

# The Impact of Federal Support on Pediatric Behavioral Health in Delaware

Nemours Children's Health is committed to addressing the mental health crisis impacting our nation's children and youth. We provide a range of services to address the mental, emotional and behavioral health needs of patients who come to us for care. Nemours Children's has received federal support that enables several training programs and services across our Delaware practices to help build the behavioral health workforce to meet the needs of our patients and families. Four of these programs are described below.

## Innovative Mental Health Pathways for Adolescent and Child Therapists (IMPACT) Program

In September 2023, Nemours Children's began implementation of a one-year, congressionally directed spending award of \$1.5 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to better respond to the urgent need for increased access to behavioral health services. The Innovative Mental Health Pathways for Adolescent and Child Therapists (IMPACT) program is helping to address mental and behavioral health workforce shortages impacting the state of Delaware. The program supports Master's-level trained social workers and counselors by providing them with specialized training and supervision to obtain clinical licensure to meet the mental health needs of youth.

Eight fellows participate in a two-year program, receiving supervision while carrying a caseload of 20-25 patients in outpatient, primary care, group and hospital-based settings. Trainees gain experience through rotations in early childhood assessment and treatment, brief intervention for anxiety and depression, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, integrated primary care, and dialectical behavior therapy. Nemours Children's will support program operation costs during the second year of the fellowship and will help prepare fellows for their licensure exams.



[Learn more from one of the fellows about the impact of this program.](#)

## HRSA Advanced Nursing Education - Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Program

In August 2023, Nemours Children's received a four-year \$2.4 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) through the Advanced Nursing Education - Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship (ANE-NPRF) funding opportunity. The grant will increase the number of trained advanced practice nurses in primary care and address the lack of accessible youth behavioral and mental health care services across Delaware. This funding will directly support four pediatric primary care nurse practitioner fellows each year for a total of 16 across the four years. Fellows receive extensive training in specialized behavioral and mental health care, as well as general pediatrics, allowing them to integrate early diagnosis and intervention of mental health problems in the primary care setting.



Well Beyond Medicine



## HRSA Advanced Nursing Education – Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Program (continued)

This grant supports the continuation of a program launched in 2017 to increase the number of primary care nurse practitioners in community settings, including rural and underserved areas of Delaware. Fellows have the opportunity to train with our primary care teams, including nurses, pediatricians and psychologists, as well as with our community network of psychologists. The grant has ignited an academic partnership with the University of Delaware Psychology Department, Center for Community Training, Evaluation and Collaboration, and Thomas Jefferson University's

College of Nursing. The goal of the program is to effectively prepare nurse practitioners for the next phase of their career and improve access to behavioral and mental health care options for children and youth in Delaware.



[Learn more from one of the fellows about the impact of this program.](#)



---

## Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND)/Swank Autism Center

The Swank Autism Center conducts patient-centered clinical services, training and research; builds community partnerships; and promotes the inclusion and career growth of people with autism. The Center's staff includes psychologists, developmental pediatricians, social workers, behavior analysts, speech pathologists, nutritionists, neurologists and gastrointestinal specialists, all of whom use a strengths-based, family-centered approach to create a customized care plan that addresses the most critical needs of the patient. In 2023, the Swank Autism Center saw 5,948 patients and provided autism-specific training to more than 2,000 Nemours Children's associates through the Autism Friendly Hospital Initiative.

The Swank Autism Center receives federal support through the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Other Related Disabilities (LEND) grant, a renewable 5-year grant from HRSA, which is funded by the Autism Cares Act. The LEND program, a partnership between the University of Delaware and Nemours Children's, provides immersive training for early career professionals and community members on patient-centered care, interdisciplinary practice, and cultural humility.

---

## HRSA Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) and Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Programs

Since 2002, we have received over \$4.3 million in continuous funding from HRSA for the Graduate Psychology Education (GPE) and Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Programs to increase the number of behavioral health professionals and improve the distribution of and access to a culturally responsive behavioral health workforce. Federal funding from these mechanisms has supported the development and growth of the Integrated Behavioral Health and Child Clinical and Community Tracks of our APA-approved psychology internship program. Nemours Children's collaborated with Delaware State University's Social Work program to establish a social work training partnership with two other community partners to provide placements for additional social work interns over the funding cycle. We intend to expand our Academic General Pediatrics Fellowship in Behavioral Pediatrics through the support of this grant.

These training programs have also led to the development of a bilingual training initiative that includes applied clinical training and didactic training for bilingual Spanish-English clinicians. Since 2016, 17 bilingual clinicians have enrolled in the training program and currently 5 of these trainees have remained at Nemours Children's as attending psychologists providing supervision, training and clinical care to Spanish-speaking families in the Delaware Valley.