

OnMed CARE ST

AUBURN UNIVERSITY RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

2024 IMPACT REPORT





OUR MISSION

Increase healthcare access and improve health outcomes throughout Rural Alabama while providing impactful experiences for students in health-related fields through unequalled collaboration among resources of Auburn University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), and Alabama communities.

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

In 2024, Auburn University's Rural Health Initiative made significant strides in enhancing healthcare access in rural Alabama. **We established four new health and wellness centers with OnMed CareStations, supporting over 3,400 neighbors through personalized health services.** Our success is deeply rooted in robust partnerships such as those with the **University of West Alabama and local governments.** Community, faculty, staff, and students' engagement highlight our commitment to community-driven healthcare solutions, prioritizing local needs and empowering residents.

We are honored to engage in work that exemplifies Auburn University's Creed: **"I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all."**

I am deeply touched to work with this mission-driven team.

War Eagle!



Assistant Vice President for University Outreach & Public Service

"This work is a testament to the power of outreach and the impact we can achieve when we come together to serve."

*Dr. Royrickers Cook, Vice President for
University Outreach & Associate Provost*

"Alabama Extension's collaboration with the Rural Health Initiative embodies our work to provide research based programs and foster engagement that improves the quality of life and economic well-being for our rural communities."

*Dr. Mike Phillips, Director
Alabama Cooperative Extension System*



COMMUNITY IMPACT

187
COMMUNITY
EVENTS



25
HEALTH
AMBASSADORS

1207
ONMED CONSULTS

"It was an awesome experience and I've been talking about it ever since!"

GERALDINE WALTON
Greene County

"This can really be a blessing being out here in this isolated area. So, it's very good and things are looking up around Gainesville."

MS. BERTHA
Sumter County



OF PATIENTS SAID THEIR
HEALTH NEEDS WERE MET
WELL OR VERY WELL

"I would have gone to the ER today if I hadn't found this amazing place."

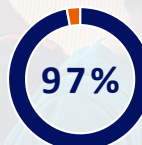
COMMUNITY MEMBER
Chambers County



RECEIVED INFO THEY
WOULDN'T HAVE
OTHERWISE RECEIVED

"I just felt safe, and I felt like this machine is really doing its job."

MAYOR HATTIE SAMUELS
Greene County



FELT CONFIDENT USING
THE CARESTATION

"I love how it's easily accessible and of course I love everything that can be free to us."

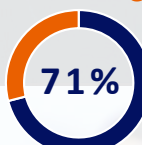
KAITLYN WILLIAMS
Hale County



SAID THAT THE
CARESTATION WAS PRIVATE
& EASILY ACCESSIBLE

"I have encouraged all my friends, neighbors and colleagues to go."

DORI HARMON
Chambers County



HEARD ABOUT THE
STATION FROM A FRIEND
OR FAMILY MEMBER

N = 127



EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH & EDUCATION

HARRISON COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Directly improves public health by hosting **vaccine clinics** that increase immunization rates, offering **health insurance assistance** through the AU-SHIP partnership to ensure more people are covered, and assisting in **primary care clinics** that provide access to necessary healthcare.

COLLEGE OF NURSING

Strengthens community health by offering **primary care clinics** that cater to underserved populations. Their focus on **maternal health education** ensures mothers have the tools to lead healthy pregnancies, while their **asthma management education and screenings** help individuals better manage respiratory conditions, improving overall health outcomes.

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH, LANGUAGE, & HEARING SCIENCES

Positively impacts those with communication and hearing difficulties, providing **screenings and therapy sessions** that help individuals improve their quality of life. This allows them to thrive in social, educational, and work environments, fostering inclusion in the community

SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY

Supports cardiovascular health through **weekly screenings and research** that educates individuals about prevention. Their **physical exams** also help detect early signs of health issues, empowering people to take control of their well-being.

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, & COUNSELING

Improves mental health awareness by providing essential **education and resources for school nurses**. This helps ensure that students receive better support for emotional and mental well-being, creating healthier and more supportive learning environments.

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Enhances community support by offering valuable **community resource information**. This connects individuals to the help they need, whether in terms of social services, mental health, or community based programs, ensuring no one is left behind.

DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

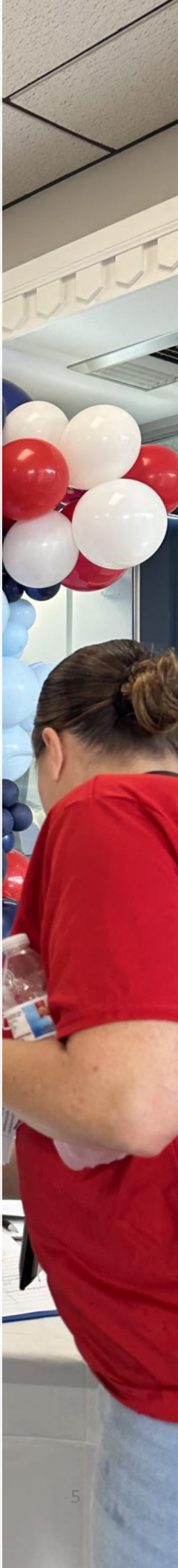
Promotes healthier eating habits through **cooking demonstrations and nutritional consultations**, empowering individuals and families to make informed food choices that improve their long-term health and reduce chronic disease.

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

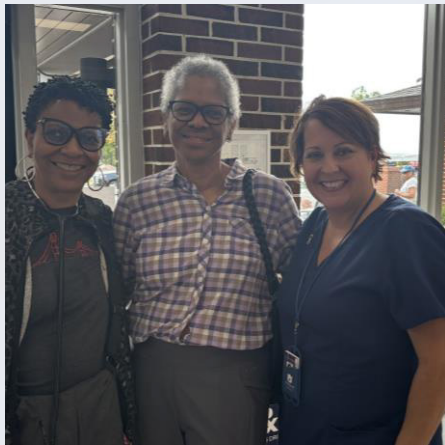
Plays a crucial role in reducing health disparities by providing **STI & syphilis testing, sexual health education, and breast & cervical cancer screenings via the mammogram bus**. These initiatives increase access to critical screenings and education, preventing disease and saving lives.

EDWARD VIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (VCOM)

Fosters new generation of healthcare professionals who are trained to work collaboratively. Through **clinical rotations and interprofessional education days with AU Nursing, Pharmacy, Nutrition, and Social Work**, students gain hands-on experience, improving the quality of healthcare available and ensuring a better-prepared health care work force for the future.



FACULTY & STAFF ENGAGEMENT



LINDA GIBSON-YOUNG | COLLEGE OF NURSING
Lazenby Endowed Professor, Outreach Coordinator

“This experience has shaped my journey as a nurse and family nurse practitioner by highlighting the challenges rural communities face. My role has been strengthened as an **advocate, educator, and leader in advancing health equity**. Together with clinicians & students, we have **seen over 100 patients** and connected with other disciplines, fostering community ties.”



ERIN REYNOLDS-PEACOCK | COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Clinical Lecturer, Clinical Experience Coordinator

“Audiology was able to provide some level of care for at least **150 people in Chambers County**. This provided students the opportunity to learn from direct patient contact and gave them the chance to improve their clinical skills from case history through counseling. Students value the learning experience offered and **love being a part of the community there.**”



10 COLLEGES HAVE BEEN ENGAGED



Faculty play a vital role in driving our work, bringing their expertise to rural communities through **teaching, research, and service**.

Aligned with **Auburn University's strategic plan, Grounded and Groundbreaking**, their **catalytic engagement** fosters sustainable partnerships that increase healthcare access and health education. By collaborating across disciplines, faculty drive **student-led initiatives and community education**, ensuring lasting impact in underserved areas.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2035
GROUND&ED
GROUNDBREAKING

GOAL #4 CATALYTIC ENGAGEMENT

"We will be a premier resource for providing impactful solutions to social, health, technological, economic, and environmental challenges through our deep bench of subject matter expertise and our far-reaching network of extension assets."

STUDENT SUCCESS

190

AU STUDENT
ENGAGEMENTS

3250+

HOURS COMPLETED

61

NON-AUBURN
STUDENT
ENGAGEMENTS

22

RURAL HEALTH
LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS

"My experience at Chambers County was **eye-opening and transformative**. It allowed me to see the work Auburn is doing for rural America by providing healthcare for individuals who would otherwise struggle with access."

MADELINE WILLIAMS
M.S. in Speech Language Pathology



"During my time in LaFayette, I have **screened and referred over 100 patients**, which eventually led to new hearing aid users. My goal was to make a meaningful impact in a place that deserved it, and I feel like I **accomplished that**. My future hopes are to work in a private practice that allows me to continue to provide prevention services and education about hearing loss."

LEXY BARRAZA
Doctor of Audiology



"For me, **joining the Rural Health Initiative was the best thing I have ever done**. I've learned a variety of skills, gained cultural awareness, and seen how the current healthcare system tends to leave many behind. I've **become dedicated to improving the lives of those who are commonly overlooked**, and I now strive to work in public health."

MIKAILIE CAULDER
B.S. in Genetics and Public Health



"Regardless of location or socioeconomic status, women share everyday experiences and aspirations. Bonding over our shared hopes and dreams, **I was inspired to further advocate for women's health and well-being**. I have learned how many health disparities, social inequities and a lack of health education affect women, especially young women."

SARAH PUTZER CONTROY
M.S. in Nursing





"I have been very privileged to have access to and autonomy over my experiences at the Community Health and Wellness Center. My perspective has changed in part through engaging with community members at the center and learning how crucial its services are. My passion for rural health has been driven by my mentor's line of research, and due to my experience at the center, I feel a true calling to continue serving rural communities in any way possible."

ZACH HUTCHISON
Doctor of Kinesiology (Ph.D.)



"Initially I never really understood how health disparities affected rural populations; however, Chambers truly opened my eyes of how several different factors can affect health outcomes."

MICHAEL GIORDANI
B.S. in Biomedical Sciences



"Not only has this initiative expanded my understanding of the social determinants of health but it also underscored the power of culturally sensitive, community-driven solutions. My involvement has fueled my commitment to addressing and dismantling systemic barriers and improving health outcomes for all vulnerable populations. This experience has solidified my dedication to pursuing a master's degree and career in Public Health."

MELISSA GARNES
B.S. in Human Development & Family Science



"My experience has not only strengthened my commitment to bridging gaps in mental health but has also inspired me to focus my career as a clinical mental health counselor on advocating for and providing better resources for those who need them most."

ANNA BETH GANDY
M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

STUDENT LED INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY GARDEN

MICRO FOOD PANTRY

TREE OF GIVING

MATERNITY CLOSET

THE DONATED AID PROJECT

HEART HEALTHY
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

PERIOD POVERTY IN
HIGH SCHOOL FEMALES

WALK & TALK FOR YOUTH

NUTRITION COOKING
DEMONSTRATIONS

BLOOD PRESSURE & DAILY
MANAGEMENT

EXPLORING EASY LIFESTYLE
CHANGES CARDIOVASCULAR

THE PERIOD PANTRY

CHURCH CONGREGATION HEALTH
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

VACCINE ADMINISTRATION

AU RURAL HEALTH
AMBASSADORS

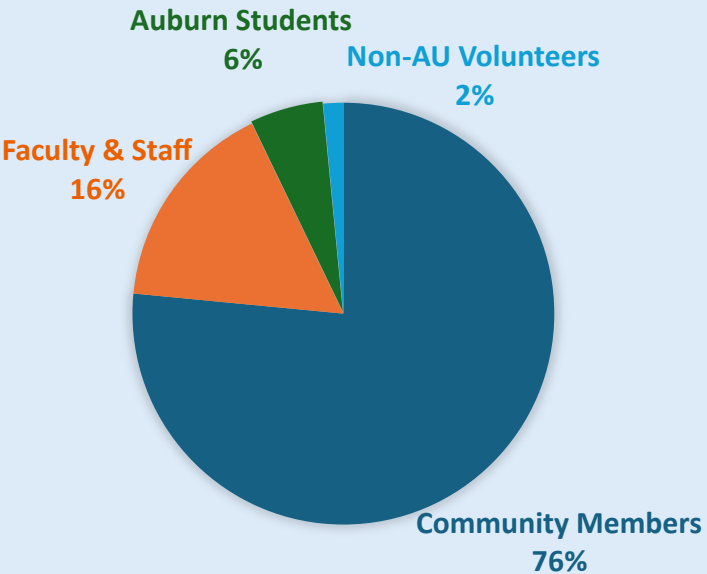
MATERNAL HEALTH CLOSET

EXAMINING DATA FOR
HEALTH IN EASTERN
ALABAMA

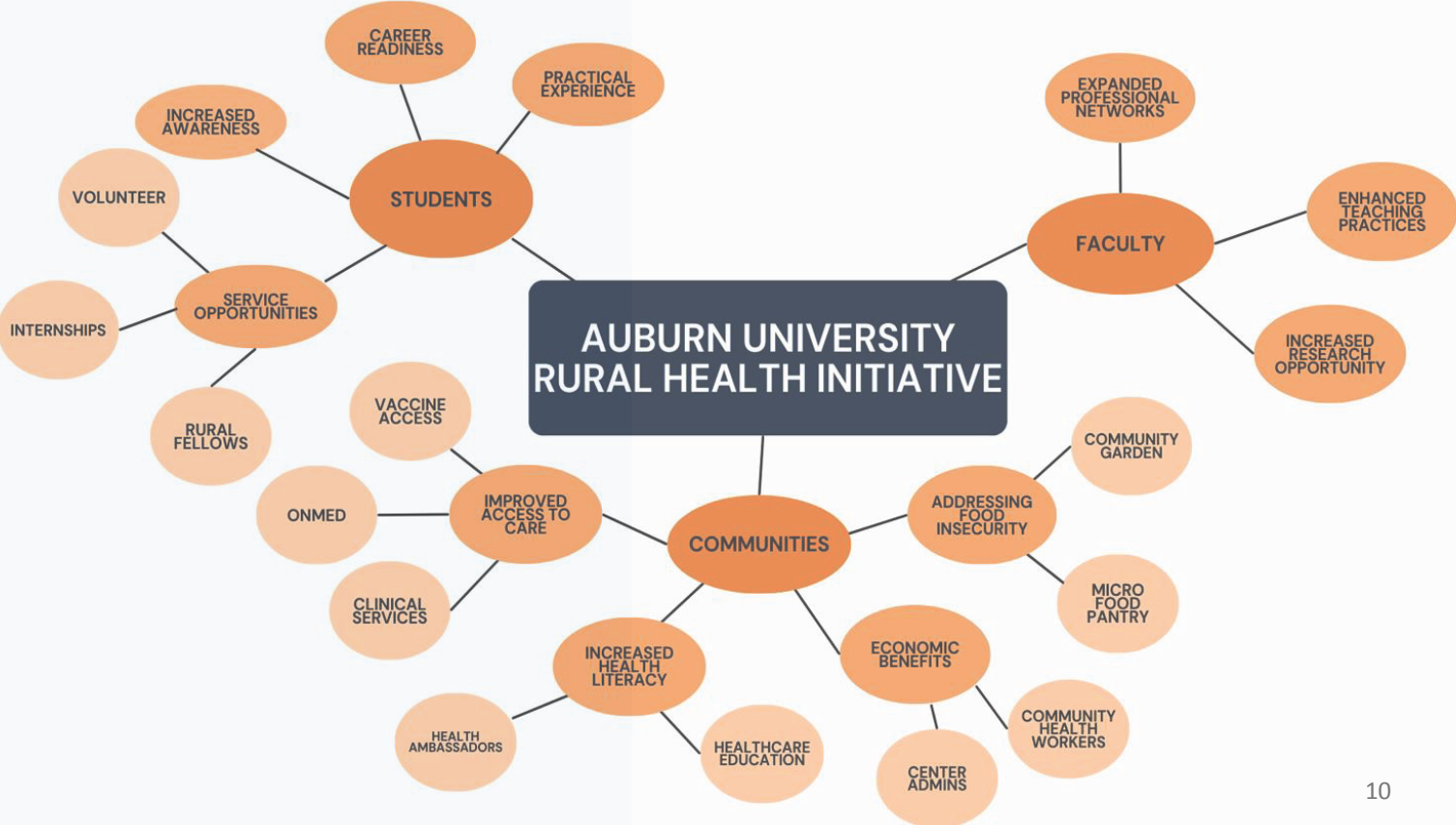
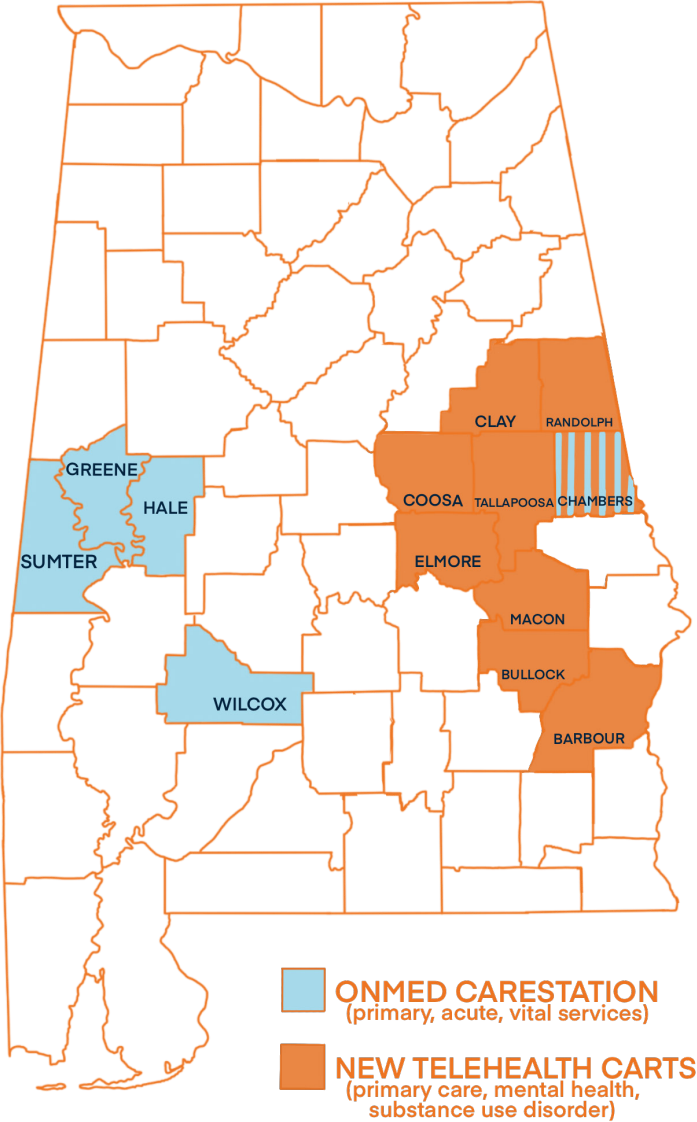
Coming Soon HEALTH PARTNERS PROGRAM

Fall 2025

Auburn University's Rural Health Initiative is reshaping the landscape of health and wellness in rural Alabama by addressing key community health challenges through **improved health outcomes, increased accessibility, education and empowerment.**




TOTAL IMPACTED
3,400+



Expansion of
**CHAMBERS COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH
& WELLNESS CENTER**

to increase opportunities for new partnerships and provide a new location for the Chambers County Extension office.

Coming
2025

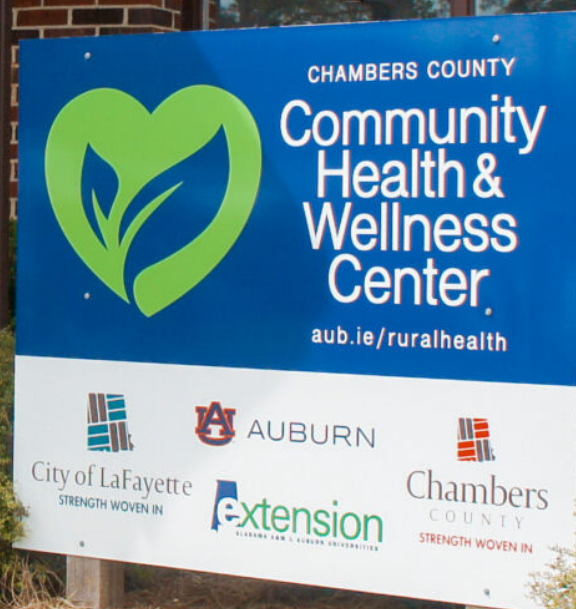
**PRIMARY CARE
COUNSELING
SUBSTANCE USE**

DISORDER SUPPORT

services coming to **ten locations** in East Alabama through a partnership with East Alabama Health, AU Psychological Services and UAB Beacon (funded through USDA-DLT).

Plans are underway to engage students to lead **community mental health education classes** while continuing to grow student-led initiatives that address rural health needs.

Pharmaceutical education efforts and the **Health Ambassador Program** expanding to West Alabama.



OUR SUPPORTERS

We deeply appreciate the dedication, collaboration, generosity and collective commitment of our supporters. Together we are increasing access to healthcare, improving community well-being, and reducing health disparities across rural Alabama.

- Auburn University Outreach
- Alabama Cooperative Extension System
- AU Colleges
- AU Psychological Services Center
- Boykin Community Center
- OnMed
- US Dept. of Agriculture
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- ALFA Corporation
- AL Dept. of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)
- Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
- The University of West Alabama
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- East Alabama Health
- Circle of Care Center for Families
- Esperanza House
- Girls S.T.E.P.S Inc.
- Innovate Alabama
- Rural Alabama Prevention Center
- LifeSouth Community Blood Centers
- AL Dept. of Finance-Federal Award #SLFRP2635
- Lowe's Pharmacy
- Akron City Council
- Hale County Commission
- Boligee City Council
- Wilcox County Commission
- Shaw Community Center
- Gainesville City Council
- Sumter County Commission
- LaFayette City Council
- Alabama Department of Human Resources
- LaFayette Fire Department
- LaFayette Police Department
- LaFayette Main Street
- Chambers County School District
- Chambers County Commission
- Chambers County Development Authority
- Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission
- The Connecting Minority Communities Grant
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- U.S. Department of Commerce



AUBURN UNIVERSITY
Outreach

