



Vision + Action Impacts the World

2023 Health Annual Report



Special Olympics
Health

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision of Special Olympics Health is health equity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) around the world. In 2023, in partnership with the Golisano Foundation, Special Olympics took action utilizing the P.A.T.H. to Health Equity Framework to develop and enhance programs, create and share resources, and grow strategic partnerships. The work is changing how children with IDD make developmental gains; supporting athletes in leading active and healthy lives; ensuring that athlete health issues are promptly and accurately identified and treated; equipping the health workforce to provide quality care, and ensuring that health systems are truly working to address the health needs of individuals with IDD. In 2023 there was significant growth in all areas of this work and the cash and value-in-kind (VIK) match was robust. In total, **\$39,770,279** in match funding was secured, **\$26,208,488** in cash and **\$13,561,791** in VIK.

The Global Golisano Leadership Awards, held during the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Berlin, attracted **over 180 guests** to honor seven individuals and organizations who are advancing health equity for individuals with IDD. The ceremony was hosted by Special Olympics Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Nyasha Derera and Special Olympics International Board Member Dr. Karoly Mirnics

and featured inspiring figures like Dr. Seun Adigun and Jurgen Dusel, German Federal Commissioner for Matters Relating to Persons with Disabilities. The ceremony garnered significant media attention. **Readership of the event's press release externally reached 327,000 and promotion of the awards on SpecialOlympics.org attracted nearly 600 page visits.**

PREVENTION: Special Olympics Young Athletes benefits children with and without IDD by providing key developmental supports and achieves a 7-month accelerated gain in motor skills, along with significant increases in adaptive skill development and decreases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors. In 2023, Special Olympics developed the Child and Family Health model and continued to standardize quality implementation of Young Athletes programming. Fitness programming continued to expand with a focus on strategic implementation to achieve optimal health and athletic performance through adequate physical activity, nutrition, and hydration.

ASSESSMENT: Healthy Athletes® screenings equip Special Olympics athletes with better awareness of their health status, share educational and supportive material to improve their health, and provide much needed services like prescription eyewear and hearing aid fittings.

Healthy Athletes is in a period of significant growth. A new screening discipline, Healthy Young Athletes, was added in 2022-2023, bringing the total of Healthy Athletes disciplines up to nine. Ongoing updates of Healthy Athletes 2.0 include current, evidence-based screenings, consistent referral criteria and categorization, and development of an updated electronic health record. In 2023, **77,541 Healthy Athletes screenings were performed by Special Olympics Programs globally**, resulting in 2,858 urgent and 10,919 non-urgent referrals for follow-up care due to health concerns or preventable risks identified through screening.

TRAINING: To improve the quality of care provided to individuals with IDD, training of healthcare providers and students is a top priority. Healthy Athletes continues to be an excellent entry point into training and Special Olympics also supports a growing number of online and in-person training opportunities beyond Healthy Athletes. Globally, **14,691 clinicians and students were trained** at Healthy Athletes. In addition, **279 Clinical Directors were trained** in a blended learning event held in Berlin at the Special Olympics World Games. Outside of Healthy Athletes, 11,685 clinicians and students were trained in inclusive health. Progress with the Golisano Virtual University in 2023 includes the upgrade of the first five interprofessional modules for healthcare professions students, collectively titled Inclusive Health Fundamentals. The Golisano Virtual University (GVU) online platform is crucial for rapidly expanding interprofessional education. In 2023, after evaluating various learning management system providers, a firm was selected for

the development of GVU, with the migration of current health education courses to the new platform scheduled for late Spring/early Summer 2024, starting with the Inclusive Health Fundamentals courses.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING: Health systems are made up of six building blocks: leadership and governance; service delivery; health system financing; health workforce; essential medical products and technologies; and health information systems. Special Olympics has continued to target various building blocks with health systems strengthening activities and in 2023 continued to bring the issue of IDD-inclusive health into the decision-making spaces and convene changemakers at different levels, all while empowering and centering people with IDD to share their stories and demand what they need to be healthy. Special Olympics took part in the World Health Summit, hosted an Inclusive Nutrition Summit in the US, and funded seven projects targeted at inclusive health in organizations. And, as part of the Rosemary Collaboratory, the structure and approach of producing the Global Report on the Health of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and achieving inclusive health reforms was developed and consultants in seven countries were selected to begin implementing the project.

ACTIVATING FOR AWARENESS: In 2023, Special Olympics Health's accomplishments were highlighted in almost **3,000 media outlets** worldwide, including renowned national publications, radio shows, podcasts, and influential blogs with a vast global audience. The value of these media mentions,

in advertising equivalency, exceeded **\$6.8 million**, and the combined readership reached **3.6 billion individuals**. Prominent outlets such as Yahoo Finance, MSN, The Daily Wire, PR Newswire, and Wiwsport provided coverage and recorded the highest readership. Global public health days, such as World Diabetes Day, provided opportunities to promote inclusion of individuals with IDD. Special Olympics Health was awarded a prestigious Sharecare Award for "School of Strength: Class is now in Session" and was also the recipient of the Pardes Humanitarian Award.

EVALUATION: In 2023, Special Olympics focused on developing a longitudinal evaluation of health programs to track the impact on athletes' well-being over time and to better understand health needs and status of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A Scientific Advisory Board was formed to guide this process, involving experts in relevant fields and engaging in discussions on evaluation focus, metrics, and data infrastructure. Following these discussions, four US Special Olympics Programs participated in a feasibility study to refine the evaluation protocol, with a decision made to embed project coordinators within Programs for data collection.

Additionally, an Athlete Advisory Board was established to ensure athlete perspectives are included in all phases of the evaluation. This group of six Special Olympics athletes received inclusive health research training and provided input on the longitudinal evaluation plan. Additionally, Special Olympics collaborated in several major research projects with universities and government agencies.

Strategically positioned near the opening of the World Summer Games in Berlin on June 19, 2023, and located at the Honored Guest hotel, the Global Golisano Leadership Awards attracted more than **180 esteemed guests** to honor exceptional individuals who are leading the way in achieving health equity and inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Honoring **7 remarkable individuals and organizations from each of the 7 regions**, the Golisano Health Leadership Awards took on an Oscars approach with Special Olympics athlete and Health Messenger Nyasha Derera and Special Olympics International Board Member Dr. Karoly Mirnics emceeding the event. Summer and winter Olympic athlete and Global Ambassador, Dr. Seun Adigun joined the likes of Jurgen Dusel, German Federal Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities, to inspire the audience and awardees to accelerate the race to attain health justice.

Special Olympics cheerleaders joined the room full of high-level guests – Chairman Tim Shriver, CEO Mary Davis, SOI Board Members Ambassador Luis Gallegos, Maria Gabriela Sigala, and Hamchetou Maiga-Ba, Global Ambassadors Maureen McCormick, Emma Broyles, Li Na, Founder's Family members Maria Shriver, Bobby Shriver, Mark Shriver, Jeanne Shriver and Linda Potter, six Regional Presidents and dignitaries from all sectors – to celebrate the significant achievements being realized through the support of the

Golisano Foundation and the extraordinary champions of health equity around the world.

The Golisano Health Leadership Awards ceremony collected over 100 article mentions, along with over 50 mentions of the Golisano Awards winners and 425 total mentions of all key dignitaries attending the event. Each of the 7 award recipients secured media attention in their respective countries and regions and two were featured in a press conference that was held immediately after the ceremony. Promotion of the awards through the press release on SpecialOlympics.org attracted nearly 600 page visits and the readership of the press release externally reached 327,000.

Short videos were aired that showcase the remarkable progress that these seven individuals and organizations have made in improving the health of individuals with IDD in their countries:

DR. HAFIZUR RAHMAN
(BANGLADESH)

For over a decade, Dr. Hafizur Rahman has been a passionate Clinical Director supporting Special Olympics athletes in Bangladesh. Through strategic partnerships with private and public entities, he has facilitated preferential and discounted access to care for athletes, trained countless clinicians, students and health facility administrators, and educated family members on their role as custodians of their families' health.

Dr. Rahman has coordinated trainings for healthcare professionals, recruited and trained students, and provided health information at weekly fitness and information sessions for families which has empowered them to make timely and appropriate health decisions.

KENYA MEDICAL TRAINING COLLEGE
(KENYA)

The Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC), founded in 1927, is a leading East African medical institution, training **85% of Kenya's healthcare workforce across 72 campuses**. Through a decade-long partnership with Special Olympics Kenya, KMTTC integrates intellectual disability training for students, mid-level specialists and doctors, providing a multi-disciplinary approach. Students gain clinical experience at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes screenings, with KMTTC also transporting them to rural areas where athletes with intellectual disabilities are otherwise hard to reach. In 2022, KMTTC volunteers screened over 2,000 athletes. Special Olympics Kenya aims to train the 10,000+ annual KMTTC graduates to serve individuals with intellectual disabilities, expanding access to comprehensive healthcare in remote regions and ensuring a health workforce that is geared to deliver quality, inclusive care.

DR. LIN-CHUNG WOUNG
(CHINESE TAIPEI)

In 2019, Special Olympics Chinese Taipei secured free physical exams and specialty medical care for athletes through a national

GLOBAL GOLISANO HEALTH LEADERSHIP AWARD EVENT

health insurance agreement, largely due to Dr. Lin-Chung Woung's 20-year activism. At the same time, as a Special Olympics Opening Eyes Clinical Director, Dr. Woung has organized five annual health promotion events, focusing on children and family health education. He facilitated **COVID-19 prevention and vaccination events** and secured three university partnerships, five hospital collaborations, and healthcare professional trainings at Taipei City Hospital during his tenure as Dean. Dr. Woung's influence has significantly advanced inclusive health in the region, across multiple universities and hospitals. He consistently uses his influence to ensure that the health needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities are prioritized.

DR. IMKE KASCHKE
(GERMANY)

Dr. Imke Kaschke, the Special Olympics Regional Clinical Advisor for Special Smiles in Europe, is a prominent inclusive health advocate in Germany. Having established **free health screenings for athletes with intellectual disabilities in all 16 German states**, she has also made significant contributions at Berlin's Charité hospital, where she managed dental consultations for people with intellectual disabilities.

Dr. Kaschke trains physicians and dentists to care properly for patients with intellectual disabilities, promotes inclusive university curricula, and fosters collaborative partnerships between Special Olympics Germany and 12 national professional associations. Through her efforts, she has secured funding and driven policy changes, ensuring people with intellectual disabilities now receive more accessible and comprehensive dental care.

DR. GEORGINA TORO
(CHILE)

Dr. Georgina Toro is a pediatric dentistry specialist from Universidad Nacional Andres Bello, the largest private university in Chile. Volunteering her expertise, Dr. Toro engages her students to educate individuals with intellectual disabilities on oral hygiene, conduct dental screenings, and provide dental procedures free of charge to Special Olympics athletes. The university currently supports learners with intellectual disabilities across 12 special needs schools in the metropolitan area of Santiago. Dr. Toro has been supporting Special Olympics Chile to grow their university and medical partnerships to include all 3 regions where Universidad Nacional Andres Bello has campuses with health tracks and thus

expand treatment opportunities to athletes living in remote areas of the country.

**ABU DHABI PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER
(UNITED ARAB EMIRATES)**

The Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (ADPHC) has forged a strong partnership with Special Olympics UAE, showcasing their commitment to addressing health barriers faced by people with intellectual disabilities. Through this collaboration, they have launched a nationwide initiative for early detection of chronic conditions and provided free access to regular health examinations for athletes with intellectual disabilities. The partnership has also led to the training of seven Clinical Directors and the provision of fitness equipment, educational materials and awareness workshops. Furthermore, ADPHC has supported a training program across the emirates called Unified Healthcare, that equips medical professionals and clinical administrative staff to deliver informed, compassionate and high-quality healthcare to patients with intellectual disabilities.

**DR. DAVID JENKINS
(USA)**

Dr. David Jenkins, a podiatry professor at Midwestern University, has been a transformative force in Special Olympics Arizona's Healthy Athletes program for 16 years. As a Fit Feet Clinical Director, he has educated and trained hundreds of students, certified 50 global Clinical Directors, and expanded health services to athletes with intellectual disabilities. The efforts of

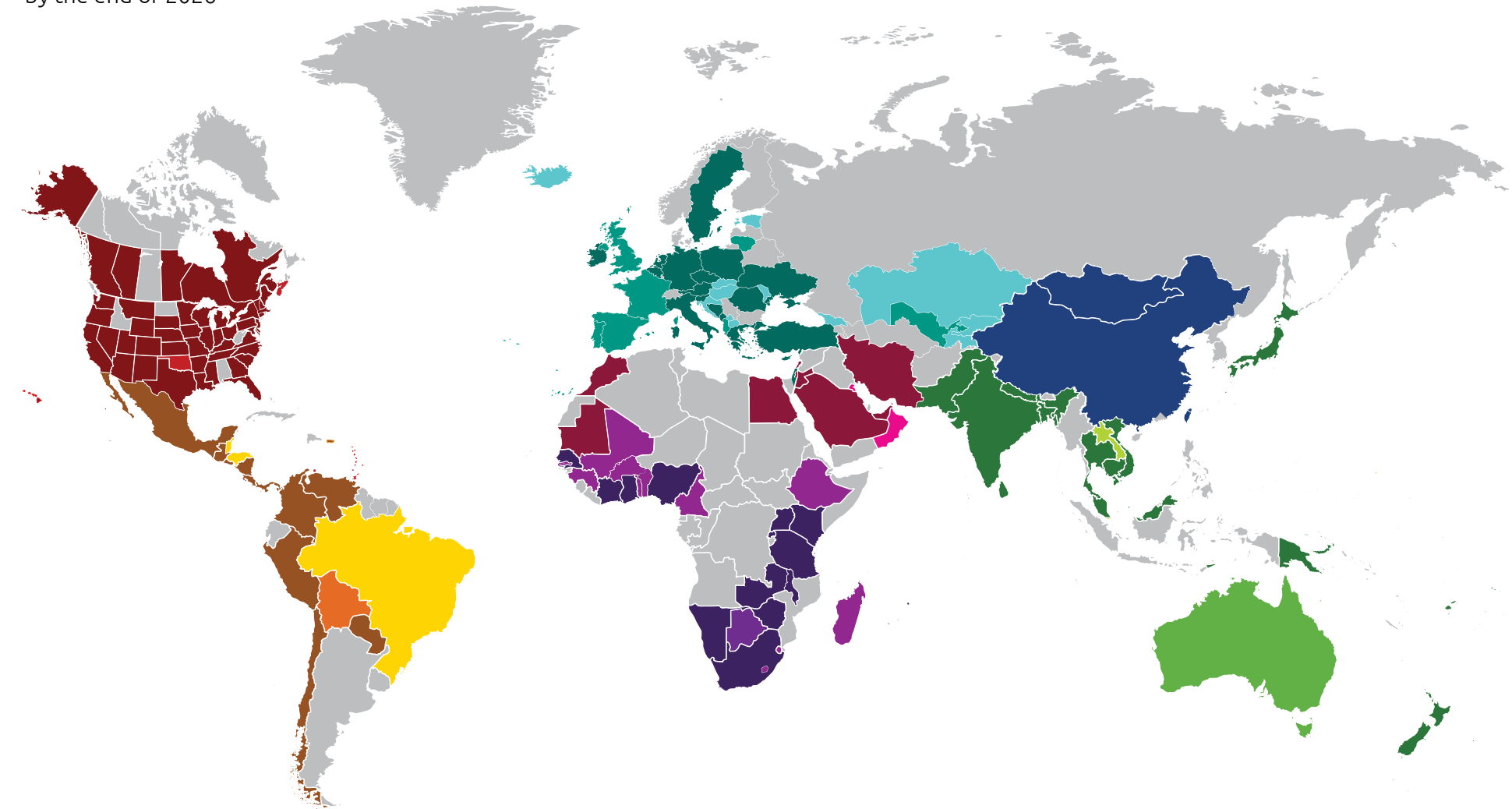
Dr. Jenkins in creating referral networks, providing athlete-friendly educational resources, leading academic research and promoting inclusive health initiatives have significantly impacted the lives of athletes with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers. His dedication to fostering prevention, quality assessments, and partnerships inspires others to emulate his inclusive health allyship and make a difference in their communities.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MAP

Healthy Communities work was newly initiated in 12 countries and 1 US state, bringing the total number of sites where Healthy Communities has been initiated up to 145. Special Olympics has a goal of reaching 150 Special Olympics Programs by the end of 2026

Special Olympics Region	North America	Latin America	Africa	East Asia	Middle East/ North Africa	Asia Pacific	Europe Eurasia
Previously Initiated Healthy Communities Work	Dark Red	Dark Yellow	Dark Purple	Dark Blue	Dark Magenta	Dark Green	Dark Teal
Newly Initiated Healthy Communities Work	Light Red	Light Yellow	Light Purple	Light Blue	Light Magenta	Light Green	Light Teal
HA/FHF/YA in 2023	Red	Yellow	Purple	Blue	Magenta	Green	Teal



P.A.T.H. TO HEALTH EQUITY

Special Olympics' health work is aimed at achieving health equity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This work focuses on:



Prevention

Ongoing programs that promote health, fitness, child development, and social-emotional health. It is a lifespan approach, from Young Athletes to older adults.



Assessment

Health screenings and follow-up care for Special Olympics athletes.



Training

Curricula and training for the healthcare workforce, focused on inclusion and improving quality of care delivered to people with IDD.



Health Systems Strengthening

Innovative, targeted partnerships and policy changes at the local, national, regional, and global levels to elevate the voices and health needs of people with IDD.

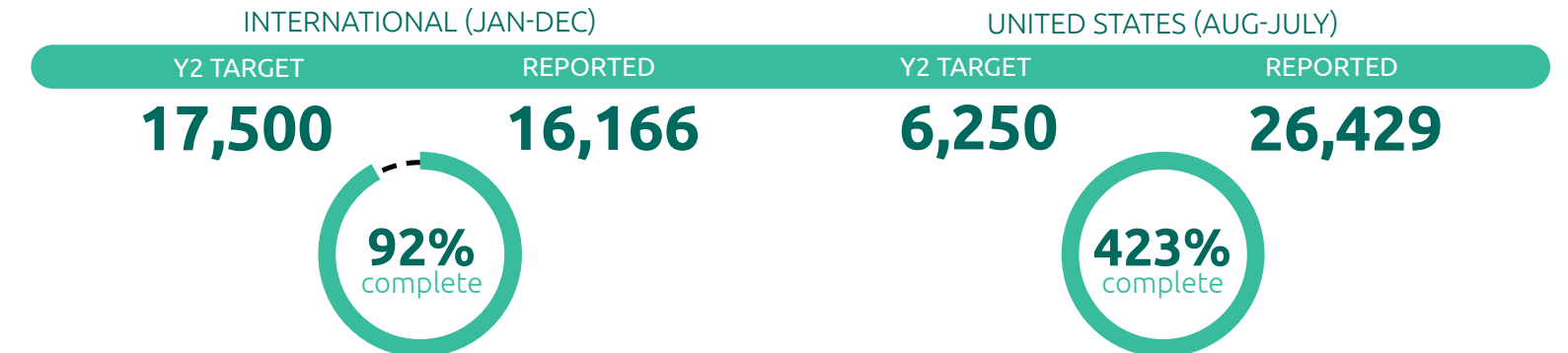


PREVENTION

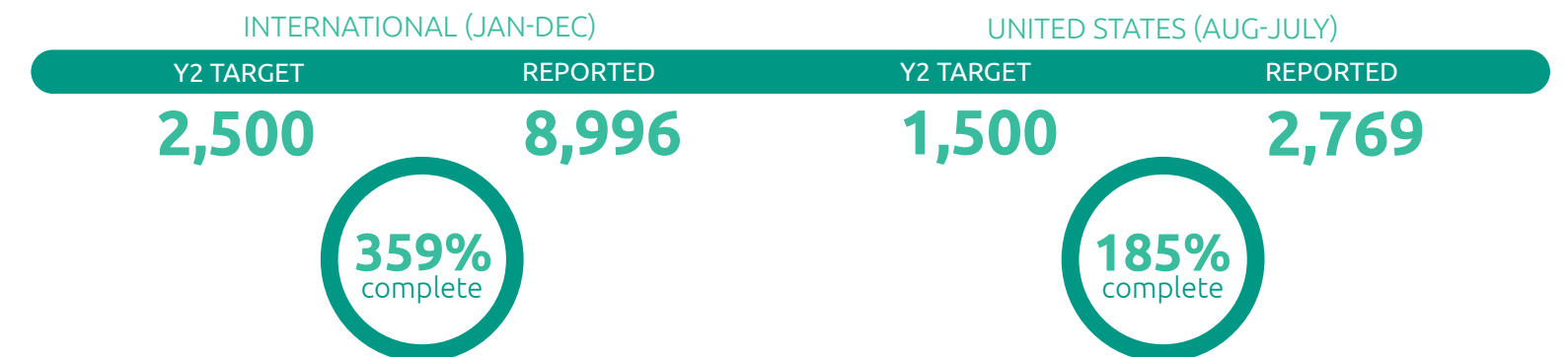


Y2 METRICS: PREVENTION

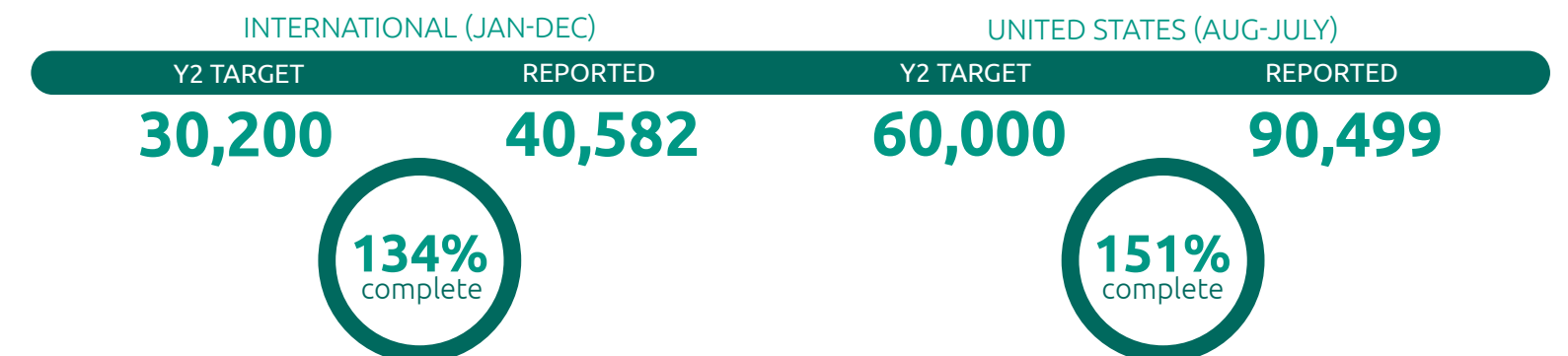
OF NEW YOUNG ATHLETES



ATTENDING FAMILY HEALTH FORUMS/HEALTH EDUCATION



ATHLETES IN FITNESS



EARLY CHILDHOOD & FAMILIES

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: CHILDREN WITH IDD MAKE DEVELOPMENTAL GAINS

YOUNG ATHLETES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Special Olympics Young Athletes benefits children with and without IDD by providing key developmental supports, and achieves a 7-month accelerated gain in motor skills, along with significant increases in adaptive skill development and decreases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors. In 2023, Special Olympics expanded early childhood programming by developing the Child and Family Health model, while also continuing to standardize the quality implementation of ongoing Young Athletes programming for children with and without IDD.

FROM THE FIELD: To grow Young Athletes programming across the country, Special Olympics South Africa trained master Young Athletes coaches, who implemented their own programming but also led the training of new coaches and recruited new school and community sites in their area. The model has allowed the Program to sustainably grow Young Athletes programming and reach new, hard-to-reach districts across South Africa.

YOUNG ATHLETES CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In 2023, Special Olympics piloted the implementation of a standardized full-school year curriculum across four states –

Arizona, Kansas, Michigan, and New York. The curriculum aligns Young Athletes activities with core academic and physical education standards for pre-K and kindergarten. It includes activities that support children in developing social, emotional, cognitive, and learning skills. Feedback from Special Olympics Programs and educators will be used to adapt and finalize the curriculum before launching in summer 2024.

In addition to the US curriculum, Special Olympics developed a global version. The global curriculum provides additional context on inclusive education practices, suggestions for aligning the curriculum with local education standards, and templates to integrate local activities, stories, and songs into activities. This curriculum will ensure flexibility and usability around the world, while also ensuring standardized implementation for maximum developmental benefit.

Special Olympics continued development of the Young Athletes app, to guide parents

and caregivers through a child's early developmental years. Activities in 2023 included completing pilots of the initial iteration of the app with families in Colorado, Minnesota, and Louisiana and conducting Phase 2 development. During the pilots, feedback on app usability and functionality was solicited from families through focus groups. Families found the activities, videos, and visual components to be the most valuable. Families were also looking to build in-person connections through the

“ [Stories of inspiration] added emotion to the app that I didn't think it would have.”

“ [The activities were] exactly what therapy wanted us to do, but in a fun way!”

community, receive notifications to track their child's progress, and find more activities within

the app across developmental skill areas.

Using the pilot feedback as a guide, Special Olympics completed Phase 2 development, which included building out notifications to users, enhancing the developmental survey to include more developmental skill areas, making the community easier to use with direct messaging in the app, and building out the Healthy Start toolkit into the app. AI translation features were also added to expand language capacities to include Special Olympics primary languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish). Following Phase 2 development, in July 2023 the Young Athletes app was approved and made available for public download in the Google Play and Apple app stores globally.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH PILOT

In July 2023, through additional support secured from the Gates Foundation, Special Olympics completed a 2.5-year pilot in five countries – Egypt, India, Pakistan, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates - to expand Young Athletes programming to a holistic family and child approach. Through the pilot, **13,143 children participated in Young Athletes activities, 12,581 parents and caregivers received education and support through Young Athletes and family health education activities, 344 Family Health Forum events were hosted, and 449 children were screened through the Healthy Young Athletes pediatric screening.**

The culmination of the pilot project led to the

development of a new, structured model for Child and Family Health programming that launched globally to Special Olympics Programs at the end of 2023.

The model aims to create a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to support children with IDD and their families, ensuring they have the tools and resources needed for a brighter future. Over the course of 8 weeks, the three-pronged model supports holistic health and development for children with IDD through:

- 8 weeks of Young Athletes, which provides direct intervention to the child.
- A minimum of 4 Family Health Forums, with topics including nutrition, positive parenting, and parent mental health, to provide family education and support.
- Healthy Young Athletes pediatric screening, which provides access to community healthcare services.

Special Olympics conducted an ongoing evaluation of the pilot project. Data was collected at baseline and 8-10 weeks post intervention.

Results showed significant improvements in adaptive behavior skills, including communication, daily living, social skills and relationships, physical activity, and maladaptive behaviors – internalizing and externalizing. There were also positive impacts for parents and caregivers in the areas of parent empowerment and efficacy.

Special Olympics Young Athletes benefits children with and without IDD by providing key developmental supports, and achieves a 7-month accelerated gain in motor skills, along with significant increases in adaptive skill development and decreases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

support other families and advocate for the health needs of their child with IDD. These family ambassadors led programming and events in their local governorate to build a network of support and education for mothers and families.

YOUNG ATHLETES AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES IN BERLIN

Young Athletes was hosted for the first time in Germany at the Special Olympics World Games Berlin

2023. During the Games, **over 700 children, families, and educators actively participated in Young Athletes activities** during the week-long demonstration. The event was a collaboration between the Local Organizing Committee, the World Badminton Federation (an International Youth Sports Partner), and a sensory equipment company, Good Wood, which ensured a comprehensive and inclusive experience for every child involved. Sargent Shriver Global Messengers participated as emcees and volunteers and offered an opportunity for children and families to see their future potential in the Special Olympics movement.

FROM THE FIELD: Following the Games, Special Olympics Germany launched Young

Athletes programming, with a focus on implementation of school-based programming. The Program hosted a "Sportsday" in Berlin that engaged over 100 children from a participating kindergarten and kicked off ongoing Young Athletes programming in the school. Special Olympics Germany also developed a Young Athletes coaches' course and translated the Young Athletes Activity Guide to support the implementation of programming.



Special Olympics Bharat (India) hosted the Healthy Young Athletes Pediatric Screening at the DAV Public School in Haryana, India. The screening included local pediatric health professionals and offered children with IDD access to comprehensive health screenings covering development, hearing, vision, dental, vitals, and more.

FAMILY HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2023, Family Health Forums (FHF) continued to be a key driver to engage family members in the Special Olympics movement. FHF events covered a range of topics, including nutrition, diabetes care and prevention, emotional wellness and mental health, human rights and inclusion, hygiene and sanitation, sexual health, and more, to meet the individual needs of athletes and families at the local level.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics Namibia hosted a Family Health Forum on nutrition and fitness for over 150 vulnerable families of Special Olympics athletes. The forum provided valuable information on inexpensive, but nutritious food options, which help to ease the economic burden families are currently feeling due to high inflation rates and ensure caregivers can offer nutritious meals to their families.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics Laos hosted a Family Health Forum that provided families with an introduction to IDD and supported families to learn how to care for and support their child with IDD. Following the forum, Special Olympics Laos established a family group chat to allow ongoing communication and continued support.

FROM THE FIELD: As part of their implementation of the Child and Family Health model, Special Olympics Pakistan hosted a Family Health Forum series that regularly brought together families for ongoing health education. Sessions

covered important topics such as managing behaviors, physical activity, anxiety and stress in parents and caregivers, and more. They also partnered with local organizations that offer additional services and support to further meet the needs of families.

STANDARDIZED FAMILY HEALTH FORUM CURRICULA

To support the implementation of quality FHF events that targeted the specific health and care needs of people with IDD, Special Olympics developed standardized curricula for two FHF topic areas – Healthy Eating and Parent and Caregiver Stress Management. Resources developed include a Facilitators Guide, topic-specific guide, presentation materials, and a participant workbook, all meant to support easy and seamless implementation of FHF events. Additionally, development began on two additional topics – Family Fitness and Diabetes Prevention and Management – which will be launched in 2024.



Young Athletes lead volunteers through a celebration tunnel formed by Special Olympics Germany cheerleaders during the Young Athletes festival at the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023.

FITNESS

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: ATHLETES LIVE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIVES

Special Olympics supports people with IDD to maximize their health and well-being by developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to lead a healthy and active life. Special Olympics drives this work through a focus on fitness programming and optimal health and performance through adequate physical activity, nutrition, and hydration.

In 2023, fitness programming continued to expand with a focus on quality and strategic implementation, whereby people with IDD engage in fitness programming throughout the year.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics British Columbia hosted a 9-week Sizzlin' Summer Challenge in 2023 that encouraged athletes and their supporters to move their bodies and exercise five days a week for 30 minutes a day, drink at least 5 bottles of water per day, and eat five fruits and vegetables every day. The challenge targeted the 142 Team British Columbia athletes training for the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games but was expanded to include more than 40 other athletes as well.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics Netherlands engaged two fitness professionals to

educate families about fitness and lead an engaging physical activity session. Education focused on mental health, including self-confidence and building a positive support system, and self-defense, including knowing your boundaries and learning when to say 'no'.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics China hosted an 8-week Fit 5 program across six community centers in Shanghai. During the program, one to two fitness classes were offered weekly, utilizing the Fit 5 and Dynamic Stretches Guide resources. In total, the classes served approximately 600 participants. Special Olympics China partnered with the Guangzhou Sport University to develop an online training manual to prepare fitness coaches to implement the Fit 5 programming in these community centers.

FROM THE FIELD: In 2023, Special Olympics South Africa leveraged their Healthy Communities work to receive a substantial grant from the Jobs Fund of South Africa. This allowed them to provide paid internship opportunities to 4,000 Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners, primarily from special needs schools and residential centers. Interns received training in the SO Fit and Fit5 models and hands-on experience working in vegetable gardens and learning

cooking skills. Naturally, these trainees have developed into leaders who can impart their skills to other athletes and peers with IDD. At one job site, Fulufhelo School in Limpopo, the staff have kept on their interns not only as coaches, but also as maintenance assistants for the facilities and garden, which now provide some of the ingredients for school lunches. South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa visited Fulufhelo and commended them, declaring his wish to support the continuation of the pilot program as part of his Presidential Legacy Program. Special Olympics South Africa has again received Jobs Fund support for this initiative in 2024 and are hoping to establish it as an annual offering.

FITNESS STRATEGY

In 2023, Special Olympics launched a guiding strategy to enhance the quality and growth of fitness in four key areas of work: on-going programming, education, technology, and advocacy. The strategy was distributed to regions and Programs and will ensure fitness programming maximizes the health and well-being of Special Olympics athletes.

FITNESS THROUGH SPORT

Using findings from the fitness through sport evaluation in 2022, Special Olympics developed the Fitness through Sport guiding

strategy in 2023. The strategy prioritizes key objectives including, **1)** using sports practices as a catalyst for fitness and healthy lifestyles, **2)** ensuring competitions provide a healthy and safe environment for athletes to achieve their personal best, and **3)** providing key supporters with knowledge and resources to assist athletes to be healthy and fit. The strategy is supported by the launch of minimum "fit" practice standards in 2023, and required standardized practices, like warm-ups, cool-downs, sports conditioning, and active practices, to ensure the alignment of fitness into a quality sports experience.

FITNESS CAPTAINS

In alignment with the Fitness through Sport work, Special Olympics piloted and launched the Fitness Captains athlete leadership role in 2023. Fitness Captains are trained to work closely with their coaches to ensure health and fitness are key components of the sports experience. Fitness Captains support their teams by leading safe and effective warm-ups and cool downs, providing health education tips before and after practice, and modeling health behaviors to their teammates.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics Ireland participated in the 2023 Fitness Captain pilot. During the pilot, 19 Fitness Captains from across all areas in the country were trained. These athletes were new to athlete leadership and the Program noted the role served as a great introduction to leadership skill development. In fact, one parent noted before the training that they were unclear why their child was nominated by the coach for this opportunity,

but by the end of the training, the parent was in tears because they were able to see their child shine and use leadership and communication skills they had never seen them use before.

PERFORMANCE STATIONS AT SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES IN BERLIN

For the first time in a World Games, Performance Stations were integrated into the Sport Impact Standards at the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023. This meant that warm-up, cool-down, nutrition, and hydration stations were integrated into the sports experience, versus being seen as something separate. Additionally, education was provided to coaches in advance, through eLearning courses, delegation webinars, and coach meetings, to support further buy-in and integration of fitness into the competition experience. In Berlin, this was piloted in swimming and athletics and competition schedules, with the goal of expanding to all sports in future Games.

In addition to Performance Stations, Special Olympics conducted an evaluation of healthy lifestyle behaviors across a global sample of athletes using the Lifestyle Survey. The lifestyle survey was developed for people with ID and gauges changes in lifestyle behaviors and well-being before and after participation in Special Olympics programming. As part of the evaluation, **443 athletes from 90 countries completed the Lifestyle Survey.** Here are some of the findings.

These findings reflect the geographic variability in health behaviors and resources among Special Olympics athletes that affect their physical activity, nutrition, and health. The findings highlight the need to adapt Special Olympics health programming to the unique needs of the region/country to be relevant and useful for that population. With further refinement of the Special Olympics Lifestyle Survey, there is potential to gather information from large global samples of people with IDD to identify disparities with the general population and determine priorities for more targeted health promotion.

28.1%
EAST ASIA
to
60.7%
LATIN AMERICA
consumed 5+ vegetables/day

5.1% - 19.2%
AFRICA
to
NORTH AMERICA
reported sitting for 8+ hours/day

The proportion of athletes engaging in 30+ min/day of moderate physical activity on 5+ days/week ranged from 6.6% (East Asia) to 26.0% (North America).

Athletes reporting that their health was good-excellent ranged from 75.4% (Latin America) to 96% (Asia Pacific).

8.0% - 22.4%
ASIA PACIFIC
to
LATIN AMERICA
participated in 30+ min/day of vigorous physical activity 5+ days/week

73.5%
MIDDLE EAST
to
90.9%
EAST ASIA
consumed 5+ vegetables/day

50%
(Half) of respondents completed the survey in languages other than English.

48.5%
EAST ASIA
to
76.0%
LATIN AMERICA
consumed 5+ fruits/day

HIGH 5 FOR FITNESS

In 2023, Special Olympics began piloting the implementation of the 6-week High 5 for Fitness school lesson plans across three states – Maryland, Missouri, and Wyoming. The lesson plans align fitness programming to ShapeAmerica physical education standards and provide age-appropriate support across three grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Feedback from educators and Programs participating in the pilot will be used to adapt and finalize the materials before launching in summer 2024. In addition to the US lesson plans, Special Olympics developed a global version of the materials. The global templates provide additional context to align the High 5 for Fitness lesson plans to local standards and customs. The resources will ensure flexibility and usability around the world, while also ensuring standardized implementation for maximum adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviors.

GLOBAL STUDY OF COVID-19 VACCINATION

In 2023, [Special Olympics published the findings from a global study](#) to identify rates of COVID-19 vaccination and reasons for not vaccinating among adults with ID associated with country economic income levels. The Special Olympics COVID-19 online survey was administered in January-February 2022 to adults with ID from 138 countries. Participants (n = 3560) represented 18 low (n = 410), 35 lower-middle (n = 1182), 41 upper-middle (n = 837), and 44 high (n = 1131) income countries. Key findings include:

Globally, **76%** (74.8–77.6%) received a COVID-19 vaccination while 49.5% (47.9–51.2%) received a COVID-19 booster.

Adults with ID from low and low-middle income countries reported fewer COVID-19 vaccinations, suggesting reduced access and availability of resources in these countries.

Globally, COVID-19 vaccination levels among adults with ID were higher than the general population.

Interventions should address the increased risk of infection for those in congregate living situations and family caregiver apprehension to vaccinate this high-risk population.

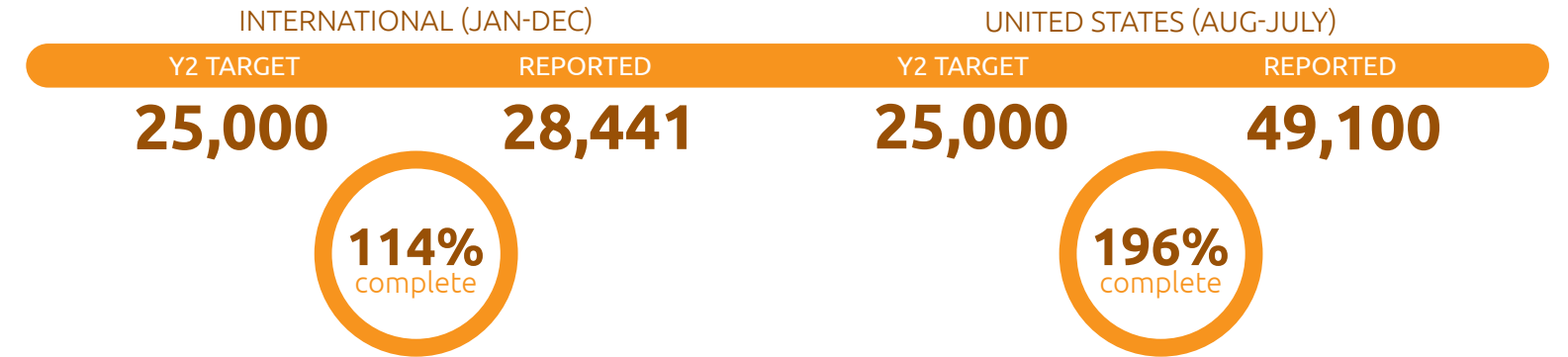
Globally, concerns about side effects (42%, (36.5–48.1%)) and parent/guardian not wanting the adult with ID to vaccinate (32% (26.1–37.0%)) were the most common reasons for not vaccinating.

ASSESSMENT

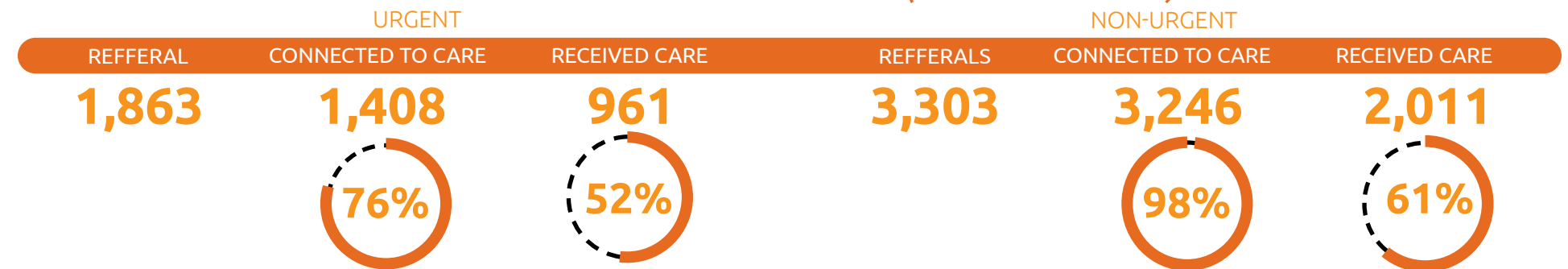


Y2 METRICS: ASSESSMENT

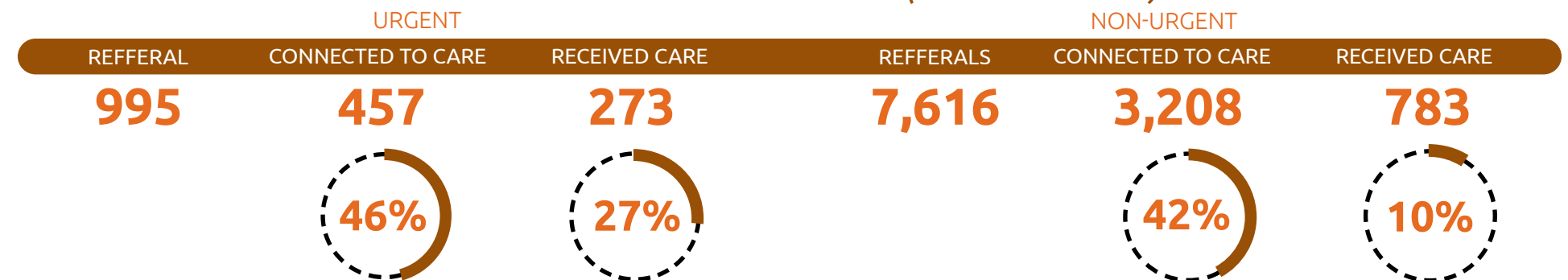
HEALTHY ATHLETES SCREENINGS



FOLLOW UP CARE REPORTED (INTERNATIONAL)



FOLLOW UP CARE REPORTED (UNITED STATES)



HEALTHY ATHLETES®

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: ATHLETE HEALTH ISSUES AND RISKS ARE PROMPTLY AND ACCURATELY IDENTIFIED.

With a focus on accessible, tailored health services for people with IDD, Special Olympics Healthy Athletes has expanded to nine health screening disciplines. The program is in a period of significant growth, with the addition of Healthy Young Athletes in 2022-2023 and the ongoing updates of Healthy Athletes 2.0 that include current, evidence-based screenings, consistent referral criteria and categorization, and development of an updated electronic health record. In 2023, **77,541 Healthy Athletes screenings were performed** by Special Olympics Programs globally, resulting in **2,858 urgent and 10,919 non-urgent referrals for follow-up care** due to health concerns or preventable risks identified through screening. Healthy Athletes screenings equip Special Olympics athletes with better awareness of their health status, share educational and supportive material to improve their health, and provide much needed services like prescription eyewear and hearing aid fittings. Globally in 2023, **7,159 pairs of prescription eyewear were provided to Special Olympics athletes** and **over 760 individuals were fit with hearing aids**, at no charge. In 2023,

the newest Healthy Athletes discipline, a holistic pediatrics screening, expanded implementation in a total of 14 Programs. This discipline, in partnership with Young Athletes programming, addresses the health and social needs of individuals 2 to 7 years old.

In 2023, 77,541 Healthy Athletes screenings were performed by Special Olympics Programs globally, resulting in 2,858 urgent and 10,919 non-urgent referrals for follow-up care due to health concerns or preventable risks identified through screening.

HEALTHY ATHLETES 2.0

Initiated in 2022, Healthy Athletes 2.0 focuses on the development and implementation of elevated screening protocols across all nine disciplines, which are evidence-based and functional in nature. Developed in collaboration with a voluntary panel of global clinical experts

aligned with each discipline, Healthy Athletes 2.0 will better identify risk factors of chronic conditions and facilitate appropriate referral and timely follow-up to contribute to improved health outcomes for Special Olympics athletes.

The building of an updated and dynamic electronic health record system is integral to the development of Healthy Athletes and ensuring real-time data capture across screening environments, providing a comprehensive view of athlete health over time, and efficiently contributing to the referral and follow-up care process. Improvements are underway in several major categories which include screening content and format, clean data capture, care coordination, and operational elements. All nine disciplines' HAS forms have been streamlined and standardized to improve their usability and the quality of data captured. Surveillance measures from national (U.S.) and international tools (e.g., NHANES, BRFSS, WHO) have been integrated into all disciplines' screening forms. This development will allow Special Olympics to directly compare the health status of Special Olympics athletes with those

of the general population, and thus measure the reduction of health disparities over time.

As one example, the Strong Minds discipline has completed development to include formal mental health screening measures (i.e., CORE-LD30 and WEMWBS-ID) to identify athletes at risk for mental health concerns. Screening results will inform a more robust referral system to connect these athletes with community-based healthcare professionals, a new and necessary addition to the Healthy Athletes model.

Another example demonstrates the value of including surveillance measures to better understand the health disparities experienced by our athletes.

We presented the following findings at the 2023 Gatlinburg Conference from "Comparing the Health of Special Olympics Athletes to those with and without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities using National Surveillance Systems":

Special Olympics athletes have a **33%** higher prevalence of elevated blood pressure compared to the US general population.

Special Olympics athletes have a **15%** higher prevalence of overweight/obesity compared to the US general population.

Tobacco use is **40%** lower among Special Olympics athletes compared to the US general population.

To ensure consistent, high-quality screenings, a continuous quality improvement framework has been developed which will guide Programs through standards for equipment, supplies, and staffing for various Healthy Athletes events. As an example, par levels for the number of tablets needed for electronic documentation was developed, and staffing parameters were also created based on the number of athletes anticipated at events. Additionally, new Clinical Director (CD) training manuals are in the process of being revised and updated and will be formatted into a new engaging online format to supplement the overall training of CDs. All these initiatives will enhance the quality and consistency of Healthy Athletes screenings globally.

FROM THE FIELD (WISCONSIN): One shining example of the importance of Special Smiles® is Dan B., a Special Olympics Wisconsin athlete. Dan was competing in softball at the State Fall Games in 2023 and attended Special Smiles®. At his screening, Dan was identified as needing follow up care. Just a few weeks later, Dan's sister drove him across the state to the first Special Olympics Gives Athletes a Smile Day to have several teeth extracted and be fitted for a partial denture.

About a month later, Dan travelled another couple of hours to the next free dental day to receive his dentures and another cleaning.

Without Special Smiles® and the compassion and generosity of our Special Smiles® Clinical Directors, Dr. Tammy Boudry and Dr. Robb Warren, Dan's condition would have gone untreated and potentially led to more serious issues.

“It is always such an honor to work with the Special Olympics Special Smiles Program every year” said Dr. Karen Johnson DDS. “My team was thrilled to take care of Dan this year at Boudry Dental. By performing a number of extractions of severely decayed teeth, it allowed Dan to be pain free and heal from infection that, if left untreated, could have affected more than just his oral health.”

“Dan, who also participates in bowling and basketball, certainly appreciates what Special Smiles® did for him. “Since I had my teeth fixed, I'm not in pain anymore and have more confidence. I want to thank everyone who helped me with my teeth. It's so awesome to have a program to help people in Special Olympics, especially when some people can't afford to get their teeth fixed. Thank you to everyone that helped make this happen!”



WORLD GAMES BERLIN 2023 HEALTHY ATHLETES

Healthy Athletes at Special Olympics World Games 2023 was opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony that included key remarks by Dr. Lauterbach, Minister of Health in Germany, a message of support from Dr. Tedros, Director General of the World Health Organization, and Maria Shriver, daughter to Eunice Kennedy Shriver. As a result, the screenings received strong media coverage including **81 social media posts** which received **461,000 impressions and reached nearly 500K individuals**. One particular article in the German press titled 'More than 12,400 medical treatments at Special Olympics' ran on 23 June in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, which has a reach of over 14 million, and was picked up and amplified by a number of additional outlets.

Healthy Athletes boasted more than 15,000 screenings for over 4,500 participants in seven Healthy Athletes disciplines.

Healthy Athletes programming was attended by 98% of participating delegations attending the World Games.

Healthy Athletes boasted more than **15,000 screenings for over 4,500 participants** in seven Healthy Athletes disciplines. This success was in part due to the implementation of a fully digital solution including a smart queueing system that maximized efficiency. This screening event resulted in more than **4,000 referrals for over 2,400 athletes** requiring follow-up care. Lions Clubs International Foundation Opening Eyes **provided more than 1,300 pairs of prescription eyewear to athletes**. Healthy Hearing served 266 individuals with hearing instrumentation and care, with 259 fit onsite through the partnership with Starkey Cares, 51 of whom received fully customized ear molds that were scanned, 3-D printed and then expedited back to the Games to fit the athletes.

Notably, Healthy Athletes programming was attended by 98% of participating delegations attending the World Games. This attendance, by athletes, coaches, and Program staff garnered interest and support in establishing Healthy Athletes at global Programs and strengthening existing programming with the addition of new screening disciplines. A highlight of Healthy Athletes at World Games were the Unified guest tours led by Health staff and Sargent Shriver Global Messengers.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: ATHLETES RECEIVE TREATMENT FOR THE HEALTH ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH HEALTHY ATHLETES SCREENINGS.

Referred follow-up is a critical step in closing the loop on care for Special Olympics athletes. From the referrals generated through global Healthy Athletes screenings in 2023, 8,319 were confirmed to have a place to go to receive follow-up care and furthermore, 4,028 were confirmed to have received follow-up care. This is an area of necessary and continued effort to support athletes in ensuring their follow-up care needs are met following screenings. To improve athletes' access to healthcare services, Special Olympics Programs are developing more robust community partnerships and provider directories locally. The development of the Healthy Athletes System in both screening content, design, and the electronic health record aims to support streamlined referral generation, improved athlete participation in care connection, and facilitate successful care connection for athletes following screenings. Special Olympics also implemented a small scale, US-based care connection pilot utilizing nurse case managers to reach athletes with referrals and facilitate their direct connection to care in their local communities. The scope of this project will be expanded in 2024.

FROM THE FIELD: From August through November, Special Olympics Mauritania

trained over 200 health professionals and students, both at Healthy Athletes and other forums. They and their partners in the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs coordinated follow-up care for **43 athletes suffering from malaria and helped 234 people with IDD register for national health insurance**, building on progress made in previous years.

FROM THE FIELD: In 2023, Special Olympics Colombia held seven Healthy Hearing and Special Smiles screening events across multiple cities. **Special Olympics Colombia secured follow-up care for 100% of the 78 athletes referred for care** at these events. They coordinated specialist follow-up care for an athlete with mouth cancer and one with a developing eye tumor. Their foundation and sport institute partners provide invaluable support in processing the athletes' necessary information through the country's social security system, ensuring their medical history is recorded for future reference and they are referred to the proper place.

FROM THE FIELD: (SPECIAL OLYMPICS MONGOLIA) Amarsaikhan is a single father of three boys 5, 8, 10 years old. His oldest son, Dolgoon, is autistic. Amarsaikhan shared that Dolgoon

would never go to the doctor for a medical checkup because it made him very anxious and panicky. However, since joining Special Olympics, Dolgoon has received three Healthy Athletes screenings and has had a very positive experience. Part of that success has been the support of Dolgoon's brothers at the screenings. "Another good thing participating in Special Olympics events is that it always welcomes siblings and even they can have Health Screening together with his brother" says Amarsaikhan.



And it's a good thing that Healthy Athletes was a space where Dolgoon felt comfortable because at a recent Opening Eyes screening, it was found that he had a serious eye problem. Not only was this condition detected, but Special Olympics Mongolia was able to ensure that the condition was successfully treated by a community clinician.

Dolgoon participates in Bocce and in a Fitness club. His father hopes that in the future Dolgoon will become a successful Special Olympics athlete with good health and spirit.

FROM THE FIELD: Moses Butulule is a Special Olympics Kenya athlete. Moses is 8 years old and has both physical (spina bifida) and intellectual disabilities. He lives with his paternal grandmother, Gladys Butulule, since his biological parents rejected him because of his disabilities.

In October of 2023, Special Olympics Kenya conducted a Healthy Athletes screening for more than 300 athletes in Mupeli Primary School. Moses was part of those who were screened and was referred to Bungoma Referral Hospital for further medical checkup and treatment. As Special Olympics Kenya collaborates with Bungoma County Health Department and had trained the staff on providing quality assessments to persons with disabilities, his grandmother was able to secure an appointment promptly and he was given the treatment that he needed as well as a wheelchair free of charge.



Moses is registered under the school's home-based programme since he cannot manage to attend school on a daily basis due to his condition and the fact that his grandmother cannot afford to pay for his motorbike transport every day. Previously, Moses had never had a wheelchair. He used to be placed on a mat where he spent the majority of his time lying down. The provision of a wheelchair was a huge relief to him and his grandmother. With enhanced mobility, he is now able to interact with his family members easily, gets to accompany them to social events and movement around his home has eased up. "This would not have been possible without the medical assessment by Special Olympics Kenya. Without this, my grandson would still be lying on the mat" says Gladys, Moses' grandmother.

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YEAR 2 METRICS: TRAINING

CLINICIANS & STUDENTS TRAINED AT HEALTHY ATHLETES

INTERNATIONAL (JAN - DEC) UNITED STATES (AUG-JULY)

Y2 TARGET	REPORTED	PROGRESS	Y2 TARGET	REPORTED	PROGRESS
1,735	5,223	301%	-	9,468	-

CLINICIANS & STUDENTS TRAINED AT NON-HEALTHY ATHLETES EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL (JAN - DEC) UNITED STATES (AUG-JULY)

Y2 TARGET	REPORTED	PROGRESS	Y2 TARGET	REPORTED	PROGRESS
2,240	5,812	259%	-	5,873	-

TRAINING

TRAINING

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: A HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE QUALITY CARE TO PEOPLE WITH IDD.

The 2022 Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities highlights that “a six-fold discrepancy in deaths amenable to quality health care can be seen between persons with intellectual disabilities and the general population.” To improve the quality of care provided to individuals with IDD, training of healthcare providers and students must remain a top priority.

Healthy Athletes continues to be an excellent entry point into training for clinicians and students, but Special Olympics also supports a growing number of online and in-person training opportunities beyond Healthy Athletes events. Major target audiences for educational and training opportunities include healthcare professionals, healthcare profession students, Clinical Directors, non-clinical volunteers, Community Health Workers, and organizations such as Health Ministries and Area Health Education Centers.

TRAINING CLINICIANS AND STUDENTS AT HEALTHY ATHLETES Globally, **14,691 clinicians and students were trained at Healthy Athlete events.** In addition, 279 Clinical Directors were trained in a blended learning format at events held in

Berlin at the Special Olympics World Games, including the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Peru, Oman, Hong Kong, and Lombok, and several sites in the U.S. This focus on the training of new Clinical Directors represents significant growth relative to 2022 and addresses both the loss of Clinical Directors experienced due to the pandemic, as well as a renewed demand by Special Olympics Programs to offer more Healthy Athletes screenings.

The blended learning format is the new standard modality for training for Clinical Directors, leading to increased capacity to fully train Clinical Directors by removing the need for in-person events only. The blended learning training consists of an online training component followed by an in-person experience. The online training encompasses 5 modules: Introduction to ID, Special Olympics Health, Role of a Clinical Director, discipline specific training and FAQs. Those who complete the online training modules complete a pre and post survey, an assessment, and an assignment. For the in-person experience, the candidate is matched to a Special Olympics Program with a strong Clinical Director who has led quality screenings

in their discipline. The trainee shadows the Clinical Director during a Healthy Athlete screening, including set-up, data collection, referrals, all stations and closing. During the in-person experience the trainee will fill out an assignment to verify that they completed each station during their experience, share any questions or concerns and have the Clinical Director sign off confirming the completion of training. Once the blended learning training option became available, there was an influx of interest from Special Olympics Programs.

TRAINING CLINICIANS AND STUDENTS BEYOND HEALTHY ATHLETES EVENTS

Globally, **11,211 clinicians and students were trained beyond Healthy Athletes events.** One way in which clinicians and students were trained was through the Learning Management System (LMS). Of those trained in 2023, 1,080 were through the LMS, with 741 in North America (566 from the US and 175 from Canada & the Caribbean) and 339 in all other regions. Besides North America, trainees from the Asia Pacific region used the LMS most frequently for training, followed by the Latin America region. The

most popular courses were Supporting Families Through the Intellectual Disability Diagnosis (n=314), Introduction to Intellectual Disabilities (n=290) and General Health Volunteer Training (n=159). Outside of the LMS reach, other education and training was hosted by Special Olympics Programs and staff at various community sites, and these reached a further 10,131 individuals. Additionally, 315 individuals completed the Community Health Worker (CHW) training globally, with 243 CHWs trained in Uganda, 19 CHWs trained from the Community Health Worker Collaborative of South Dakota, and 35 Program staff globally trained via Train the Trainer.

FROM THE FIELD: MIRIAM'S JOURNEY TO OVERCOME STIGMA AND DEFEND HER RIGHTS IN UGANDA Born with an intellectual disability, 17-year-old Miriam should have been supported by her family and community to overcome the challenges life had presented her with. Instead, she was ostracized, labelled as ‘cursed’, and even denied the basic support, health care and rights every individual is entitled to.

For Miriam, this discrimination led to a life of isolation, with barely any human interaction. That was until she crossed paths with Mark, a social worker who helped her overcome the barriers imposed by her community. Mark is one of 117 teachers, village health teams, peer educators and social workers who were trained by Special Olympics to identify young people with intellectual disabilities.

As part of his job as a social worker, Mark makes house calls to counsel families with children and young people living with a disability, addressing their specific needs. It was through one of these calls that he heard about Miriam and reached out to her grandmother.

Miriam’s grandmother was initially hesitant to disclose her granddaughter’s story, for fear of stigma. And while Miriam was sexually active, nobody realized she needed help to stay safe and make informed choices about her sexual health. But Mark’s sessions with Miriam soon became a lifeline, allowing her to express her fears and concerns. Mark referred her to a hospital, where she was provided with quality health care and contraception services, as well as information to protect herself from sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

“I am happy to know that we are not alone, and that this is not a curse. I wish I had known earlier in her young life and never lived with shame in the communitiy.”

Miriam’s grandmother participated in a family health forum organized by Special Olympics Uganda in partnership with the ANSWER programme – Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in West Nile and Acholi sub-regions in Uganda – which is implemented by UNFPA. “I never knew this was a medical condition, because no one has ever talked to me about it,” her grandmother explained.

“I am happy to know that we are not alone, and this is not a curse. I wish I had known earlier in her young life and never lived

with shame in the community.” Miriam’s grandmother has started advocating for more gatherings to combat social exclusion of people with disabilities, and to uphold their sexual and reproductive health needs and rights.

GOLISANO VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY

Progress with the Golisano Virtual University in 2023 includes the upgrade of the first five interprofessional modules for healthcare professions students, collectively titled Inclusive Health Fundamentals (IHF). These modules lay the groundwork for a continuing education model with four stages for interprofessional education. The Inclusive Health Fundamentals modules provide core concepts for health professions students which prepare them for more immersive clinical simulation and specialty-based concepts at later stages of learning.

INCLUSIVE HEALTH FUNDAMENTALS (IHF)

MODULE 1: Introduction to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

MODULE 2: Models of Disability

MODULE 3: Health Promotion

MODULE 4: Effective Communications

MODULE 5: Common Physical and Mental Health Challenges

These modules were piloted in Spring 2023 at one international and four U.S. institutions (Rush University - Illinois, Daemen University - New York, St. John Fisher University - New York, University of Minnesota, and South East Technological University - Ireland). From these universities, 546 health professional students from 8 health professions majors and 10 other types of majors participated in the pilot.

Based on feedback from the faculty and students, Special Olympics contracted with an e-learning vendor, ELB Learning, to create immersive and interactive modules which were used in the 2023/2024 Academic Year Phase 2 Pilot. At the end of the Fall 2023 term, an additional 215 students had completed the IHF modules in their new format for a total of 761 students trained in 2023. Universities who participated in the Fall term included University of Maryland, Widener University - Pennsylvania, St. John Fisher University, Daemen University, and Midwestern University - Arizona. Expansion within the Special Olympics Latin America region (Universidad del Desarrollo - Chile, Universidad Científica del Sur - Peru) and Middle East North Africa region (Egypt: Port Said University, Cairo University, Badr University, Ain Shams University, Alexandria University; Iran: Sport Science Research Institute, Islamic Azad University, University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, Tehran University, and University of Guilan, and Kuwait University) as well as universities in Florida, New York, Arkansas, Washington, California, and Chicago is expected for the remainder of the Phase 2 pilot through the Spring 2024 Academic term.

The second step of the educational strategy is focused on providing interprofessional clinical simulation experiences. Clinical simulation laboratories are included in most U.S. medical and nursing schools as well as a growing number outside of the U.S. This past year, Special Olympics partnered with Special Olympics Arkansas, Arizona, Maryland, and Washington to pilot the first clinical simulation case studies using Special Olympics athletes as standardized patients at 5



Photo provide by UNFPA Uganda

universities. **This creates an employment opportunity for Special Olympics athletes while providing real-world cases for the health professions students.** Students can learn to perform clinical interviews and gain valuable experience working with people with IDD. One successful in-person event was held in the Fall of 2023, with all other events planned for the Spring term of 2024.

In the second half of 2023, Special Olympics applied to Joint Accreditation for a 1.5-year self-study process to become accredited to offer continuing education credit for online training courses. It is anticipated that the process will be completed in the 3rd or 4th quarters of 2024. Special Olympics also partnered with HealthStream, an online learning management platform used by 75% of health systems in the US, Canada and the Caribbean. This platform is used to train staff and healthcare providers working at affiliated health systems for regular required training, and the Inclusive Health Fundamentals are now hosted on the platform as optional courses for employees. The modules were

live for the final 4 months of 2023, with 1,775 module completions at 614 unique institutions. The most popular module completed on the HealthStream site was Module 4, Effective Communications.

FROM THE FIELD: Special Olympics Arizona hosted its first "Cultivating Inclusion: A Health and Athlete Leadership Conference" on August 5th, 2023 in Phoenix, Arizona. Over 25 health professionals and 25 healthcare students came together to discuss and learn the importance of inclusive health practices and hear directly from Special Olympics

athletes about their lived experiences during this interactive day. Topics included how to provide interdisciplinary medical evaluations, healthy relationships and safety, caregiver support methods, and overall health equity for people with IDD. During the conference, eight



Special Olympics also partnered with HealthStream, an online learning management platform used by 75% of health systems in the US, Canada and the Caribbean.

athletes took the Introduction to Athlete Leadership Track, while an additional 14 athlete leaders completed advanced training as fitness captains, Health Messengers, and Global Messengers. The conference was spearheaded by the SO Arizona Athlete Leadership Council members, who closed the conference with Unified Leadership training.

FROM THE FIELD: Also in Arizona is an innovative initiative called Lead the Field. Lead the Field provides opportunities for healthcare professional students and athletes to connect one-on-one as a Unified pair, building relationships that lead to understanding, advocacy, and increased inclusion.

including her hobbies, family, health difficulties, and more. It has been very fulfilling to be here when Diane has gone through tough times. We have discussed various topics, including nutrition, exercise, mental health, finding a caregiver, school, work, and social life. As someone studying medicine, I have had the privilege of hearing firsthand from Diane the good and bad experiences she has had with various doctors, and she motivates me to become a doctor who can cater to the needs of patients with an intellectual disability." – Irene, Mayo Clinic Medical Student

"Lead the Field has been life changing for me. I face lots of medical challenges and Irene has been there for me through it all. I can always text or call her. I have only seen her once in person at a community day with Special Olympics when we made bracelets together. I do enjoy our video calls and phone calls though. I am very thankful to have Irene as my friend. She's awesome." – Diane, SOAZ Athlete Leader & Health Messenger.

“As someone studying medicine, I have had the privilege of hearing firsthand from Diane the good and bad experiences she has had with various doctors, and she motivates me to become a doctor who can cater to the needs of patients with an intellectual disability.”

“Lead the Field has been life changing for me.”

"I have developed a close relationship with Diane ever since she was assigned as my buddy from Special Olympics about a year ago. In the very first hour I spent with her, I learned so much about her background,

TRAINING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

To include non-clinical health care workers, Special Olympics has developed and piloted a Community Health Worker (CHW) training program to equip these individuals with information on how to provide inclusive health to people with IDD. A Train the Trainer (TTT) event was held with staff from 35 Special Olympics Programs participating. Special Olympics Uganda trained 243 CHWs in late spring/early summer 2023, and 19 CHWs were trained from the Community Health Worker Collaborative of South Dakota in



May 2023. Early training results indicate that gains in self-efficacy of CHW learners were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) for building communication skills and confidence in caring for people with IDD. The results of this project were presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in November, with **over 100 attendees** and resulting in several health departments and other CHW organizations in the US reaching out for training in 2024.

BUILDING THE GOLISANO VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY ONLINE EXPERIENCE

An integral component of building capacity for interprofessional education rapidly and widely is the development of the Golisano Virtual University (GVU) online platform. In

2023, the health and information technology teams worked with a consultant to identify several organizations which provide a learning management system platform which can meet the GVU requirements. Ultimately, a final firm was selected in late 2023, with contracting underway in early 2024 in preparation for an initial transition planned for late Spring/early Summer 2024. All current health education courses will migrate to the new LMS, with the first courses being the Inclusive Health Fundamentals and other popular health courses projected to be available on the new LMS by the second and third quarters of 2024.

Additionally, over the summer of 2023, Special Olympics contracted with ELB Learning to develop engaging, interactive online learning

modules. ELB Learning has worked with companies such as Roche, Pfizer, GM, and Disney to create engaging training modules. The first set of modules which were designed with ELB Learning were the Inclusive Health Fundamentals, which were completed in July 2023 and are being used in the current 2023/2024 Academic Year pilot. An immersive CHW module was also created in the Fall of 2023, with additional work ongoing through Spring 2024 to update the 4 most popular health courses, which includes Introduction to Intellectual Disability, Special Olympics Health, General Health Volunteer Training, and Supporting Families Through the ID Diagnosis. Additionally, discipline-specific Clinical Director training modules and a new Mental Health Diagnosis module are under development at present and will be completed and uploaded to the new GVU site in the summer. ELB Learning has highlighted their work and partnership with SOI by publishing a [case study](#) on their website in January 2024.



HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING



Y2 METRICS: HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

HEALTH MESSENGERS TRAINED

Y2 TARGET

800

REPORTED

748

PROGRESS

94%

HEALTH MESSENGERS ACTIVATED

Y2 TARGET

1,500

REPORTED

1,338

PROGRESS

89%

TOTAL PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL

859

UNITED STATES

1,739

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

INTERNATIONAL

162

UNITED STATES

379

MINISTRIES OF HEALTH/HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

INTERNATIONAL

81

UNITED STATES

56

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS AND SYSTEMS ADDRESS THE HEALTH NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH IDD.

Health systems are made up of six building blocks: leadership and governance; service delivery; health system financing; health workforce; essential medical products and technologies; and health information systems. With this in mind, Special Olympics has continued to target various building blocks with health systems strengthening activities. Special Olympics continued to bring the issue of IDD-inclusive health into the decision-making spaces and convene changemakers at different levels, all while empowering and centering people with IDD to share their stories and demand what they need to be healthy.

BRINGING DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE HEALTH TO THE WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT 2023

Special Olympics was part of a disability-inclusive-health consortium that brought the topic of disability-inclusive health systems—as well as people with disabilities from the Global South—to the World Health Summit (WHS) in 2023. Held annually in Berlin, the WHS is a global health event renowned for bringing together leaders, experts, and advocates from around the world to address global health challenges.



Photo credit: Jufi Reetz

“Self-advocacy enables people with disabilities to be empowered to ask questions and be included in conversations about our health.”

Special Olympics collaborated with ATScale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, CBM Christian Blind Mission, Clinton Health Access Initiative, GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation), and the Missing Billion Initiative to co-host a disability- and assistive technology-focused session at the Summit. The session was titled: “Reimagining Universal Health Coverage to Leave No One Behind.”

Health Messenger Barbara Njovo (Special Olympics Zimbabwe) participated as a panelist in the session, where she emphasized the importance of training healthcare providers and self-advocacy by people with disabilities.

She recounted discovering, after a visit to a health clinic, that she had been given contraceptive pills without her request. “When I got back home and told my friend, I was so confused!” Barbara said, since her healthcare provider did not explain to her why they prescribed her the pills.

“Self-advocacy enables people with disabilities to be empowered to ask questions and be included in conversations about our health.”
Barbara Njovo (Special Olympics Zimbabwe)

Barbara also highlighted the Assisted Medical Treatment Order (AMTO) letter introduced by the Ministry of Health in Zimbabwe. This initiative provides expedited and free health services to letter holders, who are people with disabilities and older adults.

The consortium’s overarching objective was to ensure active involvement, not just representation, of people with disabilities in shaping global health policies. To that end, the consortium also supported travel by a small group of self-advocates



with disabilities, primarily from the Global South, thanks in part to supplemental funding obtained by Special Olympics and the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) in the form of a **\$25,000 Swift grant from Lever for Change**. Barbara Njovo (Special Olympics Zimbabwe) was joined by David Duncan (Special Olympics Jamaica), and both shared their experiences and advocated for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in health systems worldwide.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE DAY: HEALTH FOR ALL MUST INCLUDE THOSE WITH IDD

December 12 is the celebration of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day, which aims to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage. For UHC Day 2023, Special Olympics seized the opportunity to highlight the importance of including people with intellectual disabilities in health system strengthening efforts around the world.

Funding provided by Lever for Change to Clinton Health Access Initiative and Special Olympics supported the development of a video of highlights from the World Health Summit. Special Olympics and other members of the WHS disability-inclusive-health consortium released this video on social media platforms on UHC Day 2023.

Special Olympics athletes and Health Messengers also featured as UHC Day 2023 champions—both on Special Olympics channels and on the UHC Day campaign’s official website, further amplifying their voices and reinforcing the message of inclusivity within health systems. On Special Olympics International channels alone,

quotes from Special Olympics athletes and Health Messengers from around the globe reached an audience of **15,000 people with 465 engagements**. (e.g. liked, commented, shared).

PILOT OF THREE NEW HEALTH MESSENGER CONTINUING EDUCATION MODULES

In 2023, Special Olympics developed and piloted three continuing education modules for existing Health Messengers. The training modules, which were framed around specialized roles that a Health Messenger might perform, were developed following consultations with Special Olympics HQ, regional, and Program staff, as well as athletes (individually and through Global Athlete Leadership Councils).

The modules were geared at preparing Health Messengers to act as:

- 1 HEALTHY HABITS LEADER (HHL)**
a Health Messenger who implements health behavior education and supports athletes to adopt healthy habits.
- 2 HEALTHY ATHLETES AID (HAA)**
a Health Messenger who helps the Special Olympics Program with Healthy Athletes event planning and implementation, supports fellow athletes attending the Healthy Athletes screening, and encourages them to obtain follow-up care after Healthy Athletes events.
- 3 HEALTH CHANGE CHAMPION (HCC)**
a Health Messenger who communicates to raise awareness, advocate or educate about the health needs of people with IDD, showing the importance of inclusive health for people with IDD.

The implementation of the pilot used a hybrid modality. In collaboration with regional staff, Special Olympics enrolled interested athletes into the module of their choice and, for virtual sessions, provided language interpretation to meet the needs of enrolled Health Messengers. The virtual trainings were facilitated by Special Olympics staff and athletes from around the world, with interpretation into French, Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic. After completing the virtual training, participating Health Messengers were required to complete a practical session and component with their home Program by the end of February 2024. In the coming months, Special Olympics will be working on refining the training materials incorporating feedback from the pilot and making the training materials widely available to Programs.

FROM THE FIELD: Ron Szeto is a bocce athlete from Hong Kong and has participated in Special Olympics for over 10 years. He is also an active athlete leader. He joined a Health Messenger training in 2023 which has inspired him to take on new roles in Special Olympics.

“I have learned many things in the training. What food I need to eat and what exercise I have to do to keep myself healthy. These can help me to have better body condition to achieve a higher sport performance. Apart from that, I feel stressed easily especially when I am facing difficulties and thinking that I did not do things well. The methods in relieving stress taught in the Health Messenger training can provide me with some practical ways to calm down and face the obstacles positively. Being an athlete leader and Health Messenger, I not only help myself, but also

use what I have learned to help other people with intellectual disabilities. To achieve different goals in our daily lives, we should be physically and mentally healthy.”

FROM THE FIELD: At Gaborone Technical College, Odirile, a Special Olympics Botswana athlete, has been inspired to take his personal leadership to a new level. Through Health Messenger training, he not only gained insights into healthcare but also developed computer proficiency. Excited about online learning, Odirile expanded into coaching techniques and athlete development. Now, fueled by knowledge, he aspires to launch an athletics club in his hometown, Thamaga.



Health Messenger Ron Szeto from Special Olympics Hong Kong at a training in 2023, lead peers on a hike and taught fellow athletes about bike safety.

INCLUSIVE NUTRITION INITIATIVE: PUSHING IDD INCLUSION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON HUNGER, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH

In October 2023, Special Olympics hosted an Inclusive Nutrition Summit, bringing together delegations from nine states and tribal nations around the United States to launch the new Inclusive Nutrition Initiative. The Inclusive Nutrition Initiative represents one of the ways in which Special Olympics is taking action to ensure people with IDD are not forgotten in health initiatives targeting the general population—in this instance, the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health launched by the Biden-Harris Administration in 2022 and heralded in the White House Conference of the same name.

The 2023 Inclusive Nutrition Summit focused on two target areas chosen by a neurodiverse advisory group among the areas of action in the National Strategy: inclusive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and inclusive Diabetes Prevention Programs (DPP). Delegation members included local SNAP-Ed and DPP implementing agencies, universities, state and tribal health departments, individual health providers, and national agencies such as the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO), The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. All attending delegations left having formulated their own commitments to addressing the health disparities of people with IDD in their own work and with the promise of reconvening virtually in March 2024 and in-person in October to celebrate progress, share lessons learned, and continue to build momentum.

SYSTEMS CHANGE IN INCLUSIVE HEALTH SUBGRANTS SUPPORT SEVEN PROJECTS IN US

Starting in 2018, Special Olympics has issued small subgrants to US-based organizations outside of the Special Olympics movement to foster the creation and dissemination of inclusive health practices and models. With an eye to generating increased interest and making the application process more user-friendly, Special Olympics revised the subgrant and application process and re-launched the subgrant, now called the Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrants. This subgrant program aims to support organizations to:

- Institute organizational changes, including through resource development and dissemination, that sustainably increase the access that people with IDD have to health care, health promotion, and disease prevention services in the US.
- Expand on existing efforts or develop new efforts, including advocacy efforts, to change health systems and services in the US to better meet the needs of people with IDD.
- Identify and document inclusion success stories and promising practices.

Of the 18 letters of interest submitted (the first step in the application process), Special Olympics funded the following seven projects:

1

The American Council on Exercise will develop curriculum to train physical activity leaders, both with and without IDD, to provide fitness access and education in under-served communities across the country.

2

The American Public Health Association will leverage their vast network of public health professionals to bring awareness and understanding of the health disparities faced by people with IDD to promote widespread inclusive practices.

3

Good Nutrition Ideas will promote improved nutrition support for people with IDD living in group homes by updating, enhancing, and digitizing their existing MENU-AIDDS (Materials supporting Education and Nutrition for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) program.

4

Medicaid Medicare CHIP Services Dental Association will create a health equity assessment tool to collect and track patient risk factors. The tool will identify health disparities to operationalize quality improvement for Medicaid dental programs.

5

New Hampshire Leadership Series will address the lack of inclusion of people with IDD in state nutrition policies by supporting the engagement of people with IDD in regional food councils.

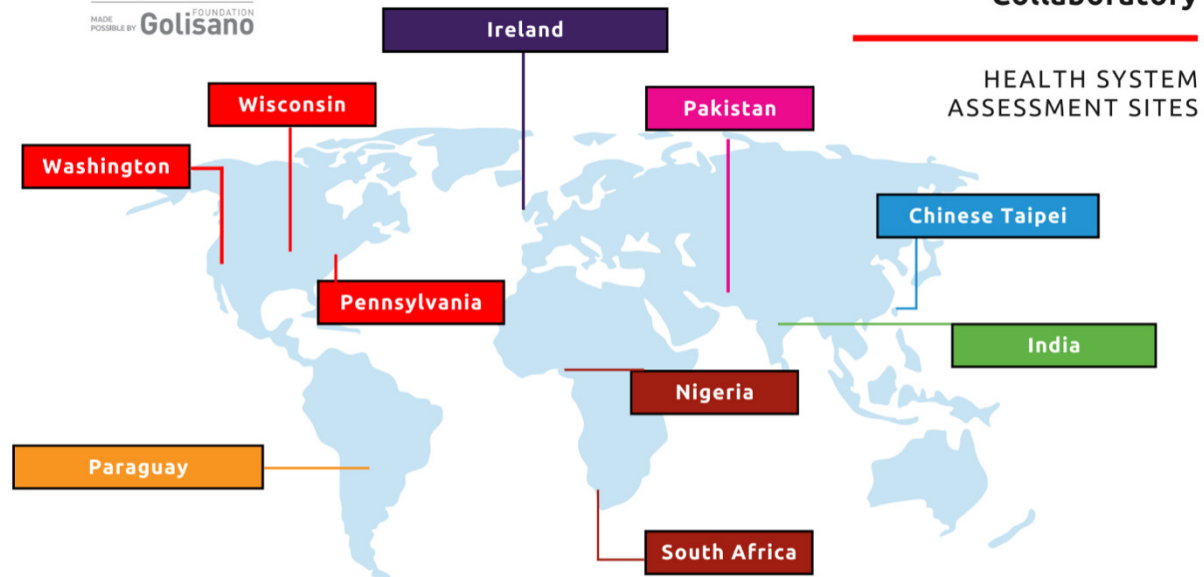
6

Sound Generations will revise and adapt their existing evidence-based fitness program for older adults to improve accessibility to people with IDD. Sound Generations' national network of service delivery organizations will employ the revised program, expanding national access to inclusive fitness programming.

7

Collaboratively, the Tennessee Justice Center and the Tennessee Disability Coalition will engage people with IDD and their families to raise awareness about the shortage of available caregivers for people with IDD and to advocate for paid family caregivers





Rosemary Collaboratory

HEALTH SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SITES

COLLABORATORY

During 2023, Special Olympics conducted research and implemented a series of consultations aimed at deciding the structure and approach to producing the Global Report on the Health of Persons with Disabilities and achieving inclusive health reforms—all part of a project now known as Rosemary Collaboratory.

After issuing a Request for Proposals for a partner to provide strategic advice and support on the global project, Special Olympics decided to partner with the Missing Billion Initiative to create an intellectual and developmental disability module to the broad disability health system assessment that they launched in late 2022. In parallel to the development of that module—a process that lasted through the end of 2023—Special Olympics selected the Global Health Advocacy

Incubator (GHAI), a program of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, to provide broader global support to Rosemary Collaboratory.

With the advice of GHAI and other actors in the global disability-inclusive health movement, Special Olympics issued another Request for Proposals—this time to identify local consultants to work with local Special Olympics Programs in implementing the Missing Billion IDD inclusion assessment and conducting advocacy to achieve inclusive health reforms. Special Olympics received more than 40 proposals registering interest in implementing the project in over 25 countries and US states, of which it selected consultants in seven countries (outside of the United States) and three US states – Chinese Taipei, India, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, and South Africa; Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin.

At the close of the year, Special Olympics completed an analysis of stakeholder inputs on the target audiences, objectives, and measures of success for the Global Report. This completed the draft of the report charter, which will guide the development of the report through 2024 and to its launch in 2025.

GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE WASHINGTON GROUP SHORT SET ON FUNCTIONING AMONG THOSE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES PARTICIPATING IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) has become the international standard to self-identify functional disability status among respondents and has replaced previously used questions about disability in many countries’ census questionnaires and other surveillance instruments. The shift is significant for Special Olympics as it affects if and how data about individuals with ID are collected.

In collaboration with colleagues at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Special Olympics has submitted a manuscript for publication that examined responses to the WG-SS questions among adults with ID participating in Special Olympics respondents to assess perceived functional limitations among participants based on a standard question set. Here are the key findings:

- The vast majority (82.1% (95% margin of error: 78.9-85.4)) of Special Olympics athletes reported experiencing at least "some difficulty" (broad definition) in one or more domains of functional limitation, and 24.2% (20.5-

27.9) reported “cannot do at all” or “a lot of difficulty” (restrictive definition) in at least one domain.

- Applying the broad definition, a higher proportion of Special Olympics athletes and proxies perceived at least “some difficulty” compared to the general population in all six domains.
- Domains with the largest differences were self-care (Rate Ratio (RR)=13.4 [11.3, 15.8]), communication (RR=12.0 [10.8, 13.4]), and cognition (RR=3.4 [3.2, 3.7]).
- Compared to the general population, Special Olympics athletes reported higher proportions of perceived functional limitations in all six functional domains.

This work demonstrates the unique global role of Special Olympics in collecting data to better understand the health needs and disparities among PWIDD. Such recognition has led to additional research studies with CDC to better understand how our athletes self-identify and improve surveillance to more accurately represent this population in Federal datasets. (See “Engaging people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to enhance functional disability representation in point of care settings” below.)

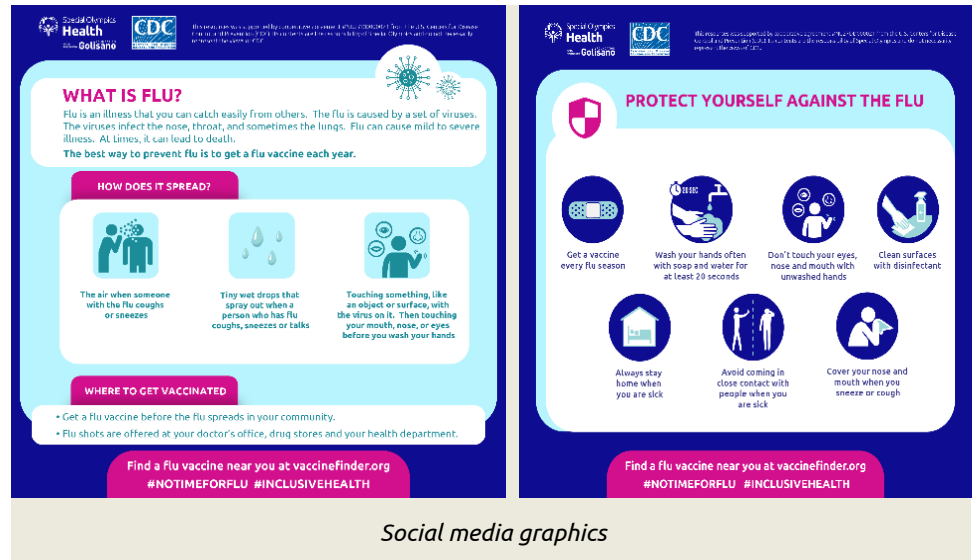


ACTIVATING FOR AWARENESS

In 2023, the Special Olympics Health's accomplishments were highlighted in almost **3,000 media outlets** worldwide, including renowned national publications, radio shows, podcasts, and influential blogs with a vast global audience. The value of these media mentions, in advertising equivalency, exceeded \$6.8 million, and the combined readership reached 3.6 billion individuals. Prominent outlets such as Yahoo Finance, MSN, The Daily Wire, PR Newswire, and Wiwspport provided coverage and recorded the highest readership. The international readership was evenly distributed across countries like the USA, Germany, Italy, India, South Africa, and Australia.

1) FLU AND COVID MANAGEMENT MADE EASY: GLOBAL TOOL KIT ACTIVATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH IDD.

Vaccines not only play a crucial role in preventing and managing outbreaks of infectious diseases but also serve as the cornerstone of global health security. While COVID-19 is no longer classified as a pandemic, it has been strongly recommended that high-risk groups, including individuals with IDD, consider receiving vaccinations for both COVID-19 and the flu. In line with this, Special Olympics Health developed toolkits that strongly advocate for adherence to



Social media graphics

both CDC and WHO recommendations and encourage individuals worldwide to receive both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. These toolkits were shared with Special Olympics athletes, coaches, volunteers, families, and individuals globally. The resources cover various topics, including information about influenza, its transmission, and precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the flu. The aim of these resources is to equip individuals with valuable information and support in effectively combating both the flu and COVID-19. By empowering people with knowledge and encouraging vaccination, Special Olympics Health aims to contribute to the overall well-being and health security of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as the broader

population. The tool kits were shared through an internal communication to all Special Olympics personnels, and it received over 180 views on Special Olympics' webpage.

2) UNIFYING VOICES: SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF HEALTH EQUITY ON WHO'S GLOBAL OBSERVANCE DAYS IN 2023

Global public health days offer a unique and valuable opportunity to enhance understanding and awareness of various health concerns,

while also garnering support for important initiatives that span from local communities to the global stage. Each year, a multitude of international observances are recognized globally, each focusing on specific health issues or conditions. Special Olympics took advantage of these occasions by launching digital awareness campaigns that emphasized the significance of inclusion during these world health observance days. Some specific days targeted for these campaigns included World Diabetes Day, World Children's Day, and Universal Health Coverage Day. The themes for these days were centered around access to diabetes care, inclusion for every child, and the need for action to ensure health for all, respectively. The messaging effectively highlighted the importance of inclusion for individuals with IDD.

These contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services. Special Olympics Health activities are supported by many sources, including in the United States by Grant Number NU27DD000021 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with \$18.1 M (64%) financed with U.S. Federal Funds and \$10.2 M (36%) supported by non-federal sources. The mark "CDC" is owned by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services and is used with permission. Use of this logo is not an endorsement by HHS or CDC of any particular product, service, or enterprise.

The social posts garnered a collective digital imprint of **over 2.1 million impressions** with a reach of over 3.3 million users across Facebook, X, LinkedIn and Instagram. Particularly the World Children’s Day reels on Instagram scored a reach of over 1 million users.

3) EMPOWERING CHANGE: THE IMPACT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS CONFERENCE PARTICIPATIONS ON HEALTH EQUITY

Special Olympics Health has actively participated in significant events like the World Health Summit (WHS) 2023 and APHA (American Public Health Association) 2023. These platforms have provided opportunities for Special Olympics to raise awareness about important topics such as "Reimagining Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to Leave No One Behind: Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities and Access to Assistive Technology as Key Drivers to Achieving UHC" and "Pursuing Health Equity through the Special Olympics Inclusive Health Model." By participating in these events, Special Olympics has been able to share valuable insights and advocate for health equity for individuals with IDD.

At the 2023 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Special Olympics Missouri Athlete Allen Tobin shared his experience participating as a panelist: "The conference was fantastic! It was filled with exciting activities, and I had the opportunity to connect with numerous individuals. The reason why it was important for me to present was to

emphasize the incredible impact our Health Messengers can have. Additionally, I wanted to shed light on the reality of healthcare for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as we often face barriers in accessing proper healthcare. What truly left an impact on the attendees was when I shared my personal experience of not having insurance and how it affected my life. I also spoke about my inspiring journey with Healthy Athletes, where I received hearing aids, dentures and glasses for free."

WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT 2023 SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Special Olympics utilized various communication channels, including internal benchmark newsletters, social media posts, and articles on their webpage, to amplify the messaging and reach a wider audience. Through these efforts, Special Olympics Health aims to create a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. **The social media digital footprint collectively reached 661,000 users creating an impression of 984,000.**

PARDES HUMANITARIAN AWARD

In October, Special Olympics was awarded the prestigious [Pardes Humanitarian Prize](#) a global recognition that honors individuals or groups who have made significant contributions towards understanding mental health challenges and addressing the issues faced by individuals. The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation presented the award

to Special Olympics, acknowledging the organization’s profound impact on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) worldwide through year-round sports training and athletic programs.

The event was attended by Special Olympics leadership, including Dr. Timothy Shriver. Dr. Karoly Mirnics, Special Olympics Board Member expressed his gratitude while accepting the award on behalf of the organization. He highlighted the shared dedication of Special Olympics and the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation in promoting inclusivity and acknowledged the invaluable partnership with the Golisano Foundation in advancing the health initiatives of Special Olympics. Dr. Mirnics emphasized the importance of enhanced mental health services that are inclusive and accessible to individuals with IDD.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRIUMPHS AGAIN: SHARECARE AWARD 2023 FOR 'SCHOOL OF STRENGTH' VIDEO

Special Olympics International Comms and Health received a prestigious Sharecare Award in the Healthy Living category for the video, ["School of Strength: Class is Now in Session"](#). The Sharecare Awards program inspires and uplifts individuals and organizations who utilize media to empower people worldwide in leading healthier lives.



In the award-winning video WWE Superstar Drew McIntyre guides viewers through 10 exercises using the Unified Fitness Kit Cards, which aim to enhance endurance, strength, and agility. This victory marks the second consecutive year that a Special Olympics video has won a Sharecare Award. Out of 52 finalists in the fifth annual Sharecare Awards, the School of Strength video was recognized alongside two other Special Olympics videos: "Starkey Cares: Starkey Hearing at the 2022 USA Games" and "Special Olympics United with Refugees: Addressing the Crisis in Ukraine."

RESEARCH & EVALUATION



In 2023, Special Olympics made significant progress on the design and implementation of the longitudinal evaluation of Special Olympics Health programming. The primary purpose of the longitudinal evaluation is to document the impact of engagement with Special Olympics on the health and wellbeing of athletes, over time. A secondary purpose is to create the data infrastructure for subsequent research initiatives to develop a better understanding of the health status, health disparities, and health needs of Special Olympics athletes and the broader population of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Special Olympics organized and convened a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) consisting of experts in the fields of physical activity, mental health, IDD, and Special Olympics sport and health programming. Monthly meetings with this group entailed discussions about the focus of the longitudinal evaluation, key metrics, and measurement tools to include, retention strategies, and data infrastructure needed to successfully track athlete data over time. These meetings culminated with an in-person meeting in May 2023 that brought the advisory board together with Special Olympics staff and athletes to make decisions in the areas of individual characteristics to be included in the evaluation, strategies for recruitment and data collection protocols, and potential comparisons with other national datasets.

Following the in-person gathering, it was decided that 4 Special Olympics Programs in the US would be initially invited and engaged in a feasibility study to identify

program evaluation requirements, develop a protocol for a longitudinal study, and capture preliminary data. Four US Special Olympics Programs confirmed their participation in this initial feasibility study: Arizona, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Based on feedback from the scientific advisory board, the decision was also made to embed a project coordinator at the Program level to lead the evaluation rather than partner with a university or other entity for data collection. The rationale for this surrounds the need for buy in from Special Olympics Programs for in depth data collection and the goal to create a culture of evaluation that can go beyond the longitudinal evaluation and set up infrastructure for data collection across multiple health activities offered by Special Olympics Programs.

Integral to the longitudinal study planning in 2023 was the development of an Athlete Advisory Board (AAB) and the adoption of a co-evaluator model to ensure athlete perspectives are included in all phases of the longitudinal evaluation design and implementation. In 2023, this group of six Special Olympics athletes received inclusive health research training and played a crucial role in providing input and perspectives on the evaluation plans. They emphasized the positive outcomes of participating in Special Olympics, such as improved access to healthcare services through the Healthy Athletes Screening (HAS) program, the promotion of healthy habits, and engagement in an accepting community of friendships. The AAB highlighted

the importance of behavior change demonstrations, reducing barriers with healthcare professionals, and assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

One of the most significant research findings on participation in Special Olympics and the reduced risk of depression among young adults was published and widely disseminated in 2023 ([Research Announcement | Special Olympics Canada](#)). Special Olympics is partnering with universities to explore further linkage of government and Special Olympics data to assess differences in health risk and utilization of healthcare and prescription medications relative to people with IDD who do not participate in Special Olympics as well as with the general population.

The Research & Evaluation team began collaborating in major research projects with numerous universities and government agencies. These include the following:

- “Engaging people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to enhance functional disability representation in point of care settings”



(Sponsor: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)) This CDC-led project aims to address an important gap in inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and or developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in comparative clinical effectiveness research. The project goal is to increase representation of people with ID/DD in administrative data systems by engaging people with ID/DD and close informants to develop a functional disability demographic checklist for use at the point of care.

- “Can You Hear Us Now? Engaging Adults with IDD in Health Research” (Sponsor: Administration for Community Living) This study is led by The Ohio State University investigators and includes 3 primary research projects: **1)** developing and testing cognitively accessible health and health related quality of life measures to increase and improve self-report in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities; **2)** determining the point prevalence of mental health conditions and health status among adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and **3)** developing, "manualizing" and evaluating a therapy to address anxiety disorders in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a treatment/ control pilot.

- “Abu Dhabi-Specific Parents’ Engagement Program: An Evaluation of its Impact on the Confidence and Well-being of Fathers and Mothers” (Sponsor: Abu Dhabi Early Child Authority) Through this study, Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) and its partner government stakeholders will gain a deeper understanding of issues affecting young

children (0-8 years old) and their families, while contributing to the development of a strong evidence base.

In 2024, Special Olympics looks forward to testing the viability of data collection platforms, enrolling participants in the longitudinal evaluation, refining and validating measurement tools, and working with Special Olympics athletes and Programs to develop a co-evaluation model at the Program level. This evaluation is planned to expand to other state Programs in the US by 2026 with anticipated expansion at the global level starting in 2028. Other major Research & Evaluation initiatives in 2024 include the initial cost effectiveness analysis of Special Olympics Health programming and an evaluation of the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the HSE Health Passport in enhancing the healthcare experiences of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (PWIDD or IDD) and their families.

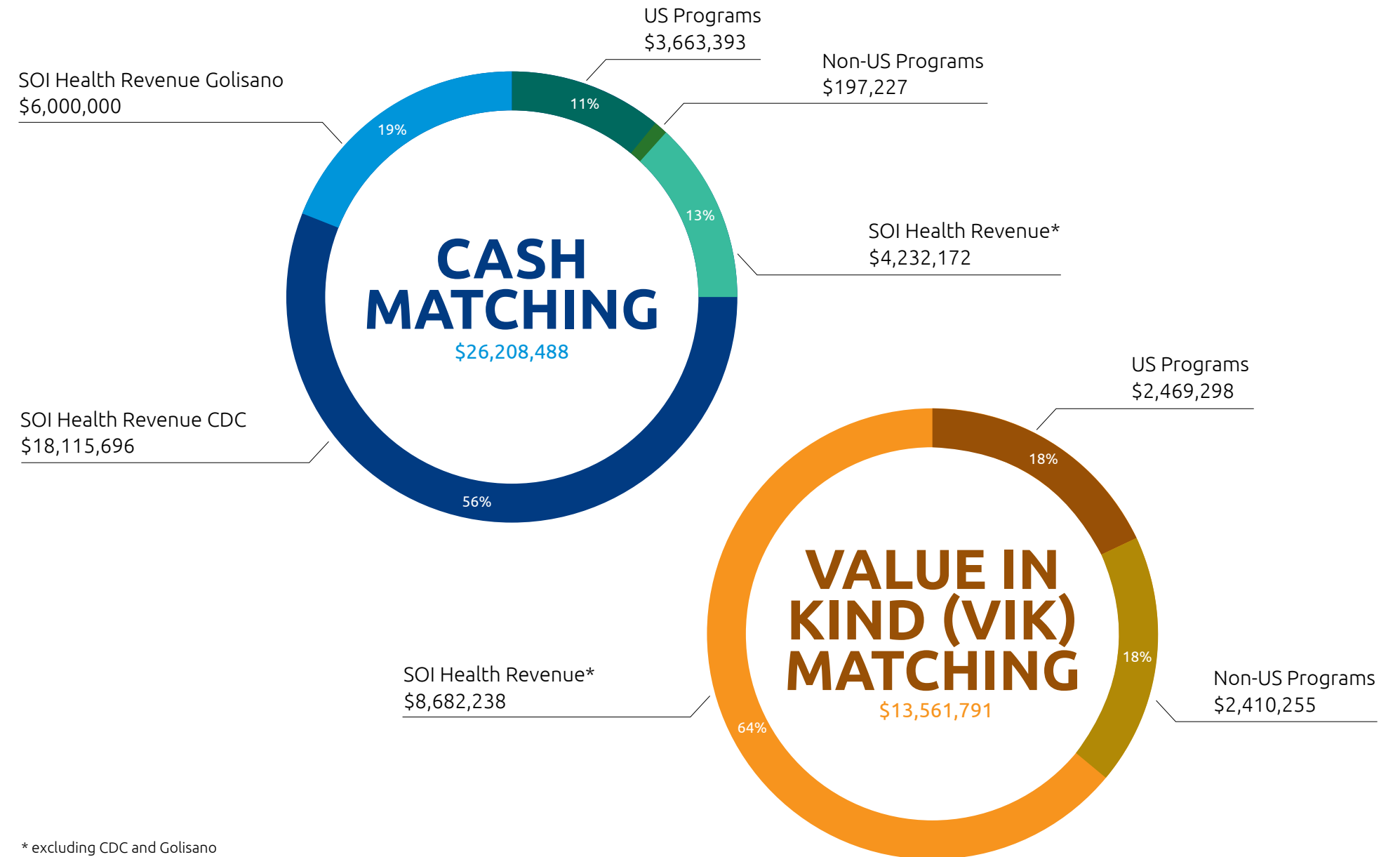




ADDENDUMS

ADDENDUM A

MATCHING FUND



ADDENDUM B: METRICS CHARTS (2022-2023) AS OF AUGUST 13, 2024

	SPECIAL OLYMPICS AFRICA		SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC		SPECIAL OLYMPICS EAST ASIA		SPECIAL OLYMPICS EUROPE EURASIA		SPECIAL OLYMPICS LATIN AMERICAN		SPECIAL OLYMPICS MIDDLE EAST		SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA & THE CARIBBEAN	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
New Young Athletes with ID	5,500	4,640	5,000	1,667	1,404	158	6,000	6,945	-	1,630	1,500	865	2,000	780
Total HA Screenings	4,000	5,905	2,000	2,897	3,570	1,383	15,000	19,066**	10,400	11,857	2,000	1,875	5,000	3,303
Athletes in Fitness	9,000	10,318	500	1,665	1,200	3,837	5,000	5,453	3,000	1,858	500	1,348	1,100	17,469
New Health Messengers Activated for health Advocacy	150	34	10	11	10	7	100	39	60	46	80	32	-	2
Students Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	100	392	20	130	40	20	300	756	125	1,801	250	482	-	345
Clinicians Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	200	198	300	198	30	20	450	138	125	593	300	308	-	129
Clinical Volunteers Trained at HA	175	427	100	231	35	108	300	222	150	572	50	223	-	284
Student Volunteers Trained at HA	200	358	100	189	75	191	300	499	150	1,179	100	184	-	688
Community Health Workers Trained with SOI Resource	-	159	-	9	-	80	-	16	-	45	-	107	-	0
Community Health Workers Trained by Other Methods	-	153	-	39	-	81	-	139	-	133	-	159	-	40
Athletes Trained as New Health Messengers	100	167	10	32	25	14	200	106	80	112	100	154	-	12

*Canada and the Caribbean
 ** This total includes 15,350 HA Screenings from the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin

ADDENDUM B: US METRICS CHARTS (2022-2023) AS OF AUGUST 13, 2024

SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH AMERICA - USA	
New Young Athletes with ID	26,275
Total HA Screenings	47,992
Athletes in Fitness	90,010
New Health Messengers Activated for health Advocacy	61
Students Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	3,243
Clinicians Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	1,852
Clinical Volunteers Trained at HA	3,361
Student Volunteers Trained at HA	5,975
Community Health Workers Trained with SOI Resource	170
Community Health Workers Trained by Other Methods	455
Athletes Trained as New Health Messengers	210

ADDENDUM B

MERTIC CHART AND TOTALS

232

New Health Messenger
activated for Health Advocacy

586

Community Health Workers
Trained with SOI Resource

1,199

Community Health Workers
Trained by Other Methods

9,263

Student Volunteers Trained at
Healthy Athletes

132,397

Athletes in Fitness

94,278*

Total Healthy Athlete Screenings

42,960

New Young Athletes with ID

807

Athletes trained as New
Health Messengers

7,169

Students Trained Outside
of Healthy Athletes

3,436

Clinicians Trained Outside
of Healthy Athletes

5,428

Clinicians Volunteers Trained
at Healthy Athletes

ADDENDUM C

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

PUBLICATIONS

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., Baio, J., Holbrook, J., & Rice, C. Functional limitations among US adults with intellectual disabilities participating in Special Olympics: A comparative analysis. (*Pending CDC clearance*)
2. Forquer, M., Stanish, H., Apgar, G., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. (pending review). Special Olympics "Road to the 2022 USA Games" Fitness Challenge: A Process Evaluation. *Disabilities*. (*Pending CDC clearance*)
3. Lincoln, A. E., Dixon-Ibarra, A. M., Hanley, J. P., Smith, A. L., Martin, K., & Bazzano, A. (2023). Global report on COVID-19 vaccination and reasons not to vaccinate among adults with intellectual disabilities: Results from secondary analyses of Special Olympics' program planning. *PLOS Global Public Health, 3*(6), e0001367. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0001367>
4. Smith, A., Ralston, Barker, R., Anderson, E., Christakis, D. (2023). *An Early Child Development Intervention Improves Outcomes in Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (Submitted)*

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (AAIDD) 2023

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley J., Smith, A., & Lincoln, A. (2023, June). Global Assessment of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning Among Those with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in Special Olympics. *147th annual meeting of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Pittsburgh, PA*
2. Smith, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Martin, K., Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., Kadry, K, Routh, B., & Williams (2023, June). Utilizing a screening tool to assess mental health status among Special Olympics athletes. *147th annual meeting of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Pittsburgh, PA*

* This total includes 15,350 HA Screenings from the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS MEDICINE (ACSM) 2023

1. Forquer, M., Hunsinger, J., & Otterbein, M. (2023). Inclusive Fitness: No-Cost Strategies to Support Physical Activity for People with Intellectual Disabilities. *Presented at the 70th Annual American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting and World Conference. Denver, CO.*
2. Lincoln, A. E., Purcell, P., Yang, J., Hanley, J., & Codd, A. E. (2023). 2022 Special Olympics USA Games: Sport-related Medical Incidents Sustained by Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 55* (9S), 71-72. <https://doi.org/10.1249/01.mss.0000980368.83343.3b>
3. Otterbein, M., Forquer, M., Apgar, G., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Stanish, H., Hanley, J., & Lincoln, A. (2023). *Process Evaluation of the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games Fitness Challenge. Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 55* (9S), 252. <https://doi.org/10.1249/01.mss.0000982056.16084.53>

AFRICAN NETWORK FOR EVIDENCE-TO-ACTION IN DISABILITY (AFRINEAD) 2023

1. Nyambe, C., Muller, M., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Mihaila, I., Martin, K., Lang, J., Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., & Chabedi, F. (2023) The COVID-19 Pandemic Experience Among Special Olympics Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities in Africa. *7th annual meeting of the AfriNEAD Conference. Cape Town, Africa*

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (APHA) 2023

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Lincoln, A., Hanley, J., Smith, A., Baio, J., Holbrook, J., & Rice, C. (2023, November). Washington Group Short Set on Functioning Among U.S. Adults with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in Special Olympics. *American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*
2. Fettekether, R., & Williams, A. (2023, November). Creating the Healthiest Nation: Inclusive Health Curriculum Model for Community Health Workers Caring for People with Intellectual Disabilities. *American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*
3. Lincoln, A., Hanley, J., Codd, A., Purcell, P., & Yang, J. (2023, November). Special Olympics World Games: Sport-Related Medical Incidents Sustained by Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities. *American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*
4. Lincoln, A., Rice, C., Williams, A., Tobin, A., & Shah, U. (2023, November). Pursuing Health Equity through the Special Olympics Inclusive Health Model. *Symposium presented at American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*

ADDEMDUM C CONT.

5. Routh, B. G., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Carasciuc, L., Williams, A., & Lincoln, A. (2023, November). Special Olympics Vaccination Campaign for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities. *Poster presented at American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*
6. Williams, A., & Fettekether, R. (2023, November). Creating the Healthiest Nation: Inclusive Health Curriculum Model for Health Professions Students Learning to Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities. *Panel presented at American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*
7. Young, H.-J., Tracy, T., Mehta, T., Rimmer, J., Routh, B. G., Williams, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., & Lincoln, A. (2023, November). National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability and Special Olympics: Connecting People with Disabilities to Inclusive Healthcare and Health Programming. *Roundtable presented at American Public Health Association Conference 2023. Atlanta, GA*

GATLINBURG CONFERENCE 2023

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Smith, A., & Lincoln, A. (2023, April). Comparing the Health of Special Olympics Athletes to those with and without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities using National Surveillance Systems. *Paper presented at the 55th annual meeting of the Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Kansas City, MO*
2. Smith, A., Hussey, M., & Paul, A. (2023, April). Sibling relationships in a global context: Findings from a survey of siblings of Special Olympics athletes. *Paper presented at the 55th annual meeting of the Gatlinburg Conference on Research and Theory in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Kansas City, MO*

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF ADAPTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (ISAPA) 2023

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Otterbein, M., Lincoln, A., Nevills, S., Ang, P., Stanish, H., Lloyd, M., & Pitchford, A. (2023). Expanding Special Olympics Global Research Adapted Physical Activity. *Presented at the 24th annual meeting of the International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity. Dunedin, FL*

SOCIETY OF HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATORS (SHAPE) 2023

1. Nevills, N. (2023). Unified Generation: Promoting Inclusion Through Inclusive Health & Fitness. Presented at the 2023 SHAPE National Convention & Expo. Seattle, WA.

2024 ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IASSIDD) 2024

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Stanish, H., Forquer, M., Hanley, J., Apgar G., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. (2023). Developing a Lifestyle Survey for Special Olympics Athletes: Lessons from the 2023 World Games.
2. Lincoln, A., Hanley, J., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Routh, B., Lloyd, M., Foley, J., Temple, V., & Krahn, G. (2023). Responding to a Call to Action: Maximizing the Utilization of Special Olympics Health Data and Enhancing Collaborations with Research and Evaluation Initiatives.
3. Smith, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Murray, H., & Lincoln, A. (2023). Fostering Inclusive Research Strategies Among Special Olympics Athletes.
4. Special Olympics Staff (2023). Evaluating Longitudinal Impact of Special Olympics Participation on Athletes' Lives.
5. Special Olympics Staff (2023). Evaluating the Impact of an Integrated Child and Family Health Early Intervention Program: A Four-Country Comparison.
6. Special Olympics Staff (2023). Special Olympics: Inclusive Health Longitudinal Evaluation of Athlete Participation IASSIDD Proposal for 2024.



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