



Transforming Strategy into Success:

ESTABLISHING THE CLARKSTON RESOURCE & WELLNESS HUB



Intro

This case study explores the health equity initiative partnership between CHMRC, a 501c3 organization and the Clarkston Health Equity Coalition (CHEC), a collaboration of multi-sector organizations based in Clarkston, Ga. The goal of the partnership centered around the establishment of the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub to address persistent health disparities in the most precarious community in DeKalb County, Clarkston, Ga.

Partnership Overview

CHMRC and the Clarkston Health Equity Coalition (CHEC) share a mission to enhance health outcomes for underserved communities through collaboration and resource mobilization. Founded in 2014, CHMRC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that builds community resilience by bridging gaps in health systems and public health. Their extensive experience includes spearheading COVID-19 response efforts, providing pop-up testing and vaccination clinics, and establishing the flagship Solano Community Health Hub, which transitioned from a pandemic response center to a community resilience hub in 2023.

CHMRC's successful history with its health hub model and funding capabilities uniquely positioned them to guide CHEC in creating the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub. CHEC, formed in June 2021, is a robust coalition of over 58 multi-sector organizations focused on improving health outcomes for Clarkston's marginalized populations. Their strong relationships with government entities, schools, academic institutions, CBOs, NGOs, resettlement agencies, and health providers facilitate effective coordination and resource sharing.

CHMRC chose to collaborate with CHEC because of CHEC's extensive network, strong partnerships, significant community health needs, and high engagement levels. This partnership enhances health access and equity in Clarkston by leveraging the strengths of both organizations, with CHMRC providing strategic guidance, operational expertise, and funding support.

A key initiative to support CHEC's goals was opening a Resource & Wellness Hub at the EasterSeal's North Georgia location. The goal of the hub was to maximize resources and accessibility by integrating a network of health and social resources within a shared space in the Clarkston community. These services addressed the needs of the community by removing transportation barriers, language barriers, and impacting cultural responsiveness.

Partnership at a Glance

Partners: CHMRC, Clarkston Health Equity Coalition (CHEC)

Key Initiators:

- Temple Moore, MScOT, MScGHD, Community Health Program Manager | Refugee Women's Network
- Suad Ali, MPH, Operations Manager, CHEC
- Donna Davidson, President/CEO | Easter Seals North Georgia, Inc
- Natasha Goburdhun | Executive Consultant
- Amelia Priest, Director of Community Engagement | CHMRC
- Ellen Young, CEO | CHMRC

Goals: Formalize structure within CHEC coalition to support hub planning, governance and funding; identify critical community social and wellness needs of Clarkston, Ga.; create an action and implementation plan to establish a consistent, safe space for Clarkston community members to access social and medical care services. Establish the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub to address the diverse needs of the community.

Health Hub Model: A preventative health hub model which offers affordable, holistic, culturally, and linguistically responsive healthcare and social services, resulting in improved health outcomes and community wellness defined by the residents.

Scope of Partnership: CHMRC provided CHEC with strategic guidance for structure, coalition governance, collaboration and pilot funding for hub launch from June 2023 to June 2024.

Funding: CHMRC provided \$20,000 in funding per month to support launch, set up and staffing.

Impact: Through a series of successful pilot events such as back-to-school health fairs and Medicaid enrollment sessions, over 400 community members received essential health services including immunizations, wellness checks, and Medicaid enrollment. The Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub was supported by more than 100 health ambassadors and 20 community partners, resulting in significant improvements in health access and community wellness.

Closing Health Equity Gaps through Community Based Organizations Partnerships

Community-based organizations (CBOs) across the country are increasingly collaborating to address social determinants impacting health outcomes. These partnerships, often established under models like Community Care Hubs (CCHs), centralize administrative functions, streamline service delivery, and enhance resource sharing to improve community health and equity. The percentage of CBOs contracting as part of these networks has doubled from 20% to 40% between 2017 and 2021, highlighting the growing importance of these collaborations

National Council on Aging: <https://www.ncoa.org/article/community-care-hubs-what-evidence-based-program-providers-need-to-know>



Preventative Health Hub Model

Clarkston faced several challenges that CHEC aimed to address through the establishment of the Resource & Wellness Hub.

- **Transportation:** Many community members struggled with reliable transportation to access healthcare services.
- **Language Barriers:** A significant portion of the population faced language barriers that hindered their ability to navigate the healthcare system.
- **Healthcare System Navigation:** Residents needed assistance in understanding and accessing the healthcare services available to them.
- **Access to Pediatric and Dental Care:** There was a lack of available pediatric and dental care services.
- **Medicaid Redetermination:** Post-pandemic, many community members needed help with Medicaid redetermination due to changes in requirements.

The Most Diverse Square Mile in America

The city of Clarkston, Georgia is known as the Ellis Island of the South and has over 60,000 immigrant and refugee residents. More than half of the residents were born outside the United States and come from over 60 countries. Many of the residents—over 40 percent—live below the federal poverty line and have difficulty meeting their essential needs, such as food, housing, transportation, healthcare, and educational opportunities. Due to these barriers and limitations, these individuals are more likely to experience chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, as well as mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, the rate of diabetes among refugees in Clarkston is nearly 20 percent higher than the rate among the general population in Georgia. The rate of depression among refugees is 40 percent higher than the general Georgia population. Although 60 percent of Clarkston residents have health insurance, significant barriers have prevented them from getting the adequate care they need.

A snapshot at the following data shows the unique barriers to healthcare challenges around access to including language barriers, navigating healthcare, transportation and overall accessibility.

Overview

- Municipality in DeKalb County, 14,000 residents, half of whom are foreign-born, non-native English speakers
- A majority-minority community
- Historically underserved and marginalized
- Social Vulnerability Index is in the top 8% of US*
- 15+ Languages spoken, 2000 refugees resettled currently
- Majority on cash assistance

SDOH for the Clarkston community

- Majority of residents live in high-density housing
- High rates of housing, food, and job insecurity
- 51% foreign-born, non-native speakers of English**
- 50% of residents have issues with healthcare access**
- 58% make less than 30k per year***
- 22% have no formal schooling***

Insurance

- 25.4% are uninsured*****
- 74.6% of the population has health coverage
- 23.2% are on employee plans
- 37.7% on Medicaid
- 11.4% on non-group
- 2.3% on Medicare







**Clarkston Community Needs Analysis II, 2022 Georgia State University Prevention Research Center

***Clarkston Community Needs Analysis III, 2023 Georgia State University Prevention Research Center

****<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/clarkston-ga>

*****Grady Community Health Needs Assessment 2022

CHMRC Support Model

-  **Supportive Guidance for Coalition Structure:** CHMRC worked closely with CHEC to help their leadership establish and formalize the coalition's organizational structure, ensuring a strong foundation for effective hub planning, governance, and funding strategies. By establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within the coalition, CHMRC helped CHEC create a cohesive and resilient governance model that can sustainably manage the hub's operations and growth.
-  **Community Needs Assessment:** CHMRC collaborated with CHEC to analyze an assessment of the critical social and wellness needs of Clarkston, GA. Using the community needs assessment surveys conducted by Georgia State University, and engaging with local stakeholders, including community members, healthcare providers, and social service organizations, CHMRC and CHEC identified key areas where the hub can have the most significant impact. The needs assessment informed the strategic priorities of the hub, ensuring that it addresses the most pressing issues facing the Clarkston community.
-  **Action and Implementation Planning:** Leveraging its expertise in community health and emergency preparedness, CHMRC assisted CHEC in developing a detailed action and implementation plan that outlines the steps required to establish and operate the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub. This plan included timelines, resource allocation, and key performance indicators to track progress. By providing a clear roadmap, CHMRC ensured that the hub not only launched successfully but also continues to meet the evolving needs of the community over time.
-  **Establishing a Safe and Consistent Space:** Central to CHMRC's support model is the creation of a consistent, safe space where Clarkston community members can access both social and medical care services. CHMRC guided CHEC in designing the hub's layout, to ensure that all community members feel welcomed and secure when accessing services. This space became a trusted resource for the community, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting regular engagement with the hub's offerings.
-  **Ongoing Support and Capacity Building:** Beyond the initial establishment of the hub, CHMRC provided ongoing support to CHEC through capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance, and continuous evaluation of the hub's impact. This sustained involvement ensures that the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub remains responsive to community needs and is capable of adapting to future challenges.
-  **Governance:** A robust governance structure is essential for the successful management of a health hub. CHMRC provided strategic guidance to CHEC leadership to assist them in prioritizing the correct governance structure components for the coalition, which was crucial for defining strategic goals, prioritization of initiatives, planning, operations and resource support of the hub launch. This governance structure was the foundation for CHEC's initial planning and documentation of strategic priorities for 90-day, 3 month and 6-month goals. The formalization discussions determined governance structure, charter, and mission using the following:
 - Workgroups:** With CHMRC guidance, CHEC established specialized teams focused on specific areas such as service delivery, outreach, and resource management. Each workgroup tasked with developing plans and strategies to achieve their specific objectives.
 - Steering Committee:** With CHMRC guidance, CHEC established a steering committee to oversee the strategic direction of the health hub. This group is responsible for making high-level decisions, ensuring that all activities align with the hub's mission and goals, and addressing any challenges that arise.
 - Membership Levels:** Different tiers of involvement were established to determine role and level of involvement.
 - o **Steering Committee:** Responsible for strategic decisions and ensuring alignment with goals.
 - o **Service Delivery Members:** Attend meetings and deliver services at the hub.
 - o **General Members:** Participate in meetings and activities without obligations.



CHEC Steering Committee and Leadership

- **Suad Ali**, MPH, Center for Leadership in Disability | Georgia State University
- **Omar Aziz**, BDS, Deputy Director of Resettlement Programs | International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- **Beverly Burks**, Mayor | City of Clarkston
- **Donna Davidson**, President/CEO | Easter Seals North Georgia, Inc
- **Adaobi Iheduru**, Psy.D., Program Manager | Center for Victims of Torture
- **Senait Kebede**, MD(Ped), MPH, Adjunct Associate Professor, Global Health | Emory University
- **Temple Moore**, MScOT, MScGHD, Community Health Program Manager | Refugee Women's Network
- **Mary Helen O'Connor**, PhD, Deputy Director, Prevention Research Center | Georgia State University
- **Muzhda Oriakhil**, Community Engagement Manager & Afghan Community Liaison | Embrace Refugee Birth
- **Selar Shwani**, Vaccine Coordinator | New American Pathways
- **Joshua Sieweke**, Director of Community Health Outreach | Ethne Health
- **Sedessie Spivey**, DBA, MS, Division of Community Health | DeKalb County Board of Health
- **Ted Terry**, Commissioner | DeKalb County Super District 6
- **Virginia Voyles Tester**, CNM, FNP-C, Director | Embrace Refugee Birth (Friends of Refugees)

Community Engagement

CHMRC implemented a unique approach to identify the most pressing community needs, determine key partnerships with community-based organizations to inform future programming, and to help launch the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub pilot Back to School event.

- Listening sessions with DeKalb Public Health and local community-based organizations facilitated conversations to identify priority needs of the individuals they currently served. At events, survey tools were dispatched to gain feedback and insight into the community needs.
- Feedback was gathered on the most effective ways to improve health access and outcomes for the Clarkston Community. This helped to inform potential programming/ongoing resource offerings at the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub. It also identified/prioritized the most effective interventions/strategies to remove barriers to achieving health equity for the community.





Community Impact: Successful Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub Events

Indian Creek Elementary Back-to-School Event (Part 1) OFFICIAL PILOT LAUNCH EVENT

Date: September 9, 2023

Services: Immunizations, wellness checks (vision, hearing, nutritional, oral)

Community Partners: 19 (Embrace, Friends of Refugees, Emory School of Nursing, DCBOH, Ethne, Grace Village, RWN, NAP)

Community Health Ambassadors (CHA): 19 (providing linguistic support)

Attendees: 90

Services Provided: 60 received Medicaid/health insurance enrollment, wellness checks, child immunizations

Follow-ups: 28

Transportation: Provided

Indian Creek Elementary Back-to-School Event (Part 2) & UNITY IN HEALTHCARE DAY

Date: September 30, 2023

Services: Wellness checks

Community Partners: 15 (Embrace, Friends of Refugees, Emory School of Nursing, DCBOH, Ethne, Grace Village, RWN, NAP)

Community Health Ambassadors (CHA): 23 (providing linguistic support)

Attendees: 200

Services Provided: 13 received Medicaid/health insurance enrollment, wellness checks, child immunizations

Follow-ups: 8

Transportation: Provided



Medicaid Access & Training (Part 1)

Date: December 2, 2023

Services: Health insurance marketplace enrollment

Community Partners: 6 (CORE, Palava Hut, RWN, New AP)

Health Ambassadors: 18 (providing linguistic support)

Attendees: 25

Services Provided: 7 received Medicaid services, 16 received COVID vaccines

Follow-ups: 2

Medicaid Access & Training (Part 2)

Date: January 20, 2024

Services: Medicaid enrollment, COVID & flu vaccines

Community Partners: 13 (DHS, Ga Primary Care Association, IRC, Core, Georgians for Healthy Futures, Medcura, RWN, New AP, Caresource, Amerigroup, Peachstate)

Health Ambassadors: 24 (providing linguistic support)

Attendees: 50

Services Provided: 39 received Medicaid services, 19 received COVID vaccines

Follow-ups: 39



Spring Back to Health Event/GSU Connect to Care

Date: April 13, 2024

Patients Screened: 306

Services Provided:

- Audiology: 47 screenings, 27 referrals
- Dental: 152 screenings, 118 referrals
- Blood Pressure: 70 screenings, 5 referrals
- BMI: 96 screenings, 19 referrals
- Vision: 88 screenings, 10 referrals
- Glucose: 109 screenings, 6 referrals
- HIV Testing: 34 tests
- Vaccinations: 25 vaccines

Breast Exams: 15 screenings, 15 referrals

Child Education: 10 sign-ups

Medicaid/Obama Care Assistance: 8 families assisted

Community Health Ambassadors (CHA): 21 (providing linguistic support in 14 languages)

Transportation: Provided

Central Partners: GSU, Mercy Care, ICNA Relief Shifa Clinic, CPACS, CORE, BPSOS-Atlanta, Emory Nursing, Easterseals of N. Georgia, GA Primary Care Associates, Palava Hut

“Creating a Community Health Hub has been a professional dream for over a decade. With dedicated space, strong community partnerships, and crucial seed funding and expertise from CHMRC, that vision has finally become a reality.”

- Donna Davidson, President/CEO | Easter Seals North Georgia, Inc

Key Success Factors

Strategic Support and Funding

A critical success factor in establishing the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub is the provision of guidance for planning, structure, capacity building, and securing initial funding for development, launch, and pilot events. These elements were essential for laying a solid foundation that supported the hub’s successful introduction and long-term sustainability.

Community Ambassadors

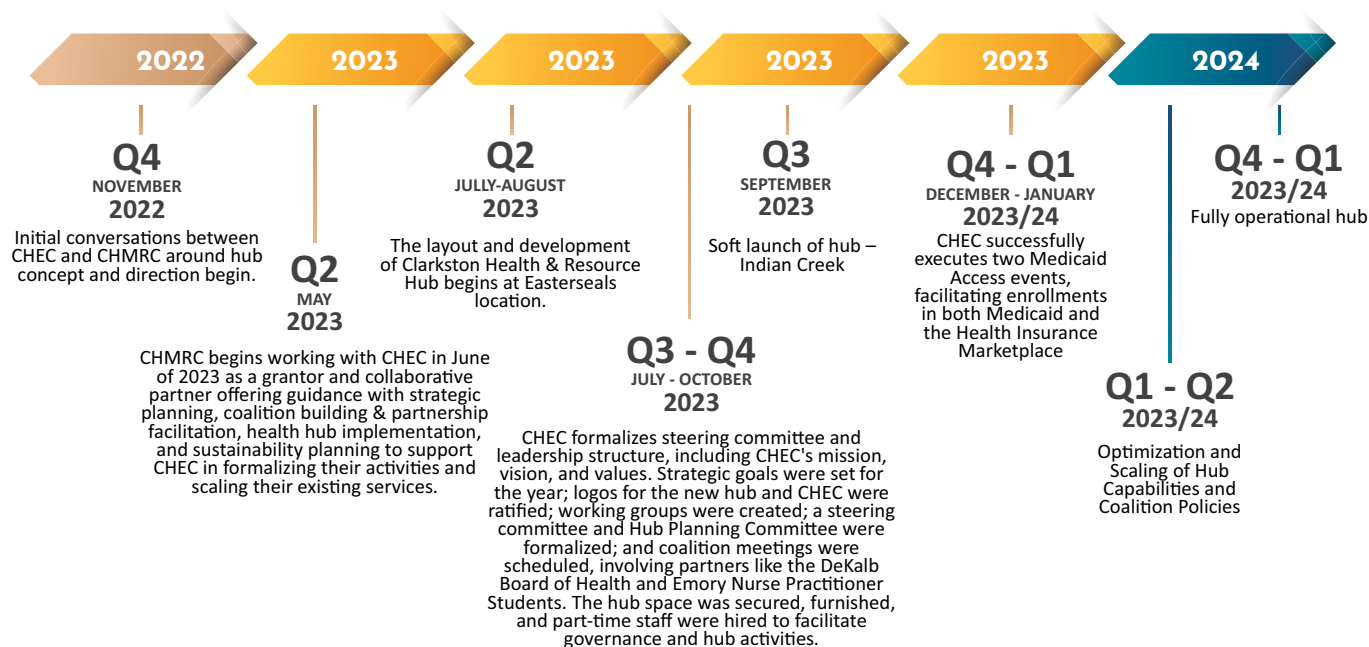
CHEC recruited and trained a number of community ambassadors who provided translations services at their events. Clarkston has a high immigrant population and the inclusion of people from the community was an important way to engage and build trust to overcome unique barriers to healthcare such as language differences, navigating the healthcare system, transportation challenges, and overall accessibility. Community ambassadors, who are deeply connected to the community, helped to ensure that the hub is not only accessible but also fully aligned with the cultural, linguistic, and practical needs of those it serves.

Partnerships

Key partnerships with public health and healthcare partners, as well as community-based organizations, are crucial to the success of the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub. These collaborations drive the hub’s ability to mobilize resources, foster collective action, and implement impactful programs that directly benefit the Clarkston community. By leveraging the strengths of these partnerships, the hub not only delivers essential services but also fosters a sustainable and transformative culture of health and wellness in Clarkston.

For CHEC, Easterseals North Georgia (ESNG) provided the hub space, structural support, fiscal agency, and leadership, while the Dekalb County Board of Health (DCBOH) offered regular health screenings and access to care. The Dekalb Community Service Board contributed a trained paraprofessional to connect residents to psychiatric and mental health support. Grace Village Medical now hosts a Diabetes Clinic which began in November 2023 and a regular clinic beginning January 2024. Additionally, the Georgia RIM Mental Health Alliance, in collaboration with the GSU PRC and International Rescue Committee, provides mental health services for RIM community members and culturally responsive, trauma-informed training for providers and agencies. These partnerships form the foundation upon which the hub operates, ensuring it meets the diverse needs of the Clarkston community.

The Evolution of Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub



Operational Challenges & Lessons Learned

- **Healthcare System Navigation:** Ensuring the hub was an entry point and not a replacement for medical homes.
- **Medicaid Redetermination:** Partnered with health plans to assist community members with Medicaid redetermination post-pandemic.
- **Services:** Vaccines offered without incentives have a low turnout. It also gets challenging when offered in conjunction with additional services at the Hub, particularly during Medicaid enrollment due to the long enrollment process and interpretation.
- **Providers:** Due to the high diabetes rates in diverse ethnic groups in Clarkston, obtaining a readily available provider for free diabetes services is challenging. Therefore, it was decided that having the clinic available weekly would be beneficial.
- **Appointments:** Securing appointment slots from healthcare facilities presented a challenge due to their high level of activity, and a reluctance to commit. Moreover, not all facilities provide language support or exhibit cultural appropriateness to effectively cater to the diverse communities in Clarkston.
- **Hub Space:** Space is difficult to obtain in Clarkston, and many groups wanted to use conference rooms for their agendas. CHEC learned early on that organizations must be in alignment with CHEC's strategic plan to use the hub space.
- **CHW Activities:** There was a necessity to consolidate Community Health Worker (CHW) activities to streamline services and avoid duplication.

Partnerships and Service Delivery

Healthcare Partners: CHEC successfully secured partnerships for regular hub programming:

- **Community Health Ambassador workforce development** - 15 ambassadors speaking 12 languages
- **Georgia State University Prevention Research Center + Afghan Alliance of Georgia** providing a 5-week psychoeducation group for 17 Afghan mothers, and the groups were delivered by 2 licensed clinicians
- **Grace Village Medical** Diabetes and Prevention Clinics which began in November 2023
- **Lyft vouchers** for Community Health Ambassadors (CHA) to utilize to help families get to appointments (15 per month)
- **Medicaid Unwinding and Insurance Access Series** began on Dec 2nd, 2023 - includes CHA training & Community Member Enrollment
- **Refugee Women's Network** Offers Mothers to Mothers Program on a biweekly schedule
- **DeKalb Public Health** Provides child health screenings/immunizations, Part C screening

Achievements and Outcomes

The Preventative Health Hub model in Clarkston, GA, has become a cornerstone of the community's health and well-being. By addressing the specific needs of Clarkston's diverse population, CHEC and CHMRC have created a sustainable, community-focused model that not only improves health outcomes but also builds resilience and equity within the community. This model can serve as a blueprint for other communities with similar demographic challenges, demonstrating the power of tailored, preventative care in transforming public health.

Through its comprehensive support model, CHMRC played a pivotal role in empowering CHEC as the "boots on the ground" to create a thriving Resource & Wellness Hub in Clarkston, GA. The hub not only addresses the diverse social and medical needs of the community but also serves as a beacon of health equity and resilience for the region.

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Acknowledgements

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We are deeply grateful to our partners at the Clarkston Health Equity Coalition (CHEC) for their unwavering commitment to improving health outcomes in Clarkston. Their collaborative spirit and deep connection to the community were vital in making this initiative a reality.

Special thanks to the community health ambassadors, healthcare providers, and volunteers who tirelessly worked to ensure that the hub meets the diverse needs of the Clarkston community. Your dedication to health equity and community wellness has set a powerful example for others to follow.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the residents of Clarkston for their participation, trust, and ongoing engagement. Your resilience and strength inspire us every day, and we are honored to serve you.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the establishment and success of the Clarkston Resource & Wellness Hub. Together, we are building a healthier, more equitable future for all.

