

REGIONAL ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS



MAY 2024

RAHS HOT NEWS

MENTAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH



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As we close out the month of May, I want to take a moment to acknowledge Mental Health Awareness, and the importance of raising awareness about behavioral health issues and advocating for better behavioral and emotional health care for all.

At the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS), our mission has always been to support the holistic well-being of youth and adolescents, ensuring they have the resources they need to thrive. Behavioral health is a critical component of this mission. Our work in schools providing accessible behavioral health services and creating safe, supportive environments is critical, now than ever.

The challenges of the past few years have underscored the importance of behavioral health care. Many adolescents, their families, and even our team have faced unprecedented stress and anxiety. It's crucial that we continue to prioritize behavioral health in our programs and daily interactions, fostering an environment where everyone feels heard, supported, and valued. Here are a few ways we can contribute:

- 1. Increase Awareness:** Share information about behavioral health resources available through RAHS, Michigan Medicine, and our community partners. Highlight the importance of seeking help.
- 2. Support Youth:** Be aware of the signs of behavioral health struggles in our patients and their peers. Encourage them to use our counseling services and create an environment where they feel safe discussing their feelings.
- 3. Self-Care:** Our ability to support others is strongest when we also take care of ourselves. There are resources available to you through Michigan Medicine.
- 4. Collaborate:** Work together to develop and implement activities that promote emotional well-being, collaboration can have a larger impact than you may realize.

I am thankful for the dedication and compassion each of you brings to RAHS. Your efforts make a difference every day in the lives of the youth and families we serve. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and hard work.

MEET DR. SANA AHMED

CONGRATULATIONS!

Meet Dr. Sana Ahmed, a passionate MD dedicated to helping adolescents navigate their health and wellness. After completing her residency at the University of Michigan, she spent years working at Ypsi Health and Corner Health. In 2017, a grant opportunity led her to join the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS), focusing on providing accessible care and support to young people in the community. We sat with Dr. Ahmed to learn about her journey, the challenges facing today's youth, and the impactful work being done at RAHS to make a difference in their lives.



1. Tell us a little bit about yourself, and how you became involved with the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS).

I finished my residency at the University of Michigan with a keen interest in adolescent medicine. My primary sites were Ypsi Health and Corner Health for about 8-9 years. Around 2017, I transitioned into working with the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) due to an Ethel & James Flinn Foundation grant that aimed to provide more behavioral/mental health supports in RAHS school-based health centers. Currently, I see patients two days a week at RAHS-Ypsilanti Community High school-based health center.

2. What inspired you to focus your practice on promoting adolescent health within schools and communities, and what do you believe are the most pressing health issues facing young people today?

Adolescent health has always fascinated me. Adolescents are in a unique phase of development, navigating significant brain and body changes while forming their identities and learning to advocate for their physical and mental health. This intersection of clinical interest and patient population (underserved and adolescent) really drew me to the school-based clinics.

My RAHS school-based health practice offers youth-friendly access for patients and their families and aligns well with the patient demographic I serve at Ypsilanti Health Center and Corner Health.

MEET DR. SANA AHMED CONTINUED...

Regarding pressing health issues, mental health stands out as a significant concern, exacerbated by factors like social media, poverty, family trauma, and social determinants of health. Additionally, issues like nutrition and obesity, coupled with limited access to healthy foods, pose significant challenges as well. The affordability and availability of unhealthy foods only exacerbate the problem.

3. Could you describe a particularly impactful initiative or program that you and/or RAHS has implemented? How did it positively affect the students and the community?

Unfortunately, what I quickly realized after I started working at the RAHS health centers, is that many of our patients struggle just to get to school. The RAHS system creates easy access points for our patients, who would otherwise not be seen at all. One of the most impactful initiatives implemented by RAHS is providing essential services and resources that fill access and care gaps for youth. Programs such as the Mobile Unit for dental and vision services, along with initiatives like the STI Blitz, have positively affected students and the community by addressing crucial healthcare needs. Basic resources like hygiene kits and food boxes not only fulfill practical needs but also signal to youth that RAHS supports them beyond the walls of the health center. One of the greatest supports RAHS offers is counseling and social work services.

4. How do you collaborate with schools, educators, youth, and families to implement health promotion strategies, and what role do you see partnerships playing in improving adolescent health and wellness as well as improving the relationship of Michigan Medicine with youth and community?

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our approach to health. We work closely with schools, educators, community organizations, youth, and families to implement strategies effectively. Pulling in key individuals and organizations helps address the diverse issues adolescents face. Collaborating with schools is particularly important, as they serve as the primary access point for youth. Strengthening partnerships with entities like school districts' Nutrition Departments can enhance initiatives like promoting healthy eating. The University of Michigan Health, Michigan Medicine brand ensures visibility and familiarity with our services. The crossover between RAHS and my work at Ypsi Health helps reinforce our presence and benefits the community.

MEET DR. SANA AHMED CONTINUED...

5. In your experience, what are some effective methods for engaging youth and families in prioritizing and maintaining their health and well-being, especially in underserved communities?

Effective engagement with youth and families in underserved communities requires a multifaceted approach. First, creating opportunities for accessible healthcare services is key. Second, listening to the patients' needs and priorities is equally important, building trust and rapport hinges on genuinely hearing and understanding their concerns. Additionally, providing a wide range of resources ensures that individuals can address the full range of their health and well-being needs.

Through a collaborative approach and a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by adolescents, Dr. Ahmed has significantly contributed to promoting health and wellness in school settings. Her work with RAHS exemplifies how school-based health centers can effectively bridge care gaps and provide essential services to underserved youth. By engaging with youth, families, schools, and communities, and leveraging partnerships, she has helped RAHS implement programs that address both immediate and long-term health needs, underscoring the importance of accessible healthcare, mental health support, and holistic wellness strategies in fostering healthier futures for young people.

TEAM UPDATES

CONGRATULATIONS!

We are excited to announce that Theresa Arnold-Robinson, LMSW, a dedicated social worker at the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) school-based health center at Ypsilanti Community High School, has been honored with the prestigious Grizzly Award. This accolade recognizes outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of students, and Theresa's exemplary service has made her a standout recipient.

Theresa's commitment to fostering a supportive and healthy school environment has been transformative for countless students. Her innovative approaches to mental health care, coupled with her compassionate and empathetic demeanor, have significantly enhanced the lives of the young people she serves. Through individual counseling, group therapy sessions, and health education initiatives, Theresa has tirelessly worked to address both the emotional and physical needs of her students, creating a safe and nurturing space where they can thrive.

As we congratulate Theresa Arnold-Robinson for this well-deserved recognition, we also extend our gratitude to all the dedicated professionals who contribute to the RAHS mission. Their collective efforts ensure that our schools remain places where every student has the opportunity to flourish, both academically and personally.

Congratulations, Theresa, on this remarkable achievement!



TEAM UPDATES

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Kim Dunlap on her new role of MA Panel Manager. Kim has worked as a Medical Assistant Senior at Briarwood Center for Women, Children, and Young Adults for 12 years. She has been an invaluable member of our team at RAHS-Springport, known for her attention to detail, communication skills, and dedication to the RAHS mission. Her ability to effectively manage complex situations and support the team has been instrumental in the success of the new RAHS-Springport Public Schools school-based health center.



Congratulates to Katie Spaulding on her new role of MA Panel Manager! Katie brings 12 years of experience as a Medical Assistant, with the last 7 years in progressive roles within Michigan Medicine, including Medical Assistant Senior at the Cardiovascular Center and most recently as a Medical Assistant at RAHS-Lincoln Middle School. Since joining our team, Katie has demonstrated exceptional clinical skills, a compassionate approach to patient care, and strong leadership qualities. She has consistently gone above and beyond in her duties, earning the respect and admiration of both colleagues and patients.



We are confident that their leadership will contribute significantly to our ongoing efforts to provide exceptional care to our communities. Please join me in congratulating Katie and Kim! We look forward to their continued success in their new roles.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2024

SAVE THE DATES - RAHS STAFF MEETING & RETREAT

JUNE 19 & 20

The Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools Staff Meeting and Retreat will take place on June 19th and June 20th.

HEALTH CENTER UPDATES

CHECK IT OUT

We are continuing the process of updating all the exterior signage at RAHS school-based health centers to align with University of Michigan Health, Michigan Medicine branding and in partnership with each school district. Signage is approved by the RAHS Director, Mohamad Khraizat, and each school Superintendent. Here is the new signage at RAHS-Carman-Ainsworth.

RAHS-CARMAN-AINSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL



HEALTH CENTER UPDATES

CHECK IT OUT

Construction crews are making great progress at the RAHS-Springport Public Schools school-based health center and the expanded and improved RAHS-Beecher High School school-based health center!

RAHS-SPRINGPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



RAHS-BEECHER HIGH SCHOOL



SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER OUTREACH

ADVOCACY DAY



SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER OUTREACH

ADVOCACY DAY



SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER OUTREACH

ADVOCACY DAY



The RAHS team and Youth Advisory Council members from school-based health centers in Genesee, Jackson, and Washtenaw Counties traveled to Lansing, MI in early May to advocate for continued funding and support for school-based health centers. This annual event serves as a pivotal moment where RAHS Youth Advisory Council members come together to meet with legislators and their staff in support of school-based health centers like RAHS. RAHS youth leaders led compelling discussions and shared their stories and perspectives leaving a lasting impression on our state representatives.

Kudos to the event organizers, the dedicated RAHS team, and above all, our Youth Advisory Council members for their commitment towards building healthier and more equitable communities through school-based health initiatives.

These photos are a glimpse into the dynamic and empowering Youth Advocacy Day organized by the School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan (SCHA-MI).

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER OUTREACH

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Great job Theresa Arnold-Robinson and Anum Latif from RAHS-Ypsilanti Community High School for an amazing Adolescent Health Initiative annual event panel: Youth Engagement – YACety YAC: Community Panel on Developing and Sustaining Youth Advisory Councils (YACs)!



RAHS-GARDEN

LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Great job Theresa Arnold-Robinson and Anum Latif from RAHS-Ypsilanti Community High School for an amazing Adolescent Health Initiative annual event panel: Youth Engagement - YACety YAC: Community Panel on Developing and Sustaining Youth Advisory Councils (YACs)!



NEW RAHS-GARDEN

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY

We are thrilled to announce a new addition to our new school-based health center garden, thanks to the exceptional efforts of Laurel Paradise-Bumhoffer, of one of our dedicated Nurse Practitioners at the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS). She successfully led the initiative to secure the donation of raised garden beds from Vego Gardens, bringing a valuable and enriching resource to our community.

This new garden will provide RAHS-Richfield youth with hands-on learning opportunities about nutrition, sustainability, and the joys of growing their own food. The raised garden beds will help promote health and wellness, offering a space where students can engage in outdoor activities and learn about healthy eating habits.

By spearheading this initiative, she has not only enhanced our health center's offerings but also set a powerful example of what can be achieved through collaboration and dedication.

This garden will be more than just a collection of plants; it is a testament to the positive impact that a proactive community can have. The students and staff of the health center will benefit immensely from this project, enjoying the fruits (and vegetables) of [Recipient's Name]'s hard work for many years to come.

Thank you and congratulations to Laurel for their outstanding efforts and for bringing this wonderful project to fruition. It is initiatives like these that strengthen our community and foster an environment of care and wellness. Stay tuned for updates on the garden's progress and the various educational activities it will support. Together, we are cultivating a healthier future for our students and our community.



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