

Tell Us Something BHERO GOOD

“Seeing students come back week after week with more of a smile on their face, hearing from their guardians and the school staff that they are improving, I can definitely see a huge value in this program.”

—Jacklyn Genzlinger, Licensed Social Worker & Behavioral Health Counselor- Avel eCare

PROGRAM
ND eCARE SCHOOL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM
 Companion to the ND eCare School Health Program

SCHOOL
Solen High School & Cannon Ball Elementary School

COLLABORATORS

Central Regional Education Association (CREA) and Avel eCare

INCEPTION & IMPACT

The Avel eCare School Behavioral Health Program, available since 2018, serves 3 districts across North Dakota and was developed as a companion to the eCare School Health Program.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE: The mission of the ND eCare School Health and School Behavioral Health programs is to improve access to healthcare for underserved and geographically disadvantaged K-12 students in North Dakota. The goal of the School Health and School Behavioral Health Programs is to minimize health-related barriers to learning by providing safe, effective care from a registered nurse or licensed social worker, respectively, via telehealth. The eCare School Health Program addresses physical health conditions, while the eCare Behavioral Health Program can support students in grades 5 - 12 who are struggling with short-term mental or behavioral health issues such as anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide.

COST: The cost to bring the eCare School Behavioral Health program to schools already utilizing the eCare School Health Program (eNursing) is an additional \$1,000/ year fee, with a cost of \$65/session. Schools interested in the Behavioral Health Program not currently utilizing the School Health Program are encouraged to contact Liz Tofteland, eCare School Health Program Manager, as costs vary.

IMPLEMENTATION JOURNEY— SOLEN-CANNON BALL

SOLEN HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
85+

**CANNON BALL ELEMENTARY
 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**
125+

PROGRAM PARTNERS SINCE
2017

**STUDENTS SERVED FOR
 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**
10 (So Far!)

For small, rural school districts like Solen-Cannon Ball, providing students access to necessary healthcare can feel like a nearly impossible task. Little school nursing support and limited school counseling staff can quickly overwhelm school staff with demand. For students with physical or behavioral health needs that the school is not equipped to address, a 20-mile drive to the nearest medical facility presents an additional barrier to accessing required care.

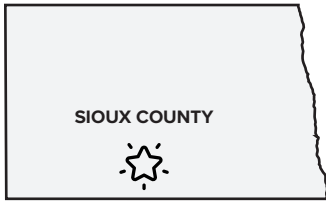
In 2017, Solen-Cannon Ball partnered with the ND eCare School Health Program to provide their students access to physical healthcare. Through this program, students can connect with an experienced school nurse at any time during the school day through two-way video communication.

“We found a lot of success with the physical health component, having someone with more expertise there to guide us,” said Jenna Feldman, Principal at Solen High School. “So when the opportunity came to add [eCare’s] behavioral health component in 2018, that was a no-brainer just to get our students some more resources.”

Steve Folmer, the district’s only full-time school counselor, divides his days between Solen High School and Cannon Ball Elementary School, driving twelve miles between each school building. The district was able to add a local teacher, Lexi Schafer, as a second, interim, school counselor—but they still did not have the capacity to meet students’ behavioral health needs. “When you have one person wearing so many different hats, some things fall through the cracks,” Feldman said. “We couldn’t let the behavioral health of our students fall through the cracks.”

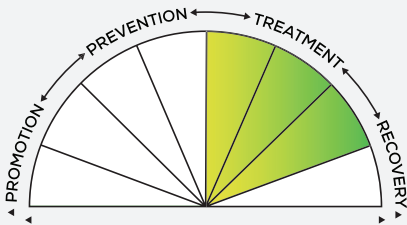


SOLEN HIGH SCHOOL & CANNON BALL ELEMENTARY



BH CONTINUUM OF CARE

This case study features eCare as a Treatment option within Behavioral Health Continuum of Care; however, this programming may span additional portions of the Continuum depending on its use.



WHO WE ARE.

A group of educators and advocates passionate about the importance of behavioral health in our schools and communities.



B-HERO Technical Assistance Center is a collaborative effort between Central Regional Education Association and the Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division.

Providing a student with support through the ND eCare School Behavioral Health Program is a collaborative effort between school staff, parents, and Avel eCare. When a teacher identifies a student who may be in need of additional support, Feldman, Schafer, and Folmer meet to determine which direction is best for the student—whether that is talking to a school counselor, connecting with an eCare Behavioral Health counselor, or being referred to Indian Health Services (IHS).

If it is decided that the ND eCare School Behavioral Health Program is the best fit for a student, Folmer contacts Avel to explain the student's situation. The student's parents or guardians are sent a consent form, along with a document explaining the service. Once a parent or guardian has signed off, Avel is put in contact with the student and their family to develop a treatment plan. From there, the student meets virtually with their Behavioral Health counselor, typically once a week for 8-12 weeks, until their treatment goals have been achieved.

SUCCESS STORY

Jacklyn Genzlinger, a licensed social worker at Avel eCare, has served Solen-Cannon Ball as an eCare Behavioral Health counselor for two years. In that time, she has witnessed tremendous growth among the students.

"With the kids I have seen, even though it is over video, we've been able to connect and build this trusting relationship," Genzlinger said. "Even if they come in hesitant, they soon realize that this is a real person who is going to help them."

Genzlinger recalls one student in particular, a seventh grader who was experiencing high anxiety about returning to the classroom after a year of distance learning during COVID-19. She was isolating herself both at home and at school, and was immediately resistant to the idea of online counseling. For the first four sessions, Genzlinger could sense her reservations. But soon, the smile returned to her face.

"Seeing students like her come back week after week with more of a smile on their faces, hearing from their guardians and the school staff that they are improving, I can definitely see a huge value in this program," Genzlinger said.

The ND eCare Programs eliminate barriers such as cost and transportation, ensuring that students can access the support they need to thrive. And while only 10 students in Solen-Cannon Ball have received behavioral health support through the program, its impact can be felt throughout the entire district. With reduced strain on their workload, counselors like Schafer and Folmer can focus on providing a higher level of care for all students.

"It relieves the stress on the resources we have in-house when we're able to access different avenues for student support," Schafer said. "I find it comforting to have someone to ask questions to make sure we're on-track or doing the right thing with the student. It is also a resource that we can rely on if we feel like we're out of our scope of practice."

GET INVOLVED

Schools interested in eCare's School Health or School Behavioral Health Programs are encouraged to contact Liz Tofteland for more information.

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