

ISSUE 62
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THE MOVEMENT NEWSLETTER



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The connection
that keeps us
together

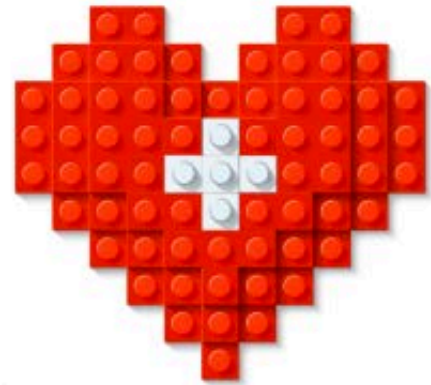


SOUTH CAROLINA
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
ASSOCIATION

Conferences and Events



Building Innovative Care
Where It Matters Most.



National Health Center Week
August 2-8, 2026



2026
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
and
BOARD GOVERNANCE
RETREAT



OCTOBER 23-25



SONESTA RESORT
HILTON HEAD ISLAND



130 Shipyard Drive
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928



Letter from the Editor



Dear Friends of *The Movement*,

As summer officially began this month, it offers a welcome opportunity to slow down, recharge, and focus on personal well-being. Amid the demands of our professional and personal lives, this season reminds us to relax, relate, release, and capitalize on opportunities to invest in our individual wellness. Whether through spending time with loved ones, enjoying the outdoors, prioritizing self-care, or simply taking a moment to reflect, summer encourages us to nurture the health and balance that allows us to better serve others.

This month's edition of *The Movement* highlights the power of collaboration and the collective impact of those committed to advancing healthcare access and improving outcomes throughout our region. Through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and a shared dedication to service, we continue to make meaningful strides in meeting the needs of our communities.

One of the highlights of this month was our recent Clinical Network Retreat, which brought together healthcare leaders, providers, and partners from across the network. The retreat provided a valuable opportunity to share best practices, celebrate successes, and explore new ways to strengthen the care we provide. It was also a time to recognize the outstanding individuals and organizations whose dedication and leadership continue to drive our mission forward. Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients and nominees. Your commitment to excellence and service is making a lasting difference in the lives of countless patients and families.

As we reflect on the conversations and achievements celebrated during the retreat, we are reminded that progress is built through strong relationships and a shared vision. The challenges facing healthcare today require innovation, perseverance, and collaboration, and we are fortunate to be surrounded by professionals who bring those qualities to their work every day.

Thank you for being part of this movement. Your passion, expertise, and unwavering commitment to serving others continue to inspire us and strengthen the communities we serve. We hope you enjoy this month's edition and find both encouragement and inspiration in the stories that showcase the remarkable work happening across our network.

Wishing you a healthy, restorative, and enjoyable summer season.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenya". The script is elegant and cursive.

Kenya L. Mingo, MBA, MA, CLSSGB
Editor, *The Movement*
Director of Corporate Compliance and Communications

A Lesson in Leadership

**"If you want to build a
great team, create an
environment where
someone can raise their
hand and say
"I disagree" without any
fear of victimization or
termination.**

Leadership First

BE PREPARED: A Monthly Emergency Essential



Summer Emergency Preparedness: Be Ready for the Unexpected

Summer brings sunshine, vacations, outdoor activities, and time spent with family and friends. It is also a season that can bring severe weather, extreme heat, hurricanes, flooding, and unexpected power outages. Taking steps to prepare now can help protect your health and safety throughout the summer months.

At community health centers, we encourage patients and families to make emergency preparedness part of their summer wellness plan. A little preparation today can provide peace of mind when unexpected situations arise.

Prepare for Summer Weather

Summer storms can develop quickly, bringing strong winds, lightning, heavy rainfall, and flooding. Stay informed by monitoring local weather forecasts and having multiple ways to receive emergency alerts.

If a severe weather event is expected in your area, make sure your mobile devices are charged and that you have access to important emergency information.

Stay Safe During Extreme Heat

High temperatures can pose serious health risks, especially for young children, older adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

To prevent heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Limit outdoor activities during the hottest hours.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.

- Seek air-conditioned spaces when temperatures become extreme.
- Never leave children or pets in parked vehicles.

Be aware of symptoms of heat exhaustion, including dizziness, headache, nausea, excessive sweating, and fatigue.

Keep Medications and Medical Information Accessible

Summer emergencies can disrupt access to pharmacies and healthcare services. Patients should keep an updated list of medications, healthcare providers, and emergency contacts readily available.

Consider maintaining a small supply of essential medications and storing important medical information in a safe, easily accessible location.

Build a Summer Emergency Kit

Every household should have an emergency kit that includes:

- Bottled water
- Nonperishable food
- Flashlights and batteries
- First-aid supplies
- Prescription medications
- Phone chargers and backup batteries
- Important documents
- Personal hygiene items

Check supplies periodically and replace expired items.

Create a Family Emergency Plan

Talk with your family about what to do during severe weather, power outages, or evacuation situations. Identify meeting locations, emergency contacts, and evacuation routes before an emergency occurs.

Ensuring everyone understands the plan can reduce confusion and stress when quick decisions are needed.

Community Health Centers: Prepared to Serve During Emergencies

Community health centers are often on the front lines during emergencies, providing essential healthcare services, health education, and support to the communities they serve. Through comprehensive emergency preparedness planning, health centers work year-round to ensure continuity of care during severe weather events, natural disasters, public health emergencies, and other unexpected disruptions.

Preparedness efforts may include staff training, emergency response exercises, communication planning, backup systems, and coordination with local emergency management agencies and community partners. These measures help health centers continue delivering quality care while safeguarding patients, staff, and operations.

Patients can support these efforts by keeping their contact information up to date, maintaining an adequate supply of medications, and staying informed about health center communications before, during, and after emergency events.

By working together, community health centers and patients can help build stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

A Healthy Summer Starts with Preparedness

Emergency preparedness is an important part of protecting your health and well-being. Whether you're planning a vacation, spending time outdoors, or simply enjoying the longer days, taking a few simple precautions now can help keep you and your loved ones safe all summer long.

This summer, make preparedness a priority—and enjoy the season with confidence, knowing you're ready for whatever comes your way.



Value-Based Care

**VALUE
BASED
CARE**



Stronger Together: Why FQHCs Should Pursue Value-Based Care Collectively

Healthcare reimbursement is rapidly evolving. Across Medicare, Medicaid, and commercial insurance markets, payers are increasingly shifting from fee-for-service reimbursement toward value-based care (VBC) models that reward quality, outcomes, patient engagement, and total cost of care management. While these changes present significant opportunities, they also create challenges for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), particularly smaller organizations that may lack the resources, infrastructure, or patient volume needed to successfully negotiate and participate in value-based arrangements independently.

As health centers continue to navigate this transformation, one thing has become increasingly clear: collaboration creates strength.

The Case for Collective Value-Based Care

FQHCs have always been leaders in delivering high-quality, comprehensive, and cost-effective primary care to underserved communities. However, many health centers face barriers when attempting to enter value-based contracts on their own. Payers often seek larger populations, broader geographic coverage, sophisticated data analytics, and standardized quality reporting capabilities before offering meaningful incentive opportunities.

By working collectively through their Primary Care Association (PCA), health center network, or a statewide collaborative structure, FQHCs can overcome many of these challenges.

A collective approach allows health centers to:

- Aggregate patient populations to create greater negotiating power
- Standardize quality metrics and reporting processes
- Share infrastructure and administrative costs
- Expand access to data analytics and population health tools
- Reduce financial risk associated with performance-based contracts

- Increase opportunities for shared savings, quality bonuses, and incentive payments
- Create a unified voice when negotiating with Medicaid managed care organizations, Medicare Advantage plans, and commercial payers

Moving Beyond Individual Contracts

Historically, many value-based arrangements have been negotiated one health center at a time. While this approach can work for larger organizations, it often leaves smaller centers with limited leverage and inconsistent opportunities.

Collective contracting allows participating health centers to approach payers as a coordinated network rather than individual entities. This model can help secure:

- Enhanced quality incentive programs
- Shared savings arrangements
- Care coordination payments.
- Population health management funding
- Health equity incentives
- Alternative payment methodologies
- Medicare Advantage and Medicaid managed care value-based agreements

When health centers negotiate together, payers gain access to a broader network of providers and communities, while health centers gain increased bargaining strength and more favorable contract terms.

Aligning Mission with Sustainability

Value-based care is not simply a reimbursement strategy; it aligns closely with the mission of community health centers.

Health centers have long focused on preventive care, chronic disease management, care coordination, behavioral health integration, social determinants of health, and reducing healthcare disparities. These are precisely the activities that value-based payment models are designed to reward.

By participating in well-structured value-based agreements, FQHCs can generate additional resources that support:

- Expanded patient services
- Care management programs
- Community outreach initiatives
- Workforce development
- Technology and data infrastructure investments
- Health equity interventions

The result is improved patient outcomes while strengthening the long-term financial sustainability of health centers.

The Role of Primary Care Associations

Primary Care Associations are uniquely positioned to help lead this transformation. PCAs can serve as conveners, facilitators, and strategic partners by helping member health centers:

- Evaluate value-based care opportunities
- Develop common quality measures and reporting standards
- Coordinate payer negotiations
- Support contract administration and compliance
- Provide education and technical assistance
- Facilitate data-sharing and benchmarking
- Identify opportunities for statewide incentive programs

Most importantly, PCAs can help ensure that health centers retain local autonomy while benefiting from the scale and strength of collective action.

Looking Ahead

The transition to value-based care is accelerating, and health centers cannot afford to remain on the sidelines. As payers continue to prioritize quality, outcomes, and cost management, collective participation in value-based arrangements offers a practical pathway for health centers to protect their mission, improve financial performance, and enhance patient care.

By coming together through their Primary Care Association and trusted partners, FQHCs can position themselves not only to succeed in value-based care but to help shape the future of primary care delivery in their states.

The future of healthcare is increasingly value-driven. For community health centers, the greatest opportunity may not be pursuing that future alone—but pursuing it together.



What Health Centers Need to Know About the Evolving AI Legislative Landscape

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly moving from innovation pilots to everyday healthcare operations. From clinical documentation and patient engagement tools to revenue cycle management and population health analytics, health centers are increasingly exploring AI-enabled solutions to address workforce shortages, improve efficiency, and enhance patient care.

At the same time, policymakers at both the federal and state levels are moving quickly to establish guardrails around AI use. For health center leaders, understanding these developments is becoming an essential component of governance, compliance, and strategic planning.

A National Push for AI Governance

While the United States has not yet enacted comprehensive federal AI legislation specific to healthcare, momentum is building. Congress continues to examine proposals that would establish national standards for AI transparency, accountability, workforce protections, and consumer safeguards. In June 2026, members of the U.S. House of Representatives released a bipartisan discussion draft proposing a federal framework for AI oversight, including whistleblower protections, increased penalties for AI-enabled fraud, and investments in AI literacy and workforce development (Axios, 2026).

Federal agencies are also actively shaping AI governance. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have issued guidance and frameworks emphasizing transparency, risk management, and human oversight in healthcare AI applications (HHS, 2024; FDA, 2024).

For healthcare providers, these discussions signal growing recognition that AI governance is no longer a future issue, it is a current policy priority.

States Are Leading the Way

In the absence of comprehensive federal regulation, states have become the primary laboratories for AI policy. According to healthcare policy tracking organizations, nearly every state has introduced or debated legislation related to AI, with healthcare among the most active policy areas (Manatt Health, 2026).

Recent state legislation has focused on several key themes:

- Transparency requirements when AI tools are used in patient-facing interactions.
- Disclosure requirements for AI-assisted clinical decision-making.
- Human oversight provisions to ensure AI does not independently make critical healthcare decisions.
- Regulation of insurer use of AI in claims review and prior authorization processes.
- Safeguards for AI-powered behavioral health and patient engagement tools.

Healthcare policy analysts report that more than 250 healthcare-related AI bills were introduced across 47 states during 2025, with legislative activity continuing to accelerate throughout 2026 (Becker's Hospital Review, 2025).

What This Means for Health Centers

Although most current legislation targets technology developers, insurers, and large healthcare organizations, community health centers should anticipate increasing expectations around AI governance and accountability.

Health centers evaluating AI solutions should consider several foundational questions:

Governance

Who is responsible for overseeing AI use within the organization? Does the board receive regular updates on AI initiatives and associated risks?

Transparency

Are patients informed when AI tools are involved in communication, documentation, scheduling, or clinical decision support?

Human Oversight

Are clinicians maintaining ultimate responsibility for patient care decisions, with AI serving as a support tool rather than a replacement?

Privacy and Security

Do AI vendors provide adequate protection for protected health information (PHI) and demonstrate compliance with HIPAA requirements?

Bias and Health Equity

Has the organization assessed whether AI tools could unintentionally reinforce disparities among underserved populations?

These considerations closely align with emerging state requirements and national frameworks such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) AI Risk Management Framework and HHS recommendations for responsible AI implementation (NIST, 2024; HHS, 2024).

Looking Ahead

The policy environment surrounding AI is expected to remain highly dynamic throughout 2026 and beyond. Federal lawmakers continue to debate national standards while states actively implement new requirements focused on transparency, patient safety, algorithmic accountability, and human oversight (Axios, 2026; Holland & Knight, 2026).

For health centers, the opportunity is significant. AI has the potential to improve access, reduce administrative burden, enhance workforce capacity, and support care teams serving vulnerable populations. However, realizing these benefits will require thoughtful governance, careful vendor selection, and ongoing attention to evolving regulatory expectations.

Organizations that establish clear AI policies today will be better positioned to innovate responsibly while maintaining patient trust, regulatory compliance, and their mission-driven commitment to health equity.

Health centers do not need to wait for federal mandates to begin building AI governance programs. Establishing policies for oversight, transparency, privacy, equity, and human review now will help organizations stay ahead of a rapidly changing legislative landscape while maximizing the benefits of AI for patients and providers alike.

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Holland & Knight. (2026). *States Continue Efforts to Regulate AI in Healthcare.*

Manatt Health. (2026). *Health AI Policy Tracker.*

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2026 SC State-Level Goals Snapshot

Reporting Date: May 2026 | Total Measures Tracked: 29



Target Achievement

- Primary Goals Met: 1
- Secondary Goals Met: 1



Priority Opportunity Areas

Annual Family Planning	24.6%
Annual Pregnancy Intention Screening	40.8%
Screening for SDOH	8.8%



Top 5 Performing Measures

1. Child Weight Assessment/ Counseling	91.1%
2. HIV Linkage to Care	90.7%
3. Tobacco Use Screening & Cessation	89.9%
4. BMI Screening & Follow-Up	89.0%
5. Screening for Depression & Follow-Up Plan	87.3%

Data reflects participating SCHCCN health centers only.

COMPLY and Thrive



Compliance Tips for Community Health Centers: Strengthening Summer Readiness and Operational Integrity

As community health centers move into the summer months, operational demands often increase alongside seasonal health needs, staffing changes, and heightened patient volume. June is an ideal time to reinforce compliance practices that support quality care, regulatory readiness, and organizational resilience.

This month's compliance focus highlights practical steps health centers can take to stay aligned with federal and state requirements while maintaining efficient, patient-centered operations.

1. Review Sliding Fee Discount Program Policies

The Sliding Fee Discount Program (SFDP) remains a cornerstone of access in community health centers. June is a good time to ensure:

- Sliding fee schedules are current and board-approved
- Patient eligibility documentation is complete and up to date
- Staff are consistently applying policies at the point of service
- Notices of rights and discounts are clearly posted and accessible to patients

Regular audits of SFDP processes help ensure equitable access and reduce the risk of billing inconsistencies.

2. Strengthen Documentation Accuracy

Accurate and timely clinical documentation supports both quality care and compliance. Reinforce best practices such as:

- Completing encounter notes promptly and thoroughly
- Ensuring medical necessity is clearly documented
- Using standardized templates when applicable
- Avoiding copy-forward errors without proper review

Strong documentation practices are essential for audits, reimbursement integrity, and continuity of care.

3. Prepare for Summer Workforce Changes

With staff vacations and seasonal scheduling adjustments common in June and July, ensure compliance is maintained through:

- Updated delegation of duties and supervision records
- Clear coverage plans for key compliance-sensitive roles
- Ongoing training for temporary or newly assigned staff
- Verification that credentialing and privileging remain current

Maintaining operational oversight during staffing transitions is critical for continuity and regulatory compliance.

4. Refresh Privacy and HIPAA Awareness

Summer brings increased patient movement, outreach events, and mobile services, making privacy protections especially important. Remind staff to:

- Safeguard patient information in all settings, including off-site events
- Avoid discussing protected health information (PHI) in public or shared spaces
- Secure mobile devices and printed materials
- Follow proper protocols for data sharing and authorization

Ongoing HIPAA awareness helps prevent breaches and reinforces patient trust.

5. Ensure Emergency Preparedness Plans Are Up to Date

June marks the beginning of peak season for severe weather in many regions. Health centers should confirm that:

- Emergency response plans are current and accessible
- Staff roles during emergencies are clearly defined
- Communication systems (text alerts, phone trees, email) are tested
- Backup systems for EHR access and prescriptions are functional

Preparedness planning supports both patient safety and operational continuity.

6. Monitor Quality Improvement (QI) Activities

Mid-year is an excellent checkpoint for reviewing QI initiatives. Consider:

- Progress toward clinical quality measures (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, cancer screenings)
- Patient satisfaction trends and feedback
- Gaps in care and targeted interventions
- Documentation of QI committee meetings and actions

Consistent monitoring ensures alignment with organizational goals and value-based care expectations.

Final Reminder: Compliance is a Shared Responsibility

Compliance is not a single department's responsibility - it is embedded in every patient interaction, documentation entry, and operational decision. By reinforcing these practices in June, community health centers can continue delivering safe, equitable, and high-quality care throughout the summer and beyond.

Staying proactive today helps ensure stronger outcomes tomorrow—for patients, staff, and the communities we serve.

The Wellness Way



June Wellness:

Embracing Healthy Habits for a Vibrant Summer



As summer begins and the days grow longer, June offers the perfect opportunity to focus on personal wellness and establish healthy habits that can last throughout the season. Wellness is more than the absence of illness - it is a commitment to caring for your physical, mental, and emotional health every day.

Stay Active and Enjoy the Outdoors

Warmer weather provides many opportunities to increase physical activity. Whether it's taking a morning walk, riding a bike, gardening, or participating in community events, regular movement can improve heart health, strengthen muscles, reduce stress, and boost overall mood. Health experts recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Even small amounts of daily movement can make a significant difference in your health and well-being.

Prioritize Hydration

Higher temperatures can increase the risk of dehydration. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day helps regulate body temperature, supports digestion, and maintains energy levels. Consider carrying a reusable water bottle and choosing water over sugary beverages whenever possible.

Remember that children, older adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions may be especially vulnerable to dehydration during the summer months.

Make Healthy Food Choices

June brings an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Seasonal produce such as berries, peaches, tomatoes, cucumbers, and leafy greens provide important vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support overall health.

Aim to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal. Choosing fresh, nutrient-rich foods can help maintain a healthy weight, support immune function, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Protect Your Skin

Spending time outdoors is beneficial, but it is important to protect your skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Apply sunscreen with at least 30 SPF, wear protective clothing, and seek shade during peak sunlight hours, typically between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Regular skin protection can help prevent sunburn and reduce the risk of skin cancer.

Support Your Mental Well-Being

Mental wellness is just as important as physical health. Take time to connect with family and friends, engage in activities you enjoy, and practice stress-management techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or journaling.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or persistently sad, reach out to a healthcare provider or mental health professional. Seeking support is a sign of strength and an important step toward wellness.

Schedule Preventive Care

Summer is an excellent time to catch up on preventive health appointments. Annual wellness visits, routine screenings, vaccinations, and dental checkups help identify potential health concerns early and keep you on track toward your health goals.

Wellness Tip of the Month

Start each day with one healthy intention. Whether it's drinking more water, taking a short walk, eating an extra serving of vegetables, or spending a few minutes practicing gratitude, small actions can lead to meaningful improvements in overall health.

This June, take advantage of the season's opportunities to refresh your wellness routine and invest in your health. Healthy choices today can help create a stronger, healthier tomorrow.

Revenue Review



Mid-Year 2026 Review: Strengthening Your Revenue Cycle & Preparing for 2027

As we reach the midpoint of 2026, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are navigating continued shifts in reimbursement, compliance expectations, and operational efficiency. With ongoing updates from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and evolving state Medicaid requirements, now is the time to assess performance, close revenue gaps, and proactively prepare for 2027.

Top 5 Revenue Cycle Leaks You Must Patch Now

Even high-performing health centers can lose significant revenue through small but consistent breakdowns across the patient journey. Use this checklist to identify and correct the most common leaks:

1. Front-End Registration Errors

Leak: Incomplete or inaccurate patient demographics and insurance information

Impact: Claim rejections, delayed billing, and increased staff rework

Fix Checklist:

- Verify insurance eligibility at every visit (not just annually)
- Standardize registration workflows across sites
- Implement real-time eligibility tools within your EHR
- Train front desk and call center teams on payer-specific requirements

2. Missed Sliding Fee & Coverage Opportunities

Leak: Failure to properly assess and document sliding fee eligibility or secondary coverage

Impact: Lost revenue and compliance risk

Fix Checklist:

- Audit sliding fee scale documentation monthly
- Ensure income verification policies are consistently applied
- Train staff to identify Medicaid, Medicare, and marketplace eligibility opportunities

3. Coding Inaccuracies & Under-Coding

Leak: Incomplete documentation or incorrect coding of services rendered

Impact: Underpayments, audit risk, and compliance exposure

Fix Checklist:

- Conduct routine internal coding audits
- Align provider documentation with coding specificity requirements
- Provide targeted education on FQHC PPS billing, HCPCS, and CPT updates
- Monitor high-risk areas such as behavioral health and care management services

4. Denials & Appeals Mismanagement

Leak: Lack of timely follow-up on denied or rejected claims

Impact: Permanent revenue loss and cash flow disruption

Fix Checklist:

- Track denial trends by payer and root cause
- Establish a denial management workflow with accountability
- Set KPIs for turnaround times on appeals
- Leverage denial analytics within your practice management system

5. Gaps in Care Management & Value-Based Billing

Leak: Failure to fully capture billable services tied to care coordination and value-based care

Impact: Missed enhanced reimbursement opportunities

Fix Checklist:

- Ensure proper use of updated care management codes replacing G0511
- Integrate workflows for **Advanced Primary Care Management (APCM)** and behavioral health integration
- Align clinical and billing teams to capture all billable touchpoints
- Audit documentation supporting time-based and service-based billing

Mid-Year Checklist: Preparing for 2027 Regulatory Changes

With 2027 policy updates on the horizon, preparation must begin now to ensure compliance and minimize disruption. Guidance from CMS and state Medicaid programs will continue to emphasize value, documentation integrity, and technology alignment.

EHR & Technology Readiness

- Confirm your EHR vendor is planning updates aligned with 2027 CMS rules
- Validate system capabilities for new billing codes and reporting requirements
- Test interoperability functions for care coordination and data exchange
- Ensure reporting tools support Uniform Data System (UDS) and quality measures

Staff Training & Workflow Alignment

- Schedule ongoing education for clinical, coding, and billing teams
- Update internal SOPs to reflect anticipated regulatory changes
- Cross-train staff across departments (front desk, billing, clinical) to reduce silos
- Reinforce documentation standards tied to reimbursement

Compliance & Audit Preparedness

- Conduct mid-year mock audits focused on high-risk billing areas
- Review policies for Medicare and Medicaid billing compliance
- Ensure documentation supports medical necessity and coding accuracy
- Strengthen internal controls for fraud, waste, and abuse prevention

Financial & Strategic Planning

- Model financial impact of potential reimbursement changes
- Identify opportunities to expand value-based care services
- Align leadership goals with operational and revenue cycle improvements
- Build reserves or contingency plans for payment delays or changes

Final Takeaway

The difference between financial stability and revenue loss in 2026 often comes down to attention to detail. By addressing common revenue cycle leaks now and preparing your systems, staff, and workflows for 2027, your health center can remain compliant, competitive, and financially strong. A proactive approach today ensures your organization is not just reacting to change—but leading through it.

Coding Corner



Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month: Coding, Care, and Value in FQHCs

For Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month is more than a campaign—it's a reminder of the critical role health centers play in early detection, comprehensive care planning, and long-term patient and caregiver support. Delivering high-quality dementia care requires accurate coding, thoughtful care coordination, and alignment with value-based care (VBC) expectations under Medicare and South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid.

I. Diagnostic Coding: ICD-10-CM (2026 Updates)

Accurate ICD-10-CM coding is foundational for risk adjustment, quality reporting, and appropriate reimbursement. Dementia-related diagnoses now require greater specificity, particularly regarding severity and behavioral disturbances.

Primary Alzheimer's & Dementia Codes

- **G30.0 – G30.9:** Alzheimer's disease (must include an additional code to specify dementia severity and behavioral symptoms)
- **F01.A – F01.C:** Vascular dementia (mild, moderate, severe)
- **F03.90 – F03.94:** Unspecified dementia (categorized by severity and behavioral disturbances)
- **G31.84:** Mild cognitive impairment (MCI)

Cognitive Symptoms & Screening Codes

- **R41.81:** Age-related cognitive decline
- **R41.840 – R41.844:** Cognitive communication deficits (attention, memory, executive function)

Why It Matters

Specificity in coding directly impacts Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) risk scores, which influence Medicare Advantage and Medicaid managed care reimbursement and quality benchmarking.

II. Billing Codes: CPT & HCPCS for Alzheimer's Care

While FQHCs are reimbursed under the Prospective Payment System (PPS), several CPT and HCPCS codes support enhanced services essential to dementia care.

Medicare (FQHC Billing)

- **99483:** Cognitive Assessment & Care Plan Services
A comprehensive, 50-minute evaluation including cognition, functional status, safety, caregiver identification, and care planning. This is a cornerstone service for Alzheimer's management.
- **G0438 / G0439:** Annual Wellness Visit (AWV)
Includes mandatory cognitive impairment screening. Often serves as the entry point for identifying early dementia and initiating further assessment.
- **General Care Management Codes**
Used by FQHCs for Chronic Care Management (CCM) and similar services. Supports ongoing coordination for patients with multiple chronic conditions, including dementia.

South Carolina Healthy Connections Medicaid

South Carolina Medicaid emphasizes a Medical Home model, with most beneficiaries enrolled in Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) such as:

- Absolute Total Care
- Healthy Blue
- Select Health
- Molina
- Humana

Key considerations:

- **E/M Codes (99202–99215):** Used for documentation, though FQHCs are paid their encounter rate
- **MCO-Specific Incentives:** Plans may include dementia-related quality incentives tied to screenings, care plans, and follow-up

Tip: Always verify billing and incentive structures with individual MCO provider manuals, as requirements may vary.

III. Quality & Value-Based Care (VBC)

In today's healthcare landscape, coding and billing must align with measurable quality outcomes. Alzheimer's care is a key focus area in both Medicare and Medicaid value-based models.

Key Quality Measures (HEDIS/MIPS)

- **Cognitive Assessment for Dementia Patients**
Annual documentation of cognitive status
- **Functional Status Assessment**
Evaluation of Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental ADLs (IADLs)
- **Caregiver Support**
Identification of caregiver burden and provision of resources
- **Medication Management**
Monitoring adherence (Proportion of Days Covered - PDC) and avoiding high-risk medications

IV. Value-Based Strategies for FQHCs

To succeed in VBC models while improving patient outcomes, FQHCs should focus on:

1. Early Detection

Leverage the Annual Wellness Visit (G0438/G0439) to identify cognitive impairment early and initiate timely interventions.

2. Integrated, Team-Based Care

Use Care Management Codes to fund care coordination services. Regular follow-ups can reduce avoidable emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

3. Comprehensive Documentation

Capture dementia severity and behavioral symptoms (e.g., agitation, wandering). These details improve risk adjustment accuracy and reflect true patient complexity.

4. Caregiver Engagement

Recognize caregivers as part of the care team. Document-support efforts to meet quality metrics and improve long-term outcomes.

Final Thought

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias present growing challenges for FQHCs—but also opportunities to lead in compassionate, high-value care. By aligning accurate coding practices with proactive care models and quality metrics, health centers can ensure both financial sustainability and meaningful impact for patients and families.



CareSouth Carolina’s Yanahires “Iris” Murillo Earns Certified Community Health Worker Credential

CareSouth Carolina’s Yanahires “Iris” Murillo, Agricultural Outreach Specialist, has successfully completed the Community Health Worker (CHW) Core Competency Certification Training and earned her credential as a Certified Community Health Worker.

The certification recognizes Murillo’s commitment to connecting patients with healthcare services, community resources, and support systems that improve overall health and well-being. Earlier this year, she was recognized as Agricultural Outreach Worker of the Year by the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association.

Murillo plays a vital role in CareSouth Carolina’s Agricultural Worker Health Program, helping patients understand available services, navigate the healthcare system, and overcome barriers that may prevent them from seeking care. As a bilingual team member, she works closely with Spanish-speaking patients, helping ensure they feel comfortable and supported throughout their healthcare journey.

“Earning my Certified Community Health Worker credential is a meaningful achievement that recognizes my dedication to helping others,” Murillo said. “It strengthens my ability to connect patients with resources, advocate for their needs, and improve their overall well-being at CareSouth Carolina. I am especially proud to have completed the certification exam in Spanish, demonstrating my commitment to supporting Spanish-speaking patients and reducing language barriers in healthcare.”

Murillo said her passion for helping others continues to drive her work every day.

“The biggest thing that motivates me is knowing I’ve helped someone,” she said. “I especially enjoy assisting people who don’t speak or understand English because I can help bridge that communication gap and make their experience easier and more comfortable.”

Marek Calhoun, Director of Social and Community Services at CareSouth Carolina, said her certification will “strengthen the organization’s efforts to serve diverse populations across its communities.”

“Iris's accomplishment strengthens CareSouth Carolina's mission to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve, particularly within our agricultural outreach efforts,” Calhoun said. “Her bilingual skills and newly earned certification will enhance our ability to reach and assist individuals and families who may face language and cultural barriers to care.

“We are incredibly proud of Iris's hard work, determination, and commitment to professional growth.”

Murillo joined CareSouth Carolina in April 2025 and quickly made an impact through her outreach efforts, helping agricultural workers connect with essential healthcare services while building trust within the communities she serves.

CareSouth Carolina is a private, non-profit community health center delivering patient-centered health and life services in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. CareSouth Carolina operates centers in Bennettsville, Bishopville, Cheraw, Chesterfield, Dillon, Hartsville, Lake View, Latta, McColl and Society Hill.

Services provided by CareSouth Carolina include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, women's services, OB/GYN, HIV/AIDS primary care, infectious disease primary care, IV therapy, substance abuse prevention, dental, chiropractic services, pharmacy, senior support services, family support services, clinical counseling, laboratory, ultrasound, x-ray, agricultural worker health services, podiatry, and veterans’ choice provider.



CareSouth Carolina Welcomes Tabitha Hennagan to Full-Time Role at Latta Office

LATTA, S.C. — CareSouth Carolina is pleased to announce that Tabitha Hennagan, Ed.D., LPC, is now seeing patients full-time at the organization's Latta office, expanding access to behavioral health services for residents throughout Dillon County and the surrounding communities.

Hennagan joined the organization three and a half years ago as a School-Based Counselor, serving students at McColl Elementary Middle School, Blenheim Middle School of Discovery, and Bennettsville Primary School in Marlboro County.

A native of Latta, Hennagan said returning to serve her hometown community is especially meaningful.

"I am originally from Latta, so being able to come home and work with the community that has fostered my growth and development and to be able to give back to the community is a great honor," Hennagan said. "I am excited about helping people work toward reaching their goals and giving them the support that they need to surpass those goals."

Hennagan specializes in a patient-centered approach to care, emphasizing individualized treatment plans designed around each person's unique needs, strengths, and goals.

"I love working with patients to develop a care plan that fits their needs and growth potential versus placing everyone in the same structured mold," she said. "I believe that the more involved the person is in their treatment plan and direction, the better the possible outcome for the person's growth." Hennagan believes in the Integrated Behavioral Health Services model at CareSouth Carolina.

"I am an advocate for Integrated Behavioral Health Services because of the availability for staffing things under one roof, quicker service turnaround for the patient, familiar treatment team participants, and the ability to brainstorm with care providers who are familiar with the patient," she said. "These positives grant better opportunities for quality patient care and better outcomes for treatment for the whole patient."

Behavioral health services play a vital role in supporting overall wellness, and CareSouth Carolina remains committed to ensuring patients have access to comprehensive care close to home.

Outside of her work, Hennagan enjoys spending time with her family, reading, listening to music, traveling, and exploring new restaurants and cuisines.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the Town of Latta and to be available to the surrounding cities to support our continued community growth and fostering of behavior and mental health coping strategies," she said.

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Services provided by CareSouth Carolina include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, women's services, OB/GYN, HIV/AIDS primary care, infectious disease primary care, IV therapy, substance abuse prevention, dental, chiropractic services, pharmacy, senior support services, family support services, clinical counseling, laboratory, ultrasound, x-ray, agricultural worker health services, podiatry, and veterans' choice provider.



Carolina Health Centers' Employees Honored with Health Equity Service Award



Behavioral Health Navigator, and Alejandra Perez, Infectious Disease Care Navigator, for receiving the Health Equity Service Award from the Laurens County Prevention Coalition.

The Laurens County Prevention Coalition is a community-based partnership of local stakeholders dedicated to addiction prevention, intervention, and treatment throughout Laurens County. The coalition works collaboratively to improve the health and well-being of community members by addressing substance use challenges and promoting access to vital resources and support services.

Sandra and Alejandra were recognized for their exceptional outreach efforts and their commitment to connecting individuals and families with the care and resources they need. Their dedication reflects Carolina Health Centers' mission to improve health outcomes and expand access to quality healthcare services for all members of the community.

This award also highlights the significant impact Carolina Health Centers continues to make through community engagement, health education, and support services that promote health equity across Laurens County.

Congratulations to Sandra and Alejandra on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you for your continued service and commitment to improving lives in our community.



Cooperative Health

Outreach Team Connects Communities to Care Across the Midlands

The Cooperative Health Outreach Team has been busy throughout the Midlands, connecting residents with valuable health resources and helping eligible individuals access healthcare coverage. Through participation in community events, health fairs, and family-centered gatherings, the team continues to strengthen Cooperative Health's presence while educating community members about available services and Medicaid enrollment opportunities.

On June 13, Outreach and Enrollment Specialist Perry Gooden represented Cooperative Health at the Celebrate Juneteenth Parade in Winnsboro. With more than 250 attendees, the event provided an excellent opportunity to engage with community members and share information about Cooperative Health's comprehensive healthcare services.

Just one day earlier, despite soaring temperatures in Columbia, Outreach and Enrollment Specialist Nikki Washington joined more than 80 participants at the Columbia Police Department Block Event. Nikki connected with attendees and distributed information about Cooperative Health programs and services.

During the weekend of June 5, Perry Gooden and Nikki Washington attended the HIM – Stronger Men, Stronger Families, Stronger Communities Conference in Columbia. Held during Men's Health Month, the conference focused on promoting men's physical and emotional well-being while encouraging healthy lifestyles and stronger family connections.

Nikki continued her outreach efforts on June 9 at the Kickin' It with Dads Family Event hosted by Benedict College. The event celebrated fathers and families while providing access to community resources and support services.

Community Outreach Coordinator Yvonne Ware represented Cooperative Health at the Healthy Blue Spring Into Wellness Festival on May 29 at Trinity Baptist Church in Columbia. The well-attended event brought together families, healthcare organizations, and community partners for a day filled with health education, resource sharing, enrollment assistance, prizes, and fellowship.

The outreach team's community engagement efforts also included two additional Columbia-area events focused on connecting residents with health and wellness resources. Yvonne attended the Senior Strong: Health in MOTION event hosted by the Richland County Recreation Commission, where she engaged with approximately 100 attendees. The following day, Yvonne was joined by Marixsa Hernandez and Nikki Washington at the Wateree Community Actions Resource Fair, where they shared information about Cooperative Health's diverse healthcare offerings and community programs.

Through every event, the Cooperative Health Outreach Team remains committed to meeting people where they are, providing trusted health information, expanding access to care, and helping build healthier communities throughout the Midlands.



WELCOME

To Genesis Healthcare, Inc.

*Dental Services
Coming Soon*

Dharaben Gajjar, DDS

PEE DEE HEALTH CARE,
A DIVISION OF GENESIS HEALTHCARE

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DARLINGTON, SC 29532
843-393-7452





Pee Dee Health Care Expansion Moves Closer to Opening New Patient Services



With Phase 3 construction at Pee Dee Health Care now complete, preparations are officially underway to transition the new space into patient-ready operations. The team is beginning the process of moving furniture, medical equipment, and supplies into the expanded facility as the site moves toward opening.

This milestone marks an important step forward in enhancing care delivery for the community. The expanded location will feature upgraded medical equipment, additional parking to improve patient access and convenience, and a new dental practice office - broadening the range of services available under one roof.



The investment in this expansion reflects Genesis Healthcare's continued commitment to increasing access to high-quality, comprehensive healthcare. By strengthening infrastructure and expanding service capacity, Genesis Healthcare is responding to the growing and evolving needs of the communities it serves.

Once operational, the enhanced Pee Dee Health Care site will provide improved access, greater efficiency, and a more comfortable patient experience. Leaders anticipate that these improvements will have a lasting positive impact on the health and well-being of patients and families for years to come.

As the project moves into its final phase, excitement continues to build among staff and stakeholders eager to welcome patients into the new space.



Walterboro Family Care and Pediatrics Partners with LCAA Head Start for Transition Day



On May 15, 2026, Walterboro Family Care and Pediatrics partnered with LCAA Head Start for Transition Day, an event designed to support families and strengthen connections between healthcare, education, and community resources.

During the event, Syldra, a pharmacist with Professional Pharmacy of Walterboro, shared important health information with families and caregivers, helping to promote awareness of medication safety and wellness practices. In addition, Phillip Taylor of Genesis Healthcare delivered a presentation during the Parent Advisory Meeting, offering insight into available healthcare services and community-based support programs.

Families and Head Start staff also had the opportunity to tour Genesis Healthcare's mobile unit. The visit provided a closer look at how mobile healthcare services expand access to care and bring essential resources directly into the community.

The event served as a meaningful opportunity to engage with families, support early childhood transitions, and highlight the importance of accessible health education. By partnering with Head Start, Walterboro Family Care and Pediatrics continues to strengthen its commitment to supporting the health and well-being of children and families throughout the community.



Genesis Healthcare Partners with Manna House and MAP to Expand Access to Food and Preventive Care in Florence



On June 6, 2026, Genesis Healthcare partnered with Manna House and the Medical Access Program (MAP) to host a community outreach event in Florence aimed at improving access to both nutritious food and essential health services.

Held at Manna House, the event provided residents with a supportive, welcoming environment where they could receive a variety of fresh and healthy food items at little to no cost. Distribution included green beans, cranberries, bread, milk, and other nutritious staples designed to support overall wellness and food security.

In addition to food assistance, healthcare professionals offered preventive health services on-site, including blood pressure screenings, diabetes screenings, and other basic health assessments. These services supported early detection efforts and encouraged residents to take proactive steps toward managing their health.

Attendees also received educational health materials and resources to help them better understand chronic disease prevention, healthy lifestyle choices, and available community healthcare services.



Supporting Student Health: Genesis Healthcare and Lowcountry Pediatrics Champion Youth Athletics



Healthy lifestyle habits begin early in life, and Genesis Healthcare is committed to helping young people build a strong foundation for lifelong wellness. Through community partnerships, athletic sponsorships, and access to low-cost sports physicals, Genesis Healthcare continues to support programs that encourage students to stay active, healthy, and engaged.

As part of this ongoing commitment, the Lowcountry Pediatrics team was honored to participate in the Goose Creek Athletics Booster Club sponsorship check presentation. The event highlighted the strong community support behind local student-athletes and recognized the importance of investing in school athletic programs.

These partnerships play a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of students, coaches, and families. In addition to sponsorship efforts, Genesis Healthcare provides access to affordable sports physicals, helping ensure that students are medically cleared to participate in athletic activities safely and confidently.

The collaboration between Genesis Healthcare and Manna House reflects a long-standing partnership rooted in a shared commitment to addressing food insecurity and reducing healthcare disparities throughout Florence and the greater Pee Dee region. By working together, the organizations continue to connect residents with critical resources that support both immediate needs and long-term wellness.

This joint effort demonstrates the power of community partnerships in expanding access to care. Through the combined efforts of Genesis Healthcare, Manna House, and MAP, residents are given meaningful opportunities to improve their health outcomes in a supportive and accessible setting. Together, these organizations remain committed to building a healthier, stronger community—one event, one family, and one individual at a time.





Family Health Centers, Inc. Proudly Announces Dr. Caleb Rich as Recipient of the 2026 Pharmacist of the Year Award



Family Health Centers, Inc. is proud to announce that Dr. Caleb Rich, Clinical Pharmacist and Diabetes Educator, has been honored with the prestigious 2026 Pharmacist of the Year Award among pharmacists serving South Carolina's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

Dr. Rich received this distinguished recognition during the 2026 South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Clinical Network Retreat, held June 12–14, 2026, at the Charleston Marriott Hotel in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Pharmacist of the Year Award recognizes a pharmacist who has demonstrated exceptional dedication and excellence in a community-based healthcare setting. This honor celebrates outstanding contributions in patient care, innovation, leadership, collaboration, and mentorship, as well as a commitment to advancing the pharmacy profession and improving the health and well-being of the communities served.

Through his passion for patient-centered care, expertise in diabetes management, and unwavering commitment to improving health outcomes, Dr. Rich has made a significant impact on the lives of countless patients throughout our service area. His leadership and dedication exemplify the mission and values of Family Health Centers, Inc.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Caleb Rich on this remarkable achievement and well-deserved recognition. We are honored to have him as a member of the Family Health Centers, Inc. team and celebrate this outstanding accomplishment.

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Family Health Centers, Inc. Welcomes Joy McDonald, FNP-BC, to Its Healthcare Team



Family Health Centers, Inc. is pleased to announce the addition of Joy McDonald, FNP-BC, a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, to its team of healthcare professionals. Mrs. McDonald will provide comprehensive primary care services at the Community Medical Center in Vance, South Carolina, and the St. George Medical Center in St. George, South Carolina.

Mrs. McDonald brings a wealth of clinical knowledge and experience to Family Health Centers, Inc., with a background in pulmonary and critical care, the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), community health, family medicine, and urgent care. Her diverse experience enhances the organization's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality healthcare services to patients throughout the communities it serves.

Mrs. McDonald completed her Family Nurse Practitioner education through Herzing University and gained extensive clinical training through rotations in urgent care settings in both Florida and South Carolina, as well as in direct primary care, pediatrics, and women's health. Her broad clinical experience enables her to provide comprehensive care to patients across all stages of life.

Committed to maintaining the highest standards of patient care, Mrs. McDonald holds certifications in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS). She is also an active member of the South Carolina Nurses Association (SCNA) and the American Nurses Association (ANA).

As a healthcare provider, Mrs. McDonald is passionate about delivering patient-centered care through preventive medicine, shared decision-making, and a holistic approach to health and wellness. She is dedicated to building meaningful relationships with her patients and empowering them to take an active role in managing their health.

"We are excited to welcome Joy McDonald to the Family Health Centers, Inc. family," said Dr. Ernest "Stan" Wardlaw, Chief Executive Officer of Family Health Centers, Inc. "Her clinical expertise, compassionate approach to patient care, and commitment to improving health outcomes make her an outstanding addition to our healthcare team. We are confident that she will have a positive impact on the lives of our patients and the communities we serve."

Outside of her professional responsibilities, Mrs. McDonald enjoys jogging, reading, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

By supporting youth sports and wellness initiatives, Genesis Healthcare and Lowcountry Pediatrics are helping to strengthen the connection between healthcare and community life. These efforts reflect a shared commitment to promoting healthy habits, encouraging active lifestyles, and supporting the success of local students both on and off the field.

Together, we are proud to invest in the next generation—building healthier communities through teamwork, prevention, and care.





Health Care Partners OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Health Care Partners of South Carolina Serves as Healthcare Sponsor for 3rd Annual Brighter Days Conference



In late May, Health Care Partners of South Carolina had the privilege of serving as a Healthcare Sponsor for the 3rd Annual Brighter Days Conference, hosted by The Jonathan Foundation. The event brought together educators, faith leaders, first responders, healthcare professionals, and community advocates, all united around a shared goal: building brighter days for our community.

Our Outreach Team, alongside Behavioral Health Provider Kristen Mottey, LISW-CP, was honored to take part in meaningful conversations centered on mental health, brain health, family support, and suicide prevention. These discussions reflected the spirit of the conference and reinforced the importance of community-wide collaboration on these critical topics.

At HCPSC, we believe that whole-person care extends beyond the walls of our exam rooms and into the communities we serve. Participating in events like this one is a powerful reminder of why this work matters every day.

We extend our gratitude to The Jonathan Foundation for creating a space where real conversations happen and real hope is restored. Brighter days truly are ahead.



Health Care Partners OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Health Care Partners of South Carolina Hosts Men's Health in Action: Community Wellness Fair



In recognition of Men's Health Month, Health Care Partners of South Carolina hosted its first Men's Health in Action: Community Wellness Fair at our Marion location, bringing education, resources, and meaningful conversation directly to the men of our community.

The turnout exceeded our expectations. Attendees toured our Marion office, connected one-on-one with our providers, scheduled appointments, received blood pressure screenings, and enjoyed food and fellowship throughout the day. Dr. Barry Bodie, M.D., a urologist with MUSC Health, served as our featured guest speaker

and delivered a message that resonated deeply with everyone in the room.

This event was made possible through collaboration with our partners at the South Carolina Cancer Alliance, along with sponsorship support from Molina Healthcare and Healthy Blue. SCState 1890 Research & Extension led engaging cooking demonstrations, and we were honored to be joined by HCPSC Board Members Georgette Washington and Yvonne Davis, Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, Councilman Fred Gause, the Marion Fire Department, and the SC Department of Environmental Services.

Under the leadership of our CEO, Santina Mayo, HCPSC remains committed to bringing meaningful health resources directly to the communities we serve — meeting people where they are and making preventive care more accessible. This event was an encouraging reminder of what's possible when community partners come together around a shared goal.



Health Care Partners of South Carolina Hosts Mental Health Lunch & Learn



In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, Health Care Partners of South Carolina hosted a free Mental Health Lunch & Learn at our Conway Auditorium on Friday, May 22, 2026. The event was sponsored by Humana and open to the community, offering free health screenings alongside expert insight and meaningful conversation.

Our own Edith Bostic, PMHNP, led an engaging discussion on grief, depression, and anxiety — topics that matter deeply and often go unaddressed. Attendees traveled near and far to take part, and the turnout reflected just how much this kind of open conversation is needed in our community.



We are grateful to Humana for making this event possible, and to Edith for her thoughtful leadership in guiding such an important discussion. At HCPSC, we recognize that mental health is just as essential as physical health, and events like this one reflect our continued commitment to whole-person care.

HOPEHEALTH HOSTED BRINNER FEATURING SELLERS BROTHERS, TOMMY SUGGS TO BENEFIT COMPASSIONATE CARE FUND



FLORENCE, S.C. (June 11, 2026) – HopeHealth hosted a special evening of food, football talk, and community impact at its third-annual Brinner on June 4 at the Florence Country Club. This breakfast-for-dinner fundraising event featured Gamecock greats LaNorris Sellers, Jayden Sellers, and Tommy Suggs.

The evening began with a private VIP hour for event sponsors featuring all three special guests. Attendees took photos and interacted with LaNorris (USC quarterback) and Jayden (USC wide receiver), while swapping stories with Tommy Suggs, a legendary sports commentator and USC quarterback (1968-1970).

Guests then enjoyed their meals while listening to an engaging Q&A panel moderated by Suggs, who opened by admitting that while much has changed with college football since his time as quarterback, he greatly admires the Sellers brothers for their skill set and athletic performance.

Suggs also acknowledged Florence’s unique positioning as a health care hub and hometown to the Sellers brothers. LaNorris and Jayden emphasized Florence’s value as their home base, noting that much of what they learned growing up has helped them succeed today. LaNorris shared, “To have a room full of supporters at this event tonight, it’s just a testament to the love from our community.”

On the success of their partnership with HopeHealth and what it means to them, both brothers emphasized HopeHealth’s community impact. LaNorris shared, “HopeHealth has helped me be healthy from childhood until today. It’s always great to give back to them, after all they’ve done for me.” Jayden echoed this sentiment, saying, “They give back to the community, they help people who truly need it. They also helped us a lot growing up, so I want to repay that now.”

The HopeHealth partnership is a natural one, as overall health matters a lot to the brothers. They discussed strength and conditioning, the intensity of game play, and the importance of being at their best for the upcoming season. Jayden stated, “I just want the ball to be in my hands,” while LaNorris shared, “Whatever it takes, I’ll do it.”

As the event concluded, guests were guided to a meet-and-greet and photo opportunity with LaNorris and Jayden. This unique community event was centered on family, leadership, and giving back, with a focus on supporting HopeHealth’s mission to improve access to quality primary and specialty care across the Pee Dee and beyond.

The event was co-presented by McLeod Health and MUSC Florence Division. Additional key sponsors of the event include Chronic Care Staffing, HUB, Molina, Carrington Wingard, and Jennifer McKay.

Event proceeds benefit the HopeHealth Compassionate Care Fund, which helps provide essential health care services and support for patients facing financial hardship and barriers to care. This support includes preventive health screenings, emergency assistance, and more.

HopeHealth is a nonprofit leader in providing affordable, expert primary and specialty health care services for all ages in Florence, Aiken (Infectious Diseases), Clarendon, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg Counties. Our federally qualified health centers are the health care home of choice for nearly 85,000 patients. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414 or visit hope-health.org.

HOPEHEALTH WELCOMES NEW PROVIDER



FLORENCE, S.C. (June 1, 2026) – HopeHealth welcomes Stuart Powell, DNP, FNP-C, to HopeHealth.

Stuart Powell, DNP, FNP-C, is a nurse practitioner at the Lake City School-Based Clinic located at Lake City High School. The center provides primary and behavioral health care to students, teachers, and staff of the Florence District 3 Schools.

Additionally, she serves in the Department of Senior Health, providing annual wellness visits to HopeHealth patients in the Clarendon and Williamsburg area. These encounters offer Medicare patients an assessment of physical and cognitive health, and afford an opportunity to update immunizations, screening tests, and other preventive services.

She completed an Associate of Science degree in nursing at Horry Georgetown Technical College in Georgetown, South Carolina, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Chamberlain College of Nursing in Addison, Illinois, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from The Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina.

Her clinical interests are family medicine and disease prevention. She is a member of the South Carolina Nurses Association, American Nurses Association, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. She is also actively involved in her church and the Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

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NHFHS Celebrates the Opening of New Clinic



After YEARS of planning, perseverance, and overcoming numerous challenges - including shipping delays, government shutdowns, and inclement weather - New Horizon Family Health Services (NHFHS) is now open in the Berea community of Greenville, and we celebrated on June 5 with a ribbon cutting ceremony! The opening of our new Berea clinic marks an exciting milestone for NHFHS. More than just a new facility, this expansion represents our continued commitment to increasing access to quality, affordable healthcare and strengthening the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

This achievement was made possible through the dedication and support of many individuals and organizations. We extend our sincere gratitude to our Board of Directors, leadership team, staff, community partners, contractors, vendors, and supporters whose vision, hard work, and collaboration helped bring this project to life.



As we celebrate this accomplishment, we also recognize those whose contributions helped shape this journey, including our former President and CEO, Regina M. Mitchell, and our late Chief Operating Officer, Stephen Williams. Their leadership, commitment, and passion for serving others helped lay the foundation for this important expansion and continue to inspire our work today.

The new Berea clinic reflects our mission to provide compassionate, quality care close to home. From our medical and pharmacy teams to the many staff members who worked behind the scenes, this facility stands as a testament to what can be accomplished when a community comes together with a shared purpose.

“This facility represents hope, opportunity, and our unwavering commitment to improving community health,” said Brandon Gaffney, President and CEO of New Horizon Family Health Services. “We are grateful to everyone who helped make this vision a reality, and we look forward to serving the Berea community for many years to come.”





NHFHS To Host Community Health Summit



Recent community data revealed a concerning reality: only about 30% of individuals who could benefit from healthcare services are currently connected to care, even when accounting for outreach efforts by Managed Care Organizations. This means that many of our neighbors who have health coverage are still missing out on essential medical care, benefits, and support services that can improve their health and well-being.

To help address this gap, New Horizon Family Health Services (NHFHS) is hosting a Community Health Summit designed to reach individuals who are not yet engaged in routine healthcare. The event will serve as an entry point into the healthcare system while connecting attendees with a wide range of community resources and supportive services.

Upstate residents are invited to attend this free day of health, wellness, and community connection. The Community Health Summit will bring together healthcare professionals, local organizations, and valuable resources to help individuals and families access the care and support they need to live healthier lives. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about available services, connect with providers and community partners, and discover resources available right here in their own neighborhoods.

The event will take place on Saturday, August 1, at McAlister Square in Greenville. New Horizon is honored to lead the effort in organizing this important community event and bring together agencies and organizations committed to improving health outcomes across the Upstate.

We encourage community members, families, and individuals seeking health resources to join us for this impactful day of education, engagement, and support.



RHS WELCOMES OUR NEW CEO!

KEN BRINGS MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE TO RHS, INCLUDING OVER 10 YEARS AT HOPEHEALTH, INC., WHICH IS A FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA. AT HOPEHEALTH, KEN SERVED AS CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER, LEADING OVER 20 CARE LOCATIONS SERVING 60,000 ANNUAL PATIENTS THROUGH 275,000 PATIENT ENCOUNTERS. KEN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR FOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECT REPORTS AND 350 EMPLOYEES. PRIOR TO BECOMING COO, HE SERVED AS CHIEF PERFORMANCE OFFICER, LEADING ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AT HOPEHEALTH.

IN HIS NEW ROLE, KEN WILL PROVIDE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT FOR RHS BY ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY PATIENT CARE, REGULATORY COMPLIANCE, AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE. KEN WILL OVERSEE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE, DAILY OPERATIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING WHILE CONTINUING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE ACROSS AIKEN COUNTY AND THE RHS SERVICE AREA.

KEN COMPLETED UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES IN URBAN PLANNING AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY AND RECEIVED HEALTHCARE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING FROM THE HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH. HE IS AN ALUMNUS OF BOTH LEADERSHIP SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY FRED R. SHEHEEN NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AND SERVES AS A FACULTY MEMBER FOR FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS'S CERTIFICATE IN EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM. A DEDICATED COMMUNITY LEADER, KEN HAS SERVED ON THE BOARDS OF THE FMU SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, GREATER FLORENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, YMCA, AND KIWANIS.

KEN AND HIS WIFE, TAMMY, HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 32 YEARS AND HAVE TWO CHILDREN AND SIX GRANDCHILDREN. KEN AND TAMMY LOOK FORWARD TO BECOMING PART OF THE AIKEN COMMUNITY.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NURSE OF THE YEAR!



KIMYA JUSTICE
CNRO

RURAL HEALTH SERVICES IS PROUD TO CELEBRATE KIMYA JUSTICE, CHIEF OF NURSING AND RISK MANAGEMENT OFFICER, ON BEING RECOGNIZED AS NURSE OF THE YEAR.

KIMYA'S LEADERSHIP, DEDICATION, AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE HAVE MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON OUR PATIENTS, STAFF, AND ORGANIZATION. SHE LEADS WITH COMPASSION, INTEGRITY, AND A GENUINE PASSION FOR NURSING, INSPIRING THOSE AROUND HER EVERY DAY. THROUGH HER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT, SHE HAS HELPED FOSTER A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION, QUALITY CARE, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACROSS OUR CLINICAL TEAMS.

WE ARE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF THIS WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION AND GRATEFUL TO HAVE KIMYA AS PART OF THE RURAL HEALTH SERVICES FAMILY. CONGRATULATIONS, KIMYA, AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO!



Rural Health Services Launches Reentry Healthcare Partnership with Aiken County Detention Center

AIKEN, S.C. (May 12, 2026) – Rural Health Services (RHS), a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), is partnering with the Aiken County Detention Center (ACDC) to link justice-involved individuals to primary healthcare services upon community reentry. This new initiative, which is named “Project Connect,” aims to ensure that individuals with chronic conditions continue to receive medical care post-incarceration.

The initial weeks and months after incarceration are recognized as a vulnerable period for individuals returning to the community, especially for those with chronic conditions. Many persons taking medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, or other conditions find that they are now uninsured, without an established healthcare provider, and/or without their medications. These concerns are also sidelined as recently released individuals must contend with navigating housing, transportation, and economic opportunities.

The RHS-ACDC partnership seeks to bridge this gap by linking persons to care immediately following release. Through collaboration with ACDC staff, individuals will complete RHS intake paperwork prior to release. When an anticipated release date is identified, the individual will be scheduled for a transitional care appointment with a primary care provider within seven to fourteen days after release.

“The transition from incarceration to community reentry is a critical period in terms of health outcomes,” said Grayson Ross, RHS’s Project Coordinator for this initiative. “Project Connect helps ensure individuals do not fall through the cracks when it comes to medications, chronic disease management, and access to primary care. We’re happy to partner with the Aiken County Detention Center to support healthier reentry and stronger community health overall.”

About Rural Health Services

For more than five decades, RHS has delivered a diverse range of primary and preventive healthcare services to the residents of Aiken County and its neighboring regions. Operating as a private, non-profit, Federally Qualified Health Center, RHS provides culturally sensitive, inclusive primary care, preventive, and supplementary healthcare services to all.

For more information, please visit our website www.ruralhs.org.

Coffee and Communication



Community health centers play a vital role in delivering accessible, equitable, and comprehensive healthcare to diverse populations. At the heart of this mission is patient-centered communication - a care approach that prioritizes understanding, respect, and collaboration between healthcare providers and patients.

Patient-centered communication goes beyond simply sharing medical information. It involves actively listening to patients, recognizing their individual needs and preferences, and engaging them as partners in their healthcare journey. When providers communicate with empathy and clarity, patients are more likely to feel heard, valued, and empowered to participate in decisions about their care.

Why Patient-Centered Communication Matters

Many patients served by community health centers face barriers that can affect their health outcomes, including language differences, limited health literacy, transportation challenges, financial constraints, and social determinants of health. Effective communication helps bridge these gaps by ensuring that patients understand their diagnoses, treatment options, and preventive care recommendations.

Research consistently shows that strong provider-patient communication can lead to:

- Improved patient satisfaction and trust
- Better adherence to treatment plans and medications
- Enhanced health outcomes and disease management
- Reduced healthcare disparities
- Increased patient engagement in preventive care

When patients feel respected and understood, they are more likely to share important information about their symptoms, concerns, and circumstances, allowing providers to deliver more accurate and personalized care.

Key Elements of Patient-Centered Communication

Successful patient-centered communication includes several essential practices:

Active Listening

Providers should give patients the opportunity to express their concerns without interruption. Listening attentively helps uncover underlying issues and demonstrates genuine respect for the patient's perspective.

Clear and Understandable Language

Medical terminology can be confusing. Using plain language, visual aids, and teach-back methods helps ensure patients understand critical health information.

Cultural Humility and Sensitivity

Community health centers serve individuals from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Recognizing and respecting these differences strengthens relationships and supports more effective care.

Shared Decision-Making

Patients should be encouraged to participate in decisions about their treatment and care plans. Collaborative discussions help align medical recommendations with patients' values, goals, and circumstances.

Empathy and Compassion

Simple acts of empathy can have a significant impact on patient experiences. Acknowledging concerns, validating emotions, and demonstrating compassion foster trust and strengthen the therapeutic relationship.

Building Stronger Communities Through Communication

Patient-centered communication is not only beneficial for individual patients—it also supports healthier communities. By creating positive healthcare experiences, community health centers can increase patient retention, improve preventive care utilization, and build lasting trust within the populations they serve.

As healthcare continues to evolve, community health centers remain uniquely positioned to lead the way in delivering compassionate, patient-centered care. Investing in communication skills, cultural competence, and patient engagement strategies helps ensure that every patient receives care that is respectful, responsive, and aligned with their needs.

By making patient-centered communication a priority, community health centers can continue to fulfill their mission of improving health outcomes and advancing health equity for all.

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