



# 3-minute case study: Back-to-school preventive care

By Olivia Rybolt | August 1, 2018

## The problem

As summer comes to an end, back-to-school physicals and immunizations are often delayed or missed due to family schedules and limited appointment availability – and children arrive for the first day of school with gaps in preventive care. The problem is particularly acute in rural regions, where rates for certain childhood vaccines lag compared to urban centers.

## The solution

Horizon Health, which encompasses a network of primary care clinics and the Paris Community Hospital in eastern Illinois, planned a party to solve the problem. Launched in 2015, the Back-to-School Bang is held on a Saturday in August at the Horizon Health Paris Clinic. A day-long health and wellness expo, it is open to all children in surrounding communities.

Drawn by face painting, a bounce house, giveaways from local businesses, rides in the hospital's helicopter, and free backpacks full of school supplies, families can have their children's annual and sports physicals, immunizations, and free dental and eye exams all done at once. They leave with completed health status paperwork for the school system and gaps in care closed.

Staff also help sign up families for the patient portal and offer car seat inspections. CPR lessons, displays on the quantity of sugar in a soft drink, substance abuse, and the lungs of a "smoking pig" round out the expo. "We borrow it from one of the community colleges," says Erin Frank, director of marketing for Horizon Health. "There's a healthy pig lung and the lung of a pig that smoked. And there's a foot pedal so you can inflate it and deflate it. It's so cool."

Frank says the key to the event's success lies in "making it a community event, not just our event." Junior high school cheerleaders do face painting, local businesses donate supplies – McDonald's even promotes the event at its local franchises prior to the big day.

## The outcome

Now in its fourth year of hosting the Back-to-School Bang, Horizon Health welcomed more than 250 children and families in 2017, with more 60 children brought fully up to date on their vaccinations. And every family from surrounding communities that attends leaves with a deeper connection to Horizon Health and its services.

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