven mobile units being used.

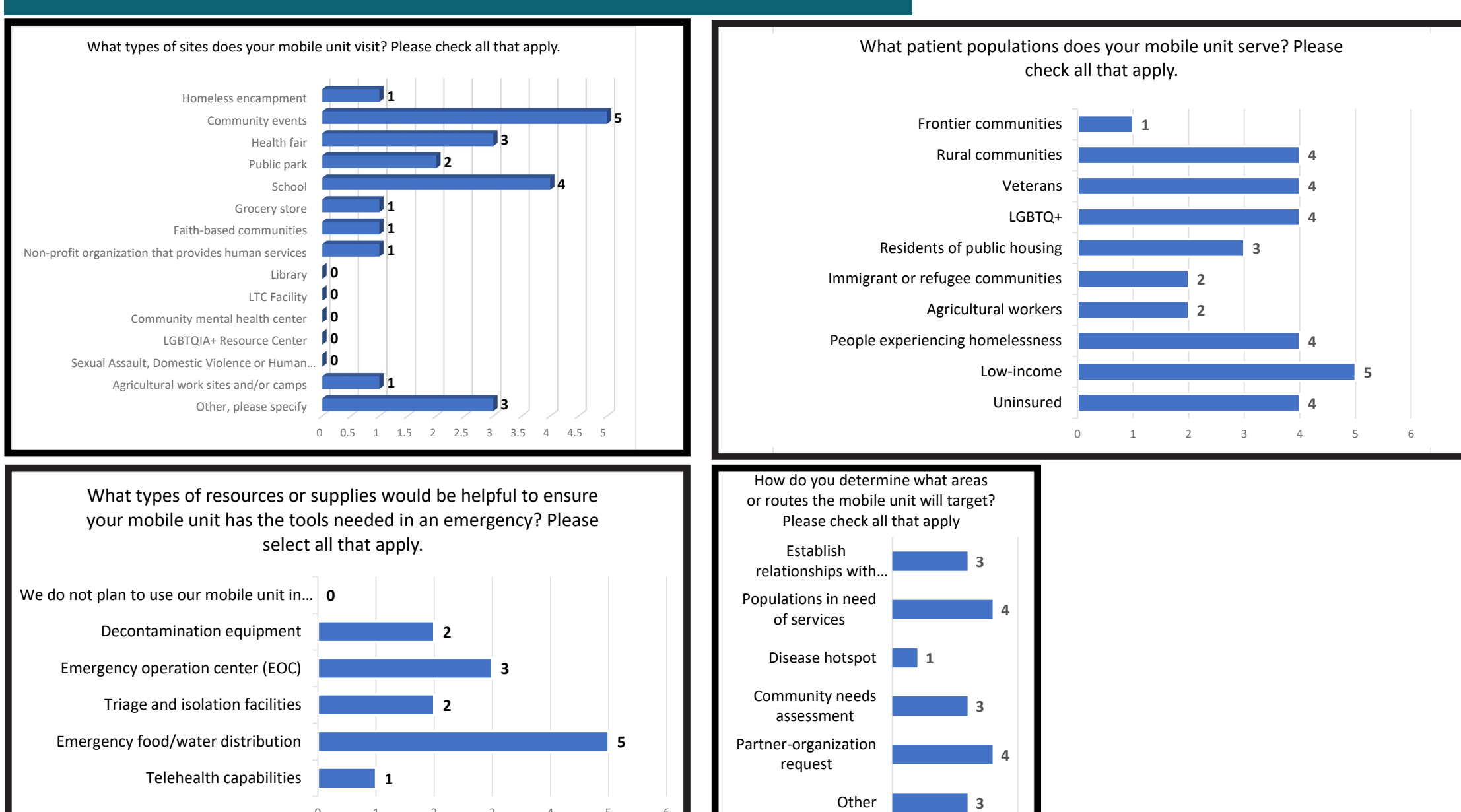
Several milestones that were proposed and completed by WVPCA include:

- An initial brief survey/interview with health centers that were currently using mobile units to better understand the successes, challenges and lessons learned.
- Joined the Mobile Health Association, participated in their two-day start-up webinar.
- Engaged the Mobile Health Map and the Family Van of Harvard Medical School to discuss their resources and expertise moving forward. The WVPCA is currently working with the Mobile Health Map to deliver a webinar that will provide resources, support, and build community amongst those using mobile units in their delivery of services.
- These learning opportunities laid the foundation for delivering a session at our 2023 SBH Conference. The session, "Expanding Healthcare Access & Equity Through Mobile Units" was attended by over 35 individuals.
- Highlighting two health centers who have just received their new mobile unit through print and social media. This session was very successful as a kickoff to engaging our membership regarding mobile units. The WVPCA did distribute the grantors survey and is awaiting that data.

As the state affiliate for the National School-Based Health Alliance, the WVPCA has acknowledged this work with Alliance and discussions continue regarding how to share what has been learned with other state affiliates in the coming months. While there were no unexpected situations, there was the realization that mobile units bring their own unique challenges:

- Having the appropriate size of mobile unit for the roads and topography is critical along with who will drive the unit. The security of the unit itself was noted by several health centers along with the maintenance scheduling as new challenges.
- As the theme of the SBH Conference was innovation, opportunity, and impact, it was clear that there was potential to share the idea of combining the use of telehealth within mobile units to increase productivity for providers and expand access to care without significant cost.

SURVEY RESULTS



Made possible with the generous support of the Leon Lowenstein Foundation