



Possibility in Action

2024 Special Olympics Health Report



Special Olympics
Health

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano**
FOUNDATION



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Healthy Communities Map	6
Regional Highlight: Middle East North Africa	8
Prevention	10
Early Childhood and Families	12
Fitness	14
Regional Highlight: North America	16
Assessment	18
Healthy Athletes	20
Follow Up Care	24
Regional Highlight: Asia Pacific	26
Training	28
Regional Highlight: Europe Eurasia	32
Health Systems Strengthening	35
Regional Highlight: Latin America	40
Activating for Awareness	42
Regional Highlight: Africa	46
Research and Evaluation	48
Regional Highlight: East Asia	52
Addendum A: Match Funding	55
Addendum B: Metrics Charts	56
Addendum C: 2024 Publications and Presentations	57

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Special Olympics Annual Health Report provides a comprehensive overview of the initiatives, achievements, and future directions of Special Olympics Health programs globally. This report highlights the organization's commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through inclusive health practices, innovative programming, and strategic partnerships.

In 2024, Special Olympics expanded its healthy communities initiative to 9 new Special Olympics Programs: Algeria, Ethiopia, Germany, Kuwait, Madagascar, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Oman and Zambia. These Programs activated Healthy Athletes, launched Young Athletes work, initiated family health forums, trained Health Messengers and more.

The cash and value-in-kind (VIK) funding secured in 2024 was robust. In total \$40,601,522 in match funding was secured, \$25,192,651 in cash and \$15,408,871 in VIK.

PREVENTION

Special Olympics continued to innovate in preventive health programming, with significant advancements in Fitness, Young Athletes, and family health education. The Young Athletes app added 175 new activities to support children under 3 years old and foster development

beyond gross motor skills. The Family Health Education model expanded to new locations, providing comprehensive support on healthy eating, stress management, diabetes prevention, and family fitness. The Fitness Captains program grew, offering athletes leadership roles in health education and fitness activities.

ASSESSMENT

The Healthy Athletes® program evolved significantly with the introduction of Healthy Athletes 2.0, incorporating evidence-based screenings, standardized referral criteria, and an updated electronic health record system. This initiative enhances screening protocols across all nine Healthy Athletes disciplines, better identifies risk factors for chronic conditions, and facilitates timely referrals. The program's success was demonstrated at the Special Olympics Latin American Games in Paraguay, where 5,120 screenings resulted in 297 urgent and 1,083 non-urgent referrals.

TRAINING

Training clinicians and students remained a priority, with 19,132 individuals trained at Healthy Athlete events globally. The launch of the Golisano School of Health Sciences provided a platform for inclusive health education, with 13,320 clinicians in all specialties and stages of training completing health courses. The Inclusive Health Fundamentals modules were translated into all Special Olympics languages to support global uptake.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Special Olympics continued to advocate for disability-inclusive health practices, participating in global health discussions and securing media coverage. The organization relaunched the Center for Inclusive Health website, providing resources to support the inclusion of people with IDD in healthcare. The communications team highlighted athlete experiences and stories, amplifying the voices of individuals with IDD. Finally, Special Olympics officially launched its Rosemary Collaboratory health system assessment project in eleven sites across the world.

ACTIVATING FOR AWARENESS

In 2024, Special Olympics Health garnered 3,391 global media mentions, reaching a readership of 5.07 billion and generating over \$21million in advertising value, which represents what it would have cost to reach that readership via advertising instead of generating it through media placement. Meanwhile, social media posts reached 2.77 million people and were shared more than 2,430 times. A major highlight was the launch of the School of Strength: Snack Zone campaign during Super Bowl Media Row, featuring Alex Singleton, which led to 3,039 individuals accessing the healthy snacking resources and contributed to Singleton's nomination for the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award. Additionally, emotionally powerful athlete stories, such as first-time hearing experiences in Papua New Guinea and Paraguay, achieved viral success on social media, earning top engagement rates and expanding awareness of inclusive health programming.

EVALUATION

Special Olympics made significant progress in research and evaluation, with the launch of Project ALL-STAR, a longitudinal evaluation of health programming. Preliminary findings from the Health Economics Project demonstrated the cost-effectiveness and return on investment of the Special Smiles® program. Additionally, the evaluation of the Health Passport tool aims to enhance healthcare delivery outcomes for individuals with IDD. Finally, Special Olympics has begun convening a range of partners to support the development of a registration platform that helps enrollment of Special Olympics athletes in expanded data collection efforts.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Looking ahead, Special Olympics remains committed to expanding inclusive health programming, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing research and evaluation efforts. The organization's focus on innovative health practices, comprehensive training, and advocacy will continue to drive progress in improving the health and well-being of individuals with IDD globally.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MAP

Healthy Communities work was newly initiated in 7 countries and 2 US states, bringing the total number of sites where Healthy Communities has been initiated up to 154. This surpasses the goal Special Olympics had of reaching 150 Special Olympics Programs by the end of 2026.

Healthy Communities addresses health inequities through the P.A.T.H. to health equity framework:

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.

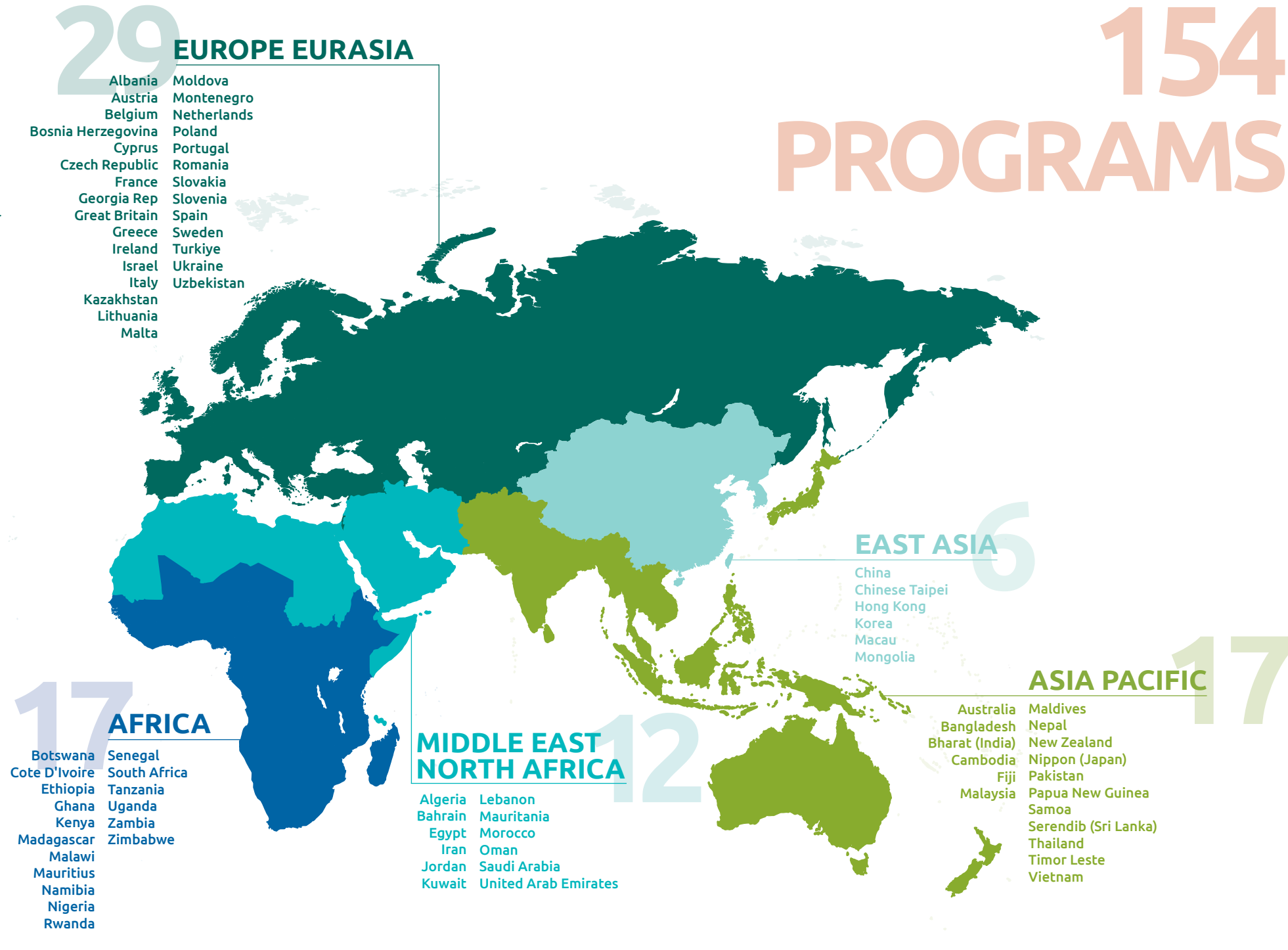
TRAINING

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.



MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, Special Olympics Middle East North Africa expanded Healthy Communities funding to Algeria, Kuwait and Oman. The Region was thrilled to host Erica Dayton, Executive Director of the Golisano Foundation, on a site visit to Egypt and Morocco. Ms. Dayton met with athletes, Clinical Directors and university partners. In Morocco, Ms. Dayton was hosted by the President of Special Olympics Morocco, Her Royal Highness Princess Charifa Lalla Soumia El Ouazzani. She also had the opportunity to meet with 10 Special Olympics Programs in the MENA region who implement Healthy Communities work and hear about their plans for growing and sustaining health programming in their respective countries.

In their first year of Healthy Communities work, Special Olympics Algeria activated seven Healthy Athletes disciplines and initiated Young Athletes and family health forums. Staff also trained Health Messengers and had nine sport coaches complete Fitness curriculum training. Special Olympics Algeria staff and athletes also had the chance to discuss their work at a

health, sport and nutrition expo for the first time. They interacted with new potential healthcare partners, such as medical



universities, and recruited new Clinical Director candidates and clinical volunteers. Special Olympics Kuwait successfully implemented a 6-week fitness program for athletes and other people with IDD, which included nutrition, hydration and physical activity daily modules. A 28-year-old athlete named Bader lost 15 pounds over the course of the program, gave up his sugar-sweetened drinks, and began moderating his daily caffeine consumption.

Special Olympics Oman expanded their reach in the physical therapy community

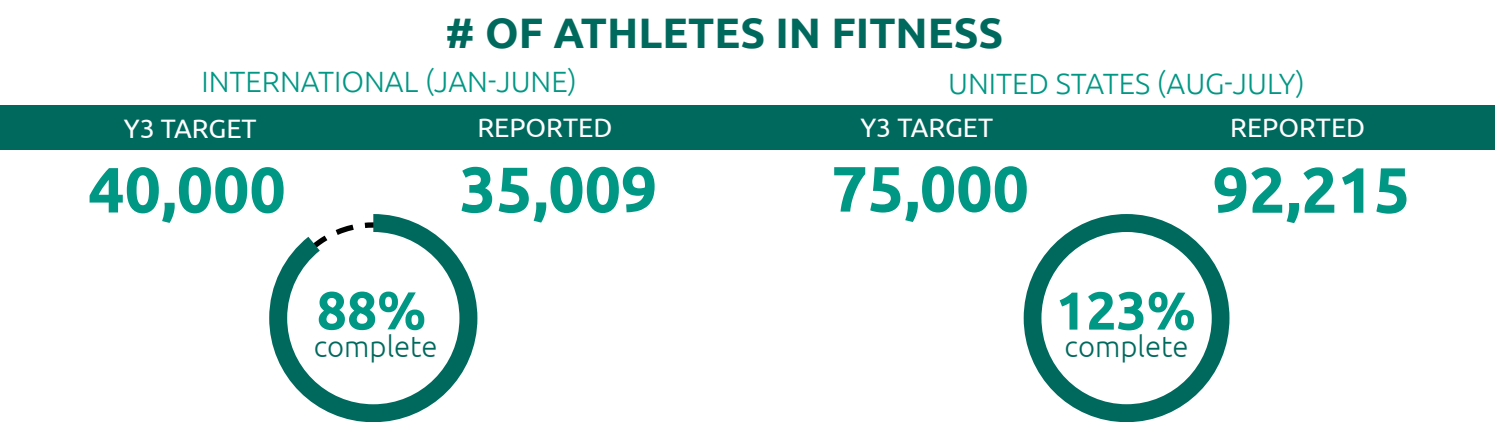
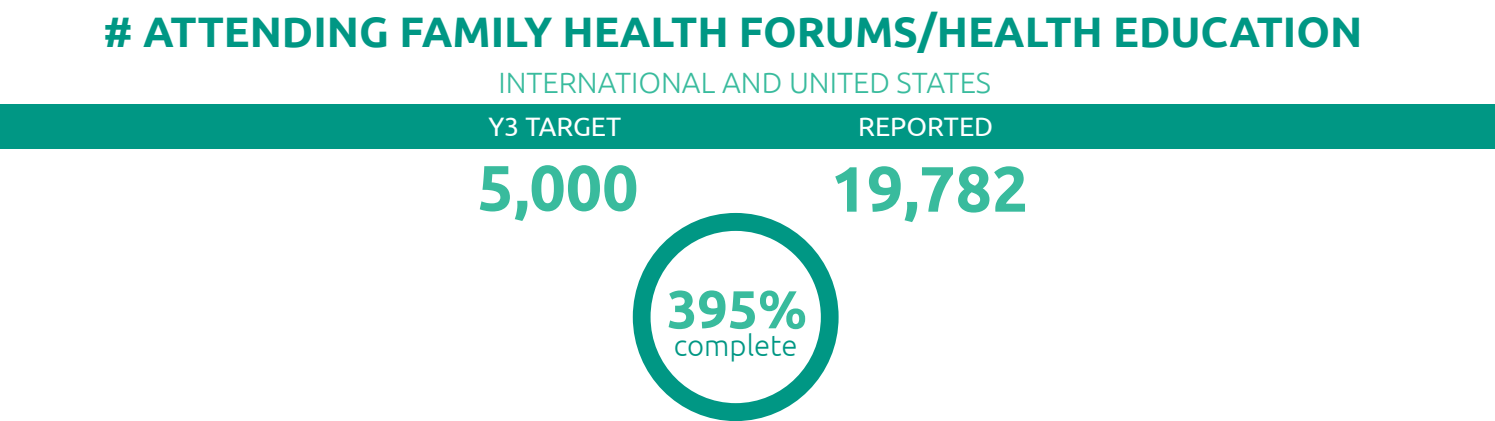
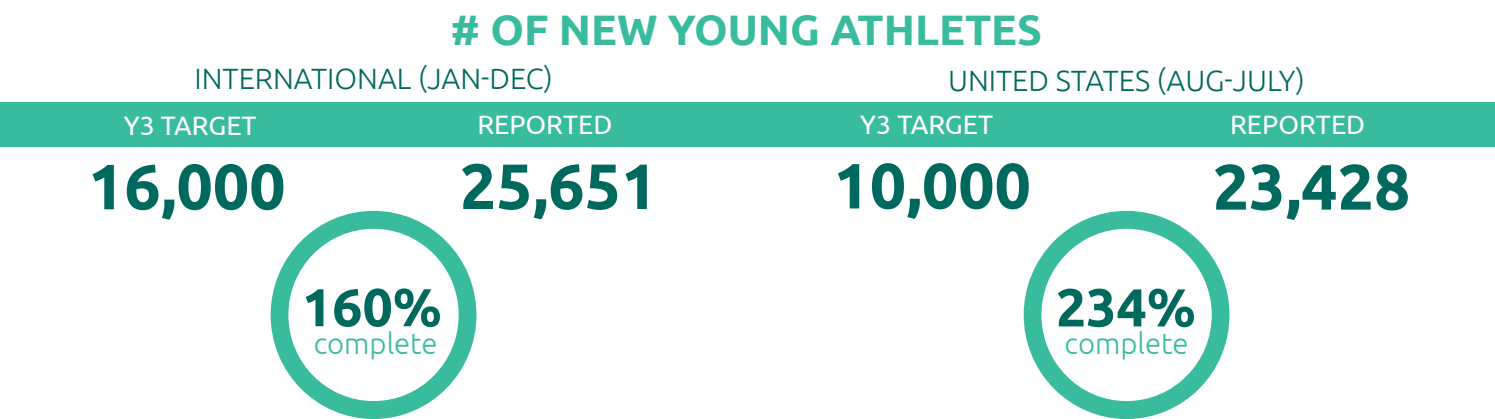
and achieved a prestigious milestone: in September 2024, the Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB) granted official approval for FUNfitness to count toward continuing education requirements for medical professionals. With OMSB's accreditation, the FUNfitness program in Oman is now formally recognized as a valuable professional development opportunity for physiotherapists and other healthcare practitioners. Special Olympics Oman also held a promising meeting with 34 academics at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, highlighting the successes of their health initiatives and the benefits to students and professional volunteers. The Program is eager to explore avenues for collaboration.





PREVENTION

2024 METRICS: PREVENTION



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & FAMILIES

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: CHILDREN WITH IDD MAKE DEVELOPMENTAL GAINS

YOUNG ATHLETES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, Special Olympics drove growth of programming through the launch, implementation, and expansion of innovative models that standardize quality implementation and meet the holistic health and development needs of children and families.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH

In 2024, Special Olympics built upon the foundational success of 2023, when the innovative Child and Family Health model was launched. This model supports holistic health and development for children with IDD through direct intervention, family education and support, and access to community healthcare services. In 2024, **global reach was expanded to new Special Olympics Programs and families in Romania, Paraguay, El Salvador, Missouri, Maryland, Ohio, Washington, Maine, and Michigan, while also sustaining programming in previous pilot locations.** These new Special Olympics Program participants introduced fresh and innovative strategies.

For instance, Special Olympics Romania integrated the model into their summertime Family Camp, and Special Olympics Paraguay

implemented activities with the support of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, who provided access to facilities, health and education professionals, and more.

As of 31 December, the Young Athletes app had almost **1,500 lifetime users** from **51 countries** and **50 US states**. The app also has a 47% download to user ratio.

YOUNG ATHLETES LESSON PLANS

Following a successful year of piloting and adaptations, Special Olympics launched the new Young Athletes (YA) lesson plans in 2024, which offer a comprehensive 30-week program that incorporates gross motor play activities, leadership skills, and academic alignment. The lesson plans were launched globally on a webinar for over 280 attendees in September 2024. The new lesson plans include over 100 new activities, easy-to-use newsletters, printables, and videos. These resources represent an opportunity to equip teachers, parents, and community leaders with the tools needed to engage children in meaningful and developmentally appropriate activities.

The lesson plans will support the growth and sustainability of Young Athletes in years to come.

YOUNG ATHLETES APP

In 2024, **the Young Athletes app added 175 new activities that expanded the scope of the app to support children under 3 years old and foster development of skills beyond gross motor skills, including language, cognitive, and social-emotional development.** Technical enhancements to the app in 2024 included improved activity and user search functionality, group chat features, a tiered admin portal, and the addition of localized events.

As of 31 December, the Young Athletes app had almost 1,500 lifetime users from 51 countries and 50 US states. The app also has a 47% download-to-user ratio (number of people who download the app compared to people who create accounts) – industry standards consider 25% and above as exceptional.

Parents of app users in Kenya had this to say about its effectiveness: "One thing I have learned from the app is that my children are able to play together as a team. Before, each child was playing individually, but after

following the activities they are able to play together;" and, "Initially, I thought I couldn't find time to play with my child, but through the app I'm able to play with my children. And ever since I started using the app I have seen a lot of improvement in my child's life."

FAMILY HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2024, Special Olympics continued its commitment to family health education through implementing ongoing and one-time opportunities, ensuring continuous support for families to promote healthy lifestyles for their children with IDD. Phase 1 pilots of the Family Health Education model were completed in Colorado and Vermont. Building on this success, Phase 2 was launched in September 2024 in Maine, Louisiana, and Texas, further expanding the program's reach and impact. Additionally, new standardized Family Health Forum (FHF) resources were launched globally, covering essential topics such as healthy eating, stress management, diabetes prevention and management, and family fitness. Finally, development began on the "Parenting with a Purpose" FHF module, aimed at providing comprehensive support on positive parenting. These efforts underscore Special Olympics' commitment to engaging and educating families, helping them adopt healthy behaviors and make informed lifestyle choices.

"Ever since I started using the app I have seen a lot of improvement in my child's life."

– Parent from Kenya on using the Young Athletes app with their child



FITNESS

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: ATHLETES LIVE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIVES

In 2024, Special Olympics continued to support people with IDD in maximizing their health and well-being by developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to lead a healthy and active life. Throughout the year, fitness programming has continued with a strong focus on quality and strategic implementation through evidence-based models, which ensure that fitness interventions are both effective and sustainable. The Fitness Captains program experienced significant growth and provided athletes with the opportunity to take on initial leadership roles by leading health education and warm-ups and cool downs on the field of play. Additionally, the launch of the fitness endorsement model marked a major milestone, allowing Special Olympics Programs to apply for their evidence-based models to be adopted by Special Olympics International (SOI) and shared globally. This work supports program innovation and encourages the adoption of best practices developed from around the world. Finally, a focus on inclusive fitness in the community emerged in 2024, with the development of additional trainings to support fitness professionals and community physical activity leaders in providing customized training and support to people with IDD.

While the fitness global growth metrics fell slightly short of the intended goal, programming efforts in 2024 represent a strategic focus on implementing evidence-based models and ensuring ongoing programming is most impactful in addressing



At Vivamus CrossFit in South Carolina, athletes and their families participate in an adaptive CrossFit program as part of efforts to make community-based fitness opportunities more inclusive of people with IDD.

health outcomes and behaviors. Additionally, participation metrics recognize a continued shift back to in-person sports programming, which highlights the importance of continuing to grow Fitness through Sport programming,

which integrates fitness activities into the sports practice and competition experience to align with SO Program priorities. Special Olympics continues to foster a culture of fitness, where people with IDD can engage in opportunities year-round.

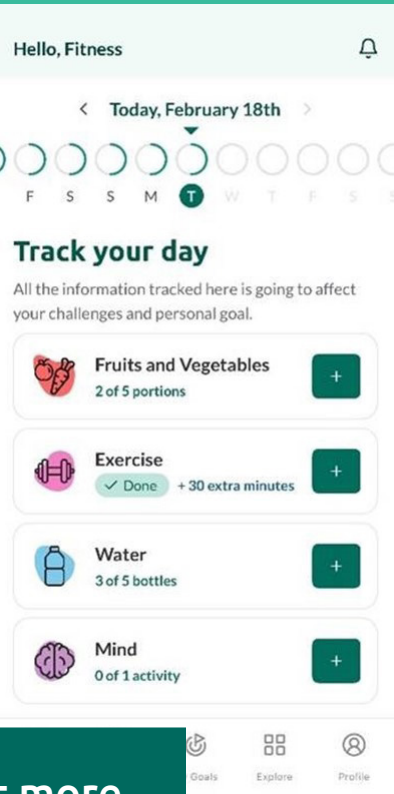
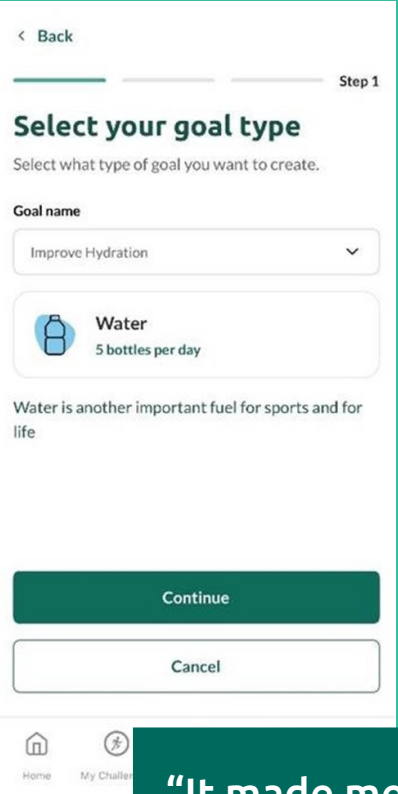
FITNESS IN SCHOOLS

In 2024, the High 5 for Fitness pilot program continued evaluation efforts to refine resources and implementation strategies. Phase I of the evaluation assessed the feasibility of the lesson plans across three programs in Wyoming, Missouri, and Maryland, involving 120 students and five educators. The results indicated that most students enjoyed the activities and wished to continue them, though older students showed a decline in engagement, suggesting a need for content adaptation. Educators found the lessons effective but often required modifications to suit their classes. Site visits revealed challenges, such as the need for more comprehensive training for inexperienced teachers and better support for students with severe mobility challenges. Phase II pilots began in September 2024 and expanded the pilot to six Programs, involving 497 students, and focused on refining the lesson plans with progression and regression strategies, aligning the lessons to SHAPE physical activity standards, and

enhancing social inclusion guidance. This phase will continue into 2025 and will support a successful global launch with usable tools.

FITNESS APP – NEW TECHNOLOGY

In 2024, the development of a new fitness app was an exciting advancement to support people with IDD in tracking and engaging in ongoing fitness. The Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of the app was designed to better meet the needs of people with IDD by providing a more seamless registration process and user interface. Key MVP features include manual tracking of daily fruit, vegetable and water intake, exercise, and healthy mind activities. Additionally, MVP development included goal setting and participation in Fit 5 and Healthy Minds challenges. The app was piloted in six US Programs and athletes found the app easy to navigate. Program staff were highly impressed with the ease of registering athletes and valued how the app's features reduced their workload.



“I really liked everything because I was able to understand everything going on in the app”
– SO Athletes on using the new fitness app

“It made me eat more fruits and vegetables. It helped me to drink more water. I love juices but with all that sugar, this helped me to drink more water.”
– SO Athletes on using the new fitness app

NORTH AMERICA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

The Golisano Foundation’s investment in health expanded its impact in the Special Olympics North America (SONA) Region in 2024. Compared to 2023, **Canada and the Caribbean saw a 65% increase in the number of grant applications** for Golisano Foundation-funded programming. SONA also held significant events like the Caribbean Regional Beach Games and expanded innovative health interventions for female athletes in Canada.

Trinidad & Tobago’s first-ever Special Olympics Regional Caribbean Beach Games achieved several health milestones. In addition to drawing 130 athletes, 70 coaches, and delegates to compete in sports, Beach Games offered Healthy Athlete screenings, a Family Health Forum, and a Family Engagement Workshop. Family Engagement Coordinators representing 13 countries attended all health components of the Beach Games. These individuals, led by a supervisor in Trinidad & Tobago, work across their countries to establish groups of leaders to champion future family-related initiatives.

Further north, SONA and Special Olympics Canada have made it a priority to encourage greater participation of women in sports and address factors that can limit women’s ability to participate, including menstrual health concerns and complications arising from

improperly fitting sportswear such as sports bras. To this end, Special Olympics Nova Scotia teamed up with a local bra-fitting expert to launch a sports bra fitting program at their Healthy Athletes event during the 2024 Provincial Games.

Staff have received extremely positive feedback: “It was absolutely awesome! I wear it almost all the time and my staff are going to look into seeing if I can purchase an additional one as the fit is perfect. I feel better about myself and much more supported,” said one athlete. A coach shared, “There is no doubt in my mind that the new bra made such a significant impact on the subsequent performances of our girls in particular, it just seemed to give her more confidence and determination and improved ability, and she earned two medals to prove it.”

This initiative revealed health risks for many female athletes, such as severe, painful chafing, and emphasized the importance of intentionally highlighting and addressing them.

In a similar vein, Special Olympics Ontario has forged a research partnership with Women’s College Hospital to offer health education on critical topics like breast cancer. The 2024 Provincial Games helped highlight this initiative and share information on self-checks and regular mammograms.

SONA is eager to expand this work and replicate it across the region, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women with IDD.

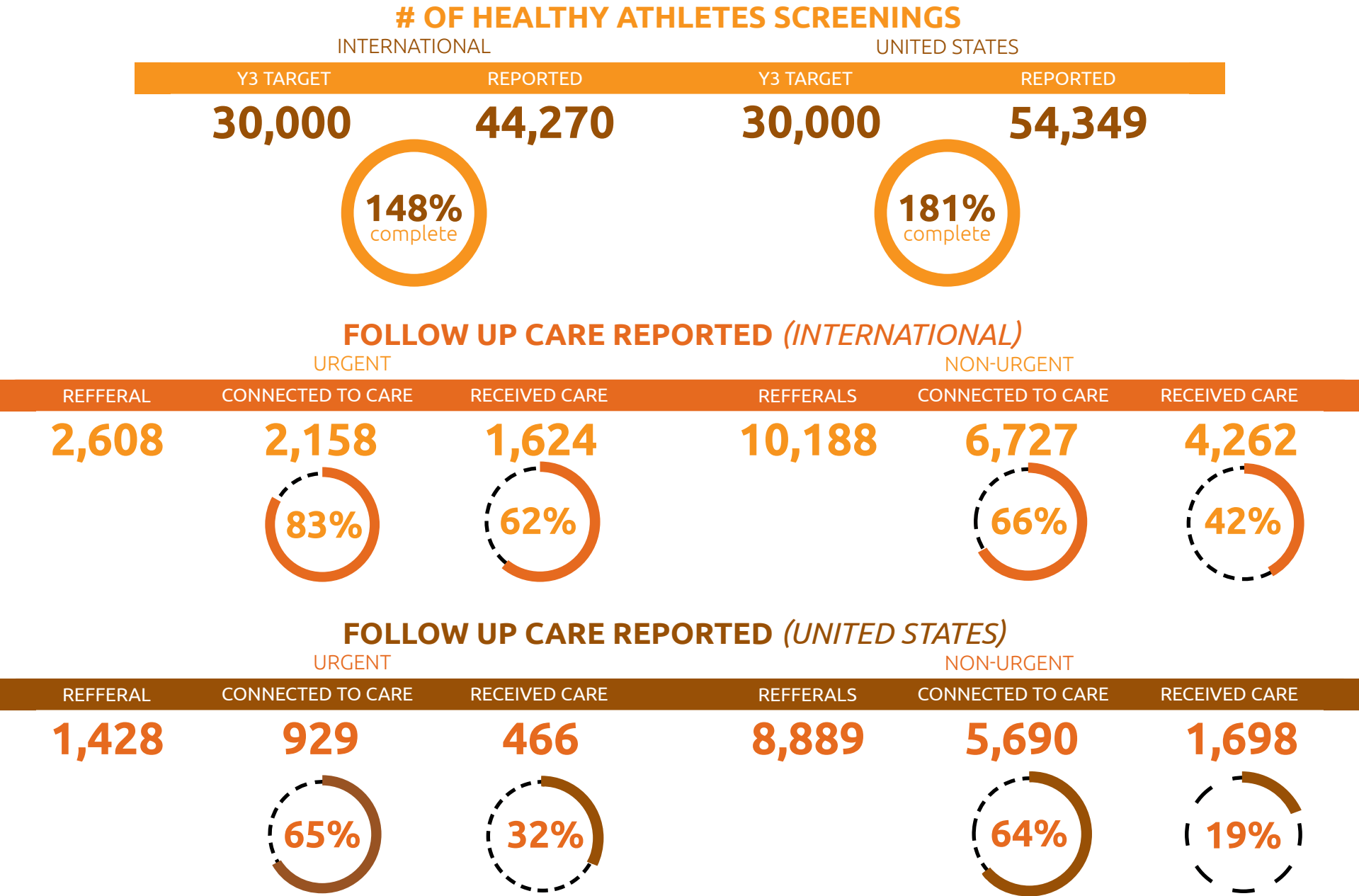
"There is no doubt in my mind that the new bra made such a significant impact on the subsequent performances of our girls in particular, it just seemed to give her more confidence and determination and improved ability, and she earned two medals to prove it."
- Special Olympics Nova Scotia coach





ASSESSMENT

2024 METRICS: ASSESSMENT



HEALTHY ATHLETES®

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

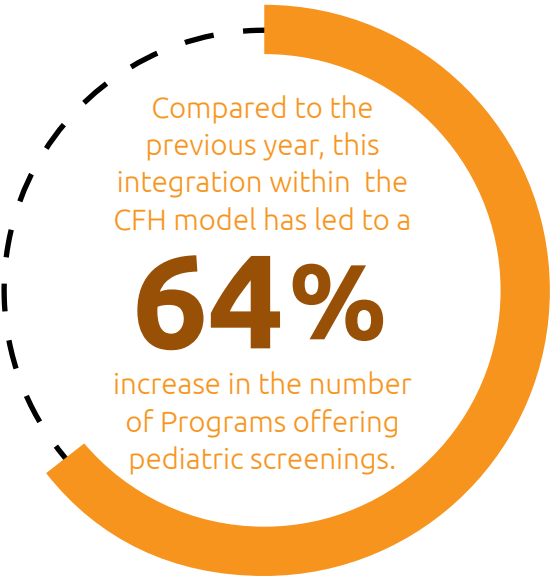
Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® (HA) is dedicated to providing accessible, evidence-based person-centered health screenings and services for individuals with IDD. The expanded program offers nine distinct health screening disciplines, to meet the specific health and wellness needs of Special Olympics athletes and individuals with IDD across the lifespan. Screenings that identify health issues and risks result in guided referrals to obtain follow-up care in the athletes' home communities.

Healthy Athletes underwent significant development in 2024, marked by the scaled piloting of Healthy Athletes 2.0. This initiative incorporates evidence-based screenings, standardized referral criteria, and an updated electronic health record system. In 2024, Special Olympics Programs worldwide conducted 98,619 Healthy Athletes screenings. From these screenings, Programs reported 4,046 urgent and 19,077 non-urgent referrals for follow-up care due to health concerns or preventable risks identified during screenings. Across SO Programs and regional events, **69,721 screenings were digitized**. Additionally, in 2024, **8,171 pairs of prescription eyewear were provided to athletes, and over 140 athletes were fitted with hearing aids, all at no cost.**

The Child and Family Health model has been instrumental in driving the growth and adoption of Healthy Young Athletes, combining pediatric screenings with developmental play activities and family education as essential components of participation.

In 2024, the newest Healthy Athletes discipline, Healthy Young Athletes, expanded implementation in a total of 23 Programs and delivered 993 screenings. This discipline, in collaboration with Young Athletes programming, focuses on the health and social needs of children aged 2 to 7 years old. Of the nearly 1,000 screenings delivered in 2024, 73% were implemented by global Programs identified as located in low-to-middle income countries, prioritizing Healthy Young Athletes in geographies where it meets a need for young children with IDD who may not have access to health and developmental screenings in their communities. Additionally, 14 of the 23 Programs offered the screening as a component of the Child and Family Health (CFH) model. The CFH model has been instrumental in driving the growth and adoption of Healthy Young Athletes, combining

pediatric screenings with developmental play activities and family education as essential components of participation. Compared to the previous year, this integration within the CFH model has led to a 64% increase in the number of Programs offering pediatric screenings.



8,171
PAIRS OF PRESCRIPTION EYEWEAR
were provided to athletes at no cost

140+
ATHLETES
were fitted with hearing aids at no cost

Healthy Young Athletes expanded implementation in **23** PROGRAMS

Healthy Young Athletes delivered **993** SCREENINGS

73%
of Healthy Young Athlete screenings were implemented by global Programs identified as located in low-to-middle income countries

IN 2024



HEALTHY ATHLETES 2.0

Healthy Athletes 2.0 (HA 2.0) aims to enhance screening protocols across all nine disciplines by ensuring the use of evidence-based, functional tests and measures. Developed with input from a global panel of clinical experts, Healthy Athletes 2.0 is designed to better identify risk factors for chronic conditions and facilitate timely referrals, ultimately improving health outcomes for Special Olympics athletes. One noteworthy example is the formal mental health screening tools added to Strong Minds, elevating it from a learning activity focused on emotional well-being to a true mental health screening and referral.

An introductory webinar in August 2024 showcased the new screenings to global Special Olympics Programs and initiated preparations for the planned transition in 2025. The updated HA 2.0 screenings were debuted in seven disciplines at the Special Olympics Latin American (SOLA) Games in Paraguay, in October 2024, with excellent uptake and valuable clinical and operational feedback from the field. At the SOLA Games, **5,120 Healthy Athletes screenings were completed using updated Healthy Athletes 2.0 screening forms**, marking a historical first implementation of the new system. These screenings resulted in **297 urgent referrals and 1,083 non-urgent referrals for follow-up care**.

Central to the success and sustainability of Healthy Athletes 2.0 is the development of an updated, responsive electronic health

record (EHR) system, which ensures real-time data capture across screenings and provides a comprehensive view of athlete health over time. Special Olympics has made key improvements to its EHR, including standardized forms across all disciplines, streamlined data capture, logic-guided clinical decision making, enhanced care coordination, and integration of surveillance questions from national and international health tools (e.g., NHANES, BRFSS, WHO). These surveillance measures will allow for direct comparisons between the health status of Special Olympics athletes and the general population, helping track reductions in health disparities. Additionally, offline capabilities ensure that the system will be accessible to global Programs with connectivity challenges and sustainable for live, digital data capture. The new EHR underwent significant user testing in 2024 in preparation for early event-based pilots scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

To maintain consistent, high-quality screenings, a continuous quality improvement (CQI) framework was implemented in 2024 at both Program-level and Major Games Healthy Athletes events. The CQI framework contains scalable standards for equipment, supplies, technology, and the clinical and general volunteer workforce for Healthy Athletes events. Additionally, Clinical Director training manuals and discipline-specific resources have been updated and will be offered in a new online format to enhance global training efforts. These initiatives will collectively elevate the quality and consistency of Healthy Athletes screenings worldwide.



FOLLOW-UP CARE

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

Referral follow-up is a critical component in ensuring comprehensive care for Special Olympics athletes. From the **23,123 total referrals generated through global Healthy Athletes screenings** in 2024, 67% were confirmed to have access to follow-up care, and of those, **52% of athletes were confirmed to have received the necessary care for which they received a referral.** This remains an area requiring ongoing attention and improvement to ensure athletes' follow-up care needs are consistently met after screenings. To enhance athletes' access to healthcare services, Special Olympics Programs are strengthening community partnerships and developing local provider directories. The evolution of the Healthy Athletes System, including updates to screening content, design, and the electronic health record, aims to streamline referral generation, improve athlete participation in care coordination, and ensure successful connections to follow-up care.

In 2024, Special Olympics expanded its ongoing care connection initiative with National Care Advisors (NCA), delegating nurse case managers to facilitate direct links between athletes and local healthcare providers. This initiative, which began as a two-Program pilot in 2023, grew to serve

six US Programs in 2024, supporting the referrals from their Healthy Athletes screening events across five disciplines, at no cost to

168 athletes received referrals resulting from screenings, 26 with urgent needs and 142 with non-urgent needs. Care coordinators assigned to each Special Olympics Program followed up on all referrals, directly connecting 80 athletes to local care providers.

the Programs, athletes, or their caregivers. From the participating cohort in 2024, 168 athletes received referrals resulting from screenings, 26 with urgent needs and 142 with non-urgent needs. Care coordinators assigned to each Special Olympics Program followed up on all referrals, directly connecting 80 athletes to local care providers. Of those connected to care, 49 athletes confirmed follow-up care appointments. This initiative also highlighted key barriers to care for athletes, which were representative of the larger population of individuals with IDD involved in Special Olympics. The top three barriers identified were: difficulty in finding in-network providers, financial constraints, and

a lack of insurance coverage for specialty care such as vision and dental services. NCA also facilitated the identification of new providers, appointment scheduling, and reactivation of benefits for multiple athletes. Their efforts helped athletes and their caregivers maximize their health benefits. By late 2024, eight additional Programs had accepted this care connection support for early implementation in 2025, with plans to expand the initiative to serve all US Programs in the first half of 2025. This expansion marks significant progress in ensuring athletes' access to essential healthcare services. The ongoing efforts have not only connected athletes with critical care but also provided valuable insights into the barriers they face. As the initiative grows both within the US through existing partnership and outside of the US through sharing of best practices, it will continue to positively impact the health and well-being of Special Olympics athletes, demonstrating the power of collaboration and targeted support in overcoming healthcare challenges.

A Special Olympics athlete with autism, residing in Arizona with his parents, was referred for dental care following a Special Olympics Special Smiles® screening. National Care Advisors (NCA), which supports Special Olympics by connecting athletes with inclusive local follow-up care in conjunction with Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, helped support the athlete's family in benefits navigation and care connection.

The low-income family, including a mother with a disability, reported difficulty accessing routine dental care due to financial constraints. Although the athlete had a dentist, he had not received regular care because Arizona Medicaid only covers emergency dental services for adults, not preventive care. The family's medical financial strain was compounded when the athlete lost his SSDI-DAC (Social Security Disability Insurance -Disabled Adult Child) benefits last year, for reasons unclear to them.

After assisting the family in contacting the Social Security Administration (SSA), NCA determined that the athlete's benefits had been discontinued due to a failure to complete a medical recertification over a year ago. Given the time lapse, a new claim had to be initiated. National Care Advisors supported the family in scheduling an appointment with SSA to start the new claim, which led to the successful reinstatement of his SSDI-DAC benefits. Ultimately, NCA educated the family on the recertification process, helped them set up an online account to independently monitor their son's benefits, and connected the athlete to the necessary dental care, all at no cost to the athlete or his family.



ASIA PACIFIC

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, the Asia Pacific Region saw growth in child and family health programs and Healthy Athletes Clinical Director training, and their year of success culminated in an Inclusive Health Summit in November.

The Region saw a couple of firsts in the child and family engagement space. Special Olympics Bangladesh introduced Healthy Young Athletes screenings, following Special Olympics Bharat and Special Olympics Pakistan before it. Special Olympics Thailand launched family engagement efforts for the first time and held an inaugural conference in Bangkok from 15–16 May. Over 108 participants from 57 provinces and 60 schools participated in discussions on exercise, nutrition, family roles in athlete development and the creation of family support networks. Upon their return, participants engaged over 2,200 families across 50 provinces.

One beneficiary was Anat, father of nine-year-old Aleef, who for years struggled with aggressive behavior and short attention span. At a Special Education Center in Thailand, he participated in Young Athletes, which has given him opportunities to practice and learn a variety of new skills that are not only fun but also help him in his daily life. At the Family Forum, Anat learned about the full range of programming offered by Special Olympics and gleaned invaluable information from doctors.

He and his wife look forward to helping Aleef develop into a bocce player.

In the realm of Healthy Athletes, this year also marked the introduction of Strong Minds by Special Olympics Bharat in India. Since its launch in Asia Pacific Region in 2016, Strong Minds has reached over 400 athletes and families to make emotional well-being a priority. Additionally, 52 Clinical Directors from India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Singapore received training across 7 disciplines.

Finally, the Region hosted an Inclusive Health Summit on 18 November 2024, on the sidelines of the Bocce and Bowling competition in New Delhi, India, as part of the Rosemary Collaboratory. Project leads shared findings from the first phase of the project, the health system assessment, as a starting point for engaging stakeholders, policy makers and people with IDD to build consensus on priorities for advancing health equity in India.

In Thailand, over **108 participants** from **57 provinces** and **60 schools** participated in discussions on exercise, nutrition, family roles in athlete development and the creation of family support networks.





合辦單位: Special Olympics
澳門特奧總會
Macau

Special Olympics
Health
GOLISANO

協辦單位: 金沙中國
Sands China Ltd.

慶國慶75周年迎回歸25周年:亞太特殊社群健康研討會
特奧東亞區醫療主任實踐認證培訓
SOEA Clinical Director Training Practicum

澳門倫敦人
2024年09月26日

TRAINING

2024 METRICS: TRAINING

CLINICIANS & STUDENTS TRAINED AT HEALTHY ATHLETES

INTERNATIONAL (JAN-DEC)

UNITED STATES (AUG-JULY)

Y3 TARGET	REPORTED	Y3 TARGET	REPORTED
2,355	8,609	7,500	10,523
366% complete		104% complete	

CLINICIANS & STUDENTS TRAINED AT NON-HEALTHY ATHLETES

INTERNATIONAL (JAN-DEC)

UNITED STATES (AUG-JULY)

Y3 TARGET	REPORTED	Y3 TARGET	REPORTED
2,980	13,244	3,275	15,932
486% complete		486% complete	

TRAINING

EYE ON THE OUTCOME: HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE IS EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE QUALITY CARE TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TRAINING CLINICIANS AND STUDENTS AT HEALTHY ATHLETES

Globally, 19,132 clinicians and students (7,010 clinicians and 12,122 students) were trained at Healthy Athlete events. The blended learning format continues to be the new standard modality for training for Clinical Directors (CD), consisting of an online training component followed by in-person experience. The online training has previously been made up of 5 modules, however several modules have been updated to prepare for the launch of Healthy Athletes 2.0. The new training modules for Clinical Directors will consist of 4 modules: Introduction to Intellectual & Developmental Disability, Special Olympics Health, discipline-specific CD training, and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). All but the FAQ module has been updated, with the FAQ module scheduled updates to be completed by the mid-point of 2025. Those who complete the online training modules complete a pre- and post-survey, a discipline-specific assessment within the module, and an assignment to be completed during hands-on training. 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 a survey 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. **In preparation for the Special Olympics Latin American Games 2024, 74 new Clinical Directors from SOLA were trained using the updated CD modules,** with 17 existing Clinical Directors who completed the updated modules as a refresher. Additionally, 18 new Clinical Directors and 22 existing Clinical Directors from SOEE and MENA were trained using the new modules in December to prepare for the Special Olympics World Winter Games Turin 2025.

TRAINING CLINICIANS AND STUDENTS BEYOND HEALTHY ATHLETE EVENTS

Globally, 29,176 clinicians and students were trained beyond Healthy Athlete events. This year, one of the major accomplishments for training was the transition and roll-out of the upgraded Learning Management System (LMS) named the Golisano School of Health Sciences. **Through the Golisano School of Health Sciences, 13,320 Health courses were completed,** with the most course completions in SONA (with 7,939 in the US

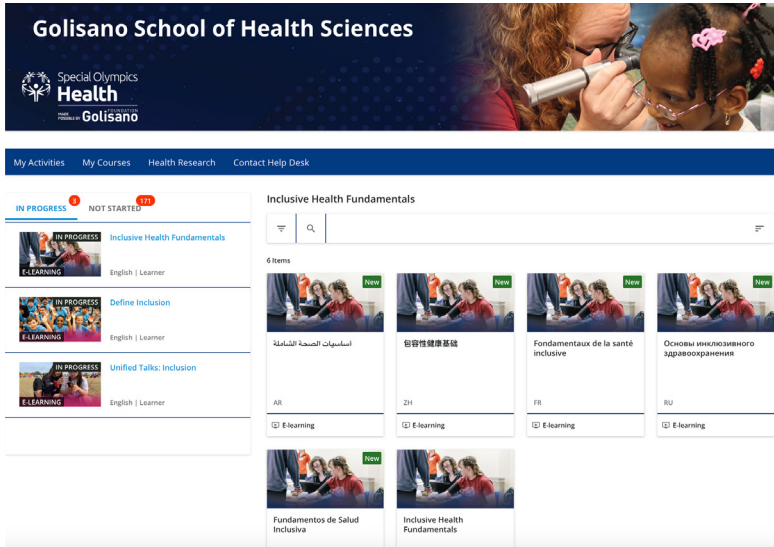
and 649 in Canada & the Caribbean) and 4,732 in all other regions. Besides North America, trainees from the Latin America region used the Golisano School of Health Sciences most frequently for training, followed by the Asia Pacific region. The most popular courses were Sports Nutrition for Coaches (n=5912), Introduction to Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (n=1113) and Special Olympics Health (n=617). Additionally, 1,550 individuals completed the Community Health Worker (CHW) training globally, with 915 trained using

The launch of the new Golisano School of Health Sciences expanded the number of health professions schools utilizing the Inclusive Health Fundamentals.

materials developed by the Special Olympics Health team and 635 through other methods/materials. Special Olympics Africa has trained the most CHWs (n=455). In North America, Alaska trained 100 CHWs using other materials/methods, while Tennessee trained 68 using SOI developed materials. Twenty-four individuals completed the CHW online training via the Golisano School of Health Sciences, 16 from the SONA region and individual learners in

Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Argentina, Ecuador, Lebanon, and Oman.

focus will include a strategic dissemination plan focused on supporting growth both inside and outside the US including visits to two regions (Asia Pacific and Europe Eurasia), as well as presentations at the International Council of Nursing’s biannual Congress Meeting in Finland. The development of Clinical Specialty Topics, including two modules on nutrition, a three module Life Transitions series, Inclusive Dental Spaces, and Understanding Sensory Differences modules, and the pursuit of accreditation to offer continuing professional education credits are also underway and will increase the support and education offerings to healthcare providers and students. To address unstable and/or inadequate internet



Screenshot of new LMS, the Golisano School of Health Sciences and the translated Inclusive Health Fundamentals modules.

The launch of the new Golisano School of Health Sciences expanded the number of health professions schools utilizing the Inclusive Health Fundamentals. There are currently 124 schools globally using them, with significant growth in schools outside of the US in the last quarter of 2024. There are 19 schools outside of the US using these modules, with 6 schools each in the Middle East North Africa and Asia Pacific regions, followed by 3 in East Asia. Inclusive Health Fundamentals were also translated into all Special Olympics languages to assist with uptake by students, universities, and health professionals outside of the US. In 2025, the

connection in remote regions globally, a low-bandwidth version of the Inclusive Health Fundamentals modules is under development and will be available in mid 2025 on the Golisano School of Health Sciences LMS. This will allow students in remote regions to easily access the content, thus increasing uptake of these important educational resources.

19,132

CLINICIANS AND STUDENTS were trained at Healthy Athlete events

Through the Golisano School of Health Sciences,

13,320

Health courses were completed, with the most course completions in SONA

1,550

INDIVIDUALS completed the Community Health Worker (CHW) training globally

EUROPE EURASIA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, 12 Programs in the Europe Eurasia Region implemented holistic Healthy Communities projects, with France and Germany receiving Healthy Communities funds for the first time. The Region trained 12 new Clinical Directors and, significantly, completed Year 2 of their Inclusive Healthy Lifestyle Groups in Schools (IHLGiS) project, funded by the European Union.

IHLGiS has already reached 158 schools across its four project sites, surpassing its goal of 100 schools in three years. Nearly 3,000 students with and without IDD are participating, and 100 of them have received training as youth leaders, putting SOEE ahead of schedule with their goal of 200 youth leaders over three years. The project has fostered 25 local partnerships and counting with civil society, government, academic and corporate partners.

Europe Eurasia athletes spoke at the World Health Summit in Berlin and participated in New York University’s Global Healthcare Leadership Program in Prague. Thanks to Regional trainings, Europe Eurasia now has over 100 Health Messengers actively promoting inclusive health. One such messenger is Reynaldo Montoya, who has been involved with SO Deutschland (Germany) for almost 20 years. His time with Special Olympics has deepened his understanding of

his own health needs and the impact of his lifestyle choices. He participated in the Berlin Poverty and Health Congress in March 2024, the largest public health congress in Germany, where he shared his personal perspectives on health promotion for people with IDD. He also spoke on a panel with members of the German government in March 2024, where speakers discussed equal access to healthcare in the country. Reynaldo has also been using social media to talk with his fellow athletes about smoking cessation, exercise tips, nutrition, and foot care.

Healthy Communities reached 6,000 family members and caregivers with education programs, and the Region engaged 3,500 new Young Athletes (YA) in health activities during the World Winter Test Games in Turin, Italy. Special Olympics Romania piloted the Region’s first Child and Family Health model, hosting a weekend YA camp in Brasov that also featured a family health forum on dental and vision health and Healthy Young Athletes screenings for 20 children. Special Olympics Lithuania also made strides in child and family health, hosting a Family Health Forum during Basketball Week June 2024 that welcomed families from 13 Special Olympics country Programs.





2024 METRICS: HEALTH SYSTEMS

NEW HEALTH MESSENGERS TRAINED INTERNATIONAL AND UNITED STATES

Y3 TARGET	REPORTED	PERCENT
600	903	151%

HEALTH MESSENGERS ACTIVATED INTERNATIONAL AND UNITED STATES

Y3 TARGET	REPORTED	PERCENT
510	1,074	211%

ROSEMARY COLLABORATORY SITES ACTIVATED INTERNATIONAL AND UNITED STATES

Y3 TARGET	ACTIVATED	PERCENT
11	11	100%

HEALTH SYSTEMS

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

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES AND HEALTH NEEDS OF THOSE WITH IDD IN GLOBAL HEALTH CIRCLES

On the sidelines of the 2024 World Health Assembly—the meeting of the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO)—Special Olympics collaborated with various organizations to host an event entitled "Disability Inclusive Health in Practice: Moving

from Awareness to Action." Special Olympics Chief Health Officer Dr. Dimitri Christakis participated on a panel alongside representatives of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development; Reaching the Last Mile, an organization with a portfolio of global health programs driven by the philanthropy of the Government of the UAE; and the Ministry of Health of Indonesia.



Advocates for disability inclusion in health at the WHS, including Special Olympics Health Messengers Rachel Veldkamp (Special Olympics Suriname) and Moira Scott (Special Olympics Ireland), pose with allies for a picture at the WHS after the session ended.

Later in the year, Special Olympics was instrumental in a group of organizations, including WHO, that put disability-inclusive health on the World Health Summit agenda for the second consecutive year. Rachel Veldkamp, a Health Messenger from Special Olympics Suriname, shared her experiences alongside fellow panelists including the Australian Ambassador to Germany and WHO's Assistant Director-General for Universal Health Coverage. Speaking to a full room of 110 people, with at least 75 people turned away, Rachel emphasized

the importance of empowering people with disabilities and including them in health discussions.

Additionally, Special Olympics staffed a table at Walk the Talk, alongside the World Health Assembly; collaborated with colleagues on a successful grant application to develop a report on the state of funding for disability-relevant health funding in official development assistance; and was part of a select group invited to a WHO-hosted global expert consultation for the creation of a global health equity and disability platform.

NEW SUBGRANTS, NEW RESOURCES, A REINVIGORATED IDD-INCLUSIVE HEALTH RESOURCE HUB

In 2024, **Special Olympics relaunched the Center for Inclusive Health website: a one-stop-shop for resources and tools to support and normalize the inclusion of people with IDD in health care and health promotion services and activities.** The site aims to specifically cater to health care providers, payers, and policy makers.

Among the inclusive health resources in which Special Olympics had a hand was a report **examining the use and potential for coding mechanisms to reduce barriers individuals**

with IDD face in accessing health care in the US. The report also identifies elements of an inclusive care model and highlights the potential of value-based payment arrangements.

The Center also houses the Systems Change in Inclusive Health subgrants and awarded ten subgrants—up from seven in the previous year.

THESE INCLUDED:

The American Public Health Association (APHA): IDD-focused educational sessions at major public health convenings (the APHA annual conference, National Public Health Week, Policy Action Institute).

The Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing at St. John Fisher University: develop and evaluate three new modules on IDD for Advanced Practice Provider (APP) residency programs.

Good Nutrition Ideas: plan for digitization of the existing MENU-AIDDS (Materials supporting Education and Nutrition for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) program promoting improved nutrition support for people with IDD in group homes.

Medicaid Medicare CHIP Services Dental Association (MSDA): expand Medicaid dental program data systems to include the use of dental codes that document disease and disability; pilot the use of ICD-10 codes in three states.

The Sibling Leadership Network: develop resources and support opportunities for siblings of people with IDD so they can be better prepared and supported to take on caregiving roles.

The National Task Group on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Dementia Practices: supplement CDC's Guiding and Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model with IDD information and training.



**TWO SIDES OF THE EQUATION:
EMPOWERING PROVIDERS AND
PEOPLE WITH IDD**

Promoting improved—and institutionalized—training of the health care workforce is a crucial element of health systems strengthening, which is why Special Olympics supported Special Olympics South Africa to host an Inclusive Health training for 30 state-employed optometrists and their leadership in Gauteng, South Africa. The training was a significant event aimed at enhancing inclusive health practices in eye care and training included the recommended adaptations to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) eye examination protocols to make optometric services inclusive for people with IDD. The Gauteng Department of Health pledged to include IDD services in their next budget to procure the necessary equipment for the provision of universal eye care.

Special Olympics also remains committed to equipping people with IDD to advocate for their health needs, which can also mean supporting those who support them. To that end, Special Olympics created a new module series on navigating the health system with two parallel tracks—one for people with IDD and one for their care givers. Currently in a pilot phase in eight states in the US, the series includes modules on:

- Main ideas about health and healthcare and why it's important to learn about them.**
- The skills of self-advocacy, including how to identify and express needs and feelings to try to get better care.**
- What to do before, during, and after a visit with a healthcare provider.**
- Knowing about health-related rights, including the existence of accommodations and specific types of accommodations to request that may help those with IDD to get better care.**
- How to stay healthy, how to spot signs of sickness, and when and where to go if medical care is needed.**

**LAUNCH OF ROSEMARY
COLLABORATORY INITIATIVE
TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH SYSTEMS
TO INCLUDE THOSE WITH IDD**

From the finalization of a tool to assess IDD inclusion in health systems to the outline of the Global Report on the Health of Persons with IDD and lots of points in between, Rosemary Collaboratory covered a great deal of ground in its first full year officially in existence. In each of eleven sites spanning Special Olympics' seven regions, Special Olympics convened local researchers and persons with IDD to gather 60 indicators' worth of data, identify possible policy avenues, and prioritize among the possibilities. **Over 79 persons with IDD from 59 countries responded to a survey designed to capture their largest health barriers and priorities;** 375 health workers from more than 40 countries responded to a survey about their perspective about supply-side barriers to people with IDD achieving their right to health, with qualitative discussions with an additional 77 health workers carried out in Rosemary Collaboratory sites. The project also started garnering visibility with the public and with key stakeholders in sites including India, Nigeria, Paraguay, and the US, setting the tone to move into the implementation of the next phase of the project—mobilizing and educating with the aim of achieving systems change.



LATIN AMERICA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

Healthy Communities began as a pilot initiative in 2012 in Mexico and Peru. As of 2024, Healthy Communities has been implemented across 10 Programs in the Latin America Region, through the support of the Golisano Foundation.

Significantly, 2024 saw 15 new strategic alliances established across Latin America, including Ministries of Health, academia and the private sector. **The region held 140 Healthy Athletes events at the local level and at Games resulting in a total of 15,185 screenings.** In addition to the more than 2,000 clinical volunteers trained for Healthy Athletes, 900 professionals and students received inclusive health training in other forums. Furthermore, nearly 1,400 family members were engaged in health education.

The Region also hit a major milestone this year with the IV Latin America Special Olympics Games in Asunción, Paraguay, where clinical volunteers and partners screened over 1,000 athletes from 18 countries at Healthy Athletes. Additionally, 200 people with IDD from Asunción received screenings, demonstrating the local impact of the Games. At the Healthy Athletes ribbon cutting ceremony, Special Olympics Paraguay and the Minister of Health formalized their collaboration on future inclusive health initiatives, which include a committee to explore legislative proposals for

installing trained inclusive health providers in every public primary care center.

In 2024, Special Olympics Latin America had the honor of hosting Erica Dayton on a site visit to Chile. While in Chile, Ms. Dayton met SO Chile athlete Rocio Ochoa in Valparaíso. Rocio's oral health benefited greatly when SO Chile expanded their dental screenings beyond Santiago and into special schools in Valparaíso. She received crucial dental care and overcame her fear of dental check-ups, which also motivated her to prepare as a Health Messenger to share her experience with families and individuals with IDD. Rocio wants to help her peers understand the importance of inclusive medical services to improve their health and ensure their well-being.

2024 saw **15 new strategic alliances** established across Latin America, including Ministries of Health, academia and the private sector.





ACTIVATING FOR AWARENESS

In 2024, Special Olympics Health’s work received 3,391 media mentions globally, across outlets including leading industry and top-tier publications, podcasts, radio, and television, such as Associated Press Online, Yahoo! News, PR Newswire, and Sports Illustrated. Cumulatively, these mentions resulted in a combined readership of 5.07 billion individuals, reflecting \$21,971,552 in advertising equivalency, meaning that it would have cost Special Olympics that amount to reach those audience numbers through paid advertising as opposed to generating the attention through media placement.

Across the 232 Health-focused social media posts on Special Olympics International channels, posts were shared over 2,430 times and reached 2.77 million individuals.

INCLUSIVE HEALTH HEADLINES ON THE NFL’S BIGGEST STAGE

In February 2024, Special Olympics returned to Super Bowl Media Row for its 11th consecutive year. The 2024 showing was particularly meaningful as it marked the launch of the School of Strength: Snack Zone campaign, supported by Denver Broncos Linebacker and Special Olympics supporter Alex Singleton. Snack Zone teaches athletes how to take their game-day performance to the next level through healthy and nutritious snacking by providing easy-to-understand and actionable information on topics like portion sizes and macronutrients.

During the week leading up to Super Bowl, Alex conducted interviews with Health

Messenger, Vince Egan, promoting Snack Zone resources on prominent outlets like CBS Sports Radio and Sirius XM. Thanks to this high-profile coverage, 3,039 individuals utilized Snack Zone resources in 2024 alone.

Later in the year, Alex was nominated for the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award for his work with Special Olympics, and primarily for Snack Zone. WPOMY is the NFL’s highest honor recognizing outstanding athletes who demonstrate a significant positive community impact. This recognition raised the profile of Snack Zone and expanded Special Olympics Health’s reach to global audiences who may have only been familiar with the work of Special Olympics in sport.

SPOTLIGHTING ATHLETE EXPERIENCES, STORIES, AND VOICES

Through Special Olympics, many athletes experience health breakthroughs that they never thought possible. These moments carry with them a range of powerful emotions, reflecting the life-changing impact of inclusive health programming. Among two of the most moving breakthroughs in 2024 came when athletes in Papua New Guinea and Paraguay were fitted for hearing aids and heard for the first time through Special Olympics Healthy Hearing. Given the poignancy of these moments, it is no surprise that both screenings, captured on video and shared on social media, are among the highest performing Special Olympics social media posts of 2024.

3,039

INDIVIDUALS
utilized Snack Zone resources

Health-focused social media
posts on Special Olympics
International channels reached

2.77 million

INDIVIDUALS

These posts, shared on World Hearing Day and during the Special Olympics Latin America Regional Games, collectively reached over 75,000 users on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. They were reshared by nearly 150 individuals, introducing new audiences to the transformative impact Healthy Athletes has on improving health outcomes of people with IDD. The World Hearing Day video also took the number one and two spots for most engagement among Health posts in 2024, with an 8.69% engagement rate on Instagram (compared to the industry average of 2.2%), and a 16.17% engagement rate on Tim Shriver’s Facebook page (compared to the industry average of 1.8%).

The **power of athlete voices** was also demonstrated by the Special Olympics Health social post achieving the highest reach of 2024, reaching **18,570 across all platforms.**

The power of athlete voices was also demonstrated by trending social media posts. A story about a Health Messenger teaming up with Aly Raisman using our Strong Minds resources had the highest reach of health social media posts for 2024, reaching 18,570 across all platforms. For World Mental Health Day, Special Olympics Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Susan Wang teamed up with Olympic gymnast, Aerie Real Foundation Ambassador, and fervent mental health advocate Aly Raisman. Together, the pair discussed the importance of managing stress, and Susan shared how she learned healthy coping mechanisms like mindful

deep breathing through the Healthy Athletes discipline Strong Minds.

The measurable success of these posts reflects the importance of placing athlete voices at the center of content—something Special Olympics strives to do with each story we share.

CHRONICLING A LEGACY OF ADDRESSING UNMET HEALTH NEEDS

STAT news, the leading publication for in-depth coverage of the latest news in health and medicine, chronicled the history of Special Olympics Health’s work over the past 30 years, detailing its critical role in reaching athletes who are often left behind by healthcare systems. The piece profiled the health journey of Special Olympics athlete and employee, Dustin Plunkett, whose life was saved when his dental screening revealed that he had mouth cancer. Following this screening, Dustin’s first in over a decade, he was referred for urgent treatment to ensure the cancer was caught before it became fatal. Through this experience, Dustin learned how to advocate for his health needs with healthcare providers.

Beyond the direct impact of Special Olympics Health, the piece demonstrated the catalytic ways in which the health stories of athletes have sparked positive change in making health systems more inclusive, including influencing the Surgeon General’s landmark 2001 report calling for expanded research on IDD, broader training of healthcare professionals on how to care for people with IDD, and easier access to health insurance for individuals in the IDD population.

This piece not only positioned Special Olympics as a leading expert on the health of people with IDD, but it amplified a key research and evaluation goal of Special Olympics Health: calling on readers to improve and increase health data on individuals with IDD to better support this population.

SPOTLIGHTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS HEALTH IN MENA

In November 2024, Erica Dayton joined Special Olympics Chief Health Officer Dimitri Christakis and Chief Health Operations Officer Annemarie Hill on a tour across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Over seven days in Morocco and Egypt, the team engaged with academic partners, civil society, families, healthcare workers, and community groups—all integral to the Special Olympics Health movement.

The communications team secured the hire of a local photographer to accompany the group, capturing content from all aspects of the visits, including Health Messenger presentations, Family Health Forums, Healthy Young Athletes demonstrations, and the Healthy Communities MENA Annual Meeting. The documentation of this tour was not only an opportunity to gather compelling content of holistic programming, but it also served as a vehicle to elevate the profile of Special Olympics Health in MENA. Over the week, several regional media outlets covered the visits, resulting in over 30 earned media pieces, including an interview with Annemarie Hill, on Nile TV.



AFRICA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

This year was quite active for Special Olympics Africa Region. Special Olympics Ethiopia, Madagascar and Zambia began receiving Healthy Communities funding for the first time; and Kenya, Namibia and Zimbabwe received grants to begin piloting the Young Athletes App. Special Olympics Ethiopia also hosted the Region's leadership conference in March, where a cross-collaboration with Europe Eurasia Regional Health staff helped to introduce Special Olympics Health work to unfamiliar attendees.

The Region also celebrated fruitful trainings and workshops. In April, 25 Africa country Programs attended a virtual Fitness Captain Train the Trainer event. The Region also hosted a virtual inclusive health training for community health workers, collaborating with 16 country Programs. Finally, **120 new Health Messengers received training across all Programs implementing Healthy Communities.**

One such Health Messenger is Pepua Kambueza of SO Namibia. After completing a virtual Health Messenger training in December, Pepua had a realization: "How can I teach others if I'm not practicing what I preach?" This thought sparked a transformation. He became more mindful of his hygiene, adopted healthier eating habits, and committed to fitness. As he embraced his new lifestyle, he gained

confidence and became a role model. Athletes listened to him not just because he spoke about health but because he lived it. With his mentor's guidance and his Health Messenger portfolio, Pepua is now leading by example, inspiring others one healthy habit at a time.

A second leadership conference in Kenya in September brought together regional staff with Clinical Directors to discuss strong, proven practices for improving follow-up care and treatment for athletes who have gone through screenings. Athlete speakers included Barbara Njovo of the Regional Athlete Leadership Committee. Notably, this year Ms. Njovo also launched a project of her own in her country of Zimbabwe, helping young girls with their hygiene and wellbeing by providing reusable sanitary towels.

Other highlights included Special Olympics Sierra Leone and South Sudan hosting their first Family Health Forums. A Family Health Forum in Cameroon, meanwhile, brought in more than 100 families. Finally, Special Olympics Gambia and Sénégal incorporated numerous fitness sessions into their Programs' joint sport camp.





EVALUATION

Special Olympics made significant progress in designing and implementing Project ALL-STAR, a longitudinal evaluation of Special Olympics Health programming. The project aims to document the long-term impact of Special Olympics participation on athletes' health and well-being. Additionally, it seeks to establish a data infrastructure to support future research and evaluation, enhancing understanding of the health status, disparities, and needs of Special Olympics athletes. The feasibility phase of Project ALL-STAR launched in 2024, with data collection beginning in four Special Olympics Programs: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Arizona. These Programs initiated participant recruitment, in-person assessments, wearable device distribution, and survey data collection to track engagement in Special Olympics Health programs and associated health outcomes. In fall 2024, two additional Special Olympics Programs—New Mexico and Colorado—joined Project ALL-STAR and will begin project activities in 2025.



2024 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

48 participants enrolled across four state programs (PA, WI, MN, AZ).

Communication and Knowledge Mobilization Plan was created for disseminating findings.

Methodology paper was developed for submission to the American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AJIDD).

Project ALL-STAR abstracts were presented at multiple US and global conferences.

REDCap platform was established for consent management, data collection, and monitoring.

Five in-person assessments and enrollment events were conducted.

Special Olympics deepened our commitment to inclusive research/evaluation with the Athlete Advisory Board (AAB). In June 2024, the AAB was expanded from 6 to 15 members to increase the diversity and representativeness of the board. This board provided their input and perspectives on a range of project activities, including recruitment and outreach to athletes for participation in Project ALL-STAR, data collection methods, and dissemination and communication about Project ALL-STAR. Two AAB members participated in an Inclusion Revolution podcast with Special Olympics staff, sharing the importance of inclusive health research.

Special Olympics has made significant progress in developing evaluation tools to help Special Olympics Programs better assess the impact of their work. Fitness evaluation toolkits for youth and adults are now complete. The adult assessment toolkit is available on the Fitness Evaluation website, and the youth toolkit will be revised and published in 2025. Additionally, lifestyle surveys for adult and youth athletes are now available on the website, allowing for language translation for the electronic survey. The Fitness Evaluation website continues to be updated with resources, assessment tools, and evaluation reports to support Special Olympics Programs. Special Olympics Evaluation Team remains committed to working with regional Programs to translate and adapt fitness tools to meet diverse needs. In 2025, Special Olympics Evaluation team will support Asia Pacific Programs in implementing



while celebrating program achievements through stories and photos that complement fitness data. Dissemination will underscore the importance of evaluation and tracking and demonstrate how these efforts contribute to a broader culture of fitness and evaluation. This will be available on the Fitness Evaluation website May 2025.

Phase 1 of the Young Athletes (YA) mobile application has been completed.

In collaboration with the University of Connecticut, a mixed-methods evaluation was conducted with four Special Olympics Programs—Ohio (US), Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Malta. Results indicated that parents who used the app more than once a week for at least 15 minutes per session reported that their children learned new skills and spent more time playing together. Qualitative data from focus groups further highlighted the app’s positive impact on parent-child interactions, as parents discovered new ways to engage their children in skill-building activities. Notably, the personalized nature of the app helped parents recognize their child’s strengths and scaffold further skill development through tailored activities. This is particularly valuable for families who are waiting for or navigating challenges in accessing services, as the app provides tools to support development at home. During the

the adult fitness toolkit and lifestyle survey, ensuring tools are tailored to the local community.

Fitness Through Sport resources are being actively enhanced. In 2024, two US-based Special Olympics Programs, involving 10 coaches and 50 athletes, enrolled in an evaluation to better understand the integration of fitness into sports practices. The evaluation—incorporating coach observations, surveys, ecological momentary assessments with athletes, and wearable technology—is ongoing into 2025 and will inform the refinement of Fitness Through Sport resources for coaches.

The 2024 Fitness in Healthy Communities Report highlights the reach of Special Olympics Fitness programming, success stories, and areas for growth. This report tracks progress toward the 2026 strategic plan objectives

Special Smiles averted

353

cases of dental caries

Special Smiles averted

14

cases of periodontal disease

\$226,985

cost of averted dental services

2023–2024 school year, the Young Athletes Lesson Plans were piloted in classrooms across four US states—New York, Michigan, Arizona, and Kansas. A formative evaluation, based on teacher feedback, led to the development of two separate versions: one for ages 2–4 and another for ages 5–7, ensuring activities are developmentally appropriate. Following this evaluation and the release of the Young Athletes Lesson Plans for Special Olympics Programs, a request for proposals (RFP) was launched to identify an evaluation partner for an implementation and impact study. The University of Nebraska-Omaha was selected and, in 2025, will collaborate with Special Olympics to evaluate the impact of the Lesson Plans on developmental skills for young children with IDD.

In 2024, Special Olympics developed preliminary findings for the Health Economics Project to understand cost-effectiveness and return on investment (ROI) for Special Smiles®. Results indicate that Special Olympics athletes referred for dental services demonstrated a high prevalence of oral disease, including dental caries and periodontal infections, highlighting the critical need for targeted dental care interventions for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The Special Smiles screening program effectively addressed these challenges by providing dental screenings, referrals, and education, leading to measurable improvements in oral health outcomes. Specifically, the program averted 353 cases of dental caries and 14 cases of periodontal disease. These outcomes indicate that the program not only improved access to care but

also facilitated early intervention, preventing the progression of oral diseases and reducing the need for more extensive and costly treatments.

From a financial perspective, the program demonstrated exceptional cost-effectiveness. Preliminary findings of the total savings from averted dental services were estimated at \$226,985, significantly outweighing the program’s cost of \$174,862. This resulted in a benefit-cost ratio of 1.30, meaning that for every dollar spent, the program delivered \$1.30 in value. The return on investment (ROI) was calculated at 30%, reinforcing the program’s value in delivering both health and economic benefits. Phase 2 of this project will include Opening Eyes, Health Promotion, Healthy Hearing, and FUNfitness disciplines in 2025.

The evaluation of a Health Passport tool on healthcare delivery outcomes for PWIDD was initiated with Thomas Jefferson University. The initial phases will include a systematic literature review and development of a structured evaluation framework. Following that, the evaluation will engage PWIDD, their care partners, and healthcare and community service providers to identify multi-level barriers and facilitators to the adoption of the Health Passport. Evaluation results will inform the development of a new mobile app tailored for use in US-based health care and

home/community services encounters. This evaluation project holds significant promise in bridging communication needs of PWIDD to enhance the delivery of healthcare and community services by the development of a codesigned, patient-centered, and evidence-based mobile app.

On July 22, 2024, the Special Olympics Evaluation Consortium convened to explore best practices for the development of a registration platform, tentatively referred to as the “Special Olympics Link (SO-Link),” to support enrollment of Special Olympics Athletes in expanded data collection efforts to enhance the evaluation of Special Olympics

activities. The meeting took a multidisciplinary collaborative approach bringing together more than 40 participants including self-advocates, caregivers, academics, service providers, federal agencies, and Special Olympics staff, with sessions focused on perspectives, lessons learned, and opportunities in inclusive evaluation and research practices as they pertain to registry participation and data use. Recommendations provided guidance for internal use in the development and implementation of the Special Olympics Registry. SO-Link is now under construction with state Programs participating in the Centers of Excellence infrastructure. Initial response has been strong with 200+ athletes expressing interest in participating in such evaluations in December.

Parents who used the app more than once a week for at least 15 minutes per session reported that their **children learned new skills and spent more time playing together.**

EAST ASIA

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHT

Healthy Communities launched in 2015 in East Asia Region, and all 6 Programs have participated in health over the past decade. In 2024, the Region saw meaningful partnership advancements and involvement in major health congresses.

The Region recorded over 2,500 Healthy Athletes (HA) screenings and trained 90 new Clinical Directors (CDs), as well as nearly 250 clinical volunteers who helped at the HA events. The Region hosted an Opening Eyes CD training and screening at the Vision China 2024 Congress in Wenzhou, where they celebrated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Wenzhou Medical University Eye Hospital. The MOU provides overall support for HA venues, supplies and volunteers as well as assistance with care connection for athletes and recruitment of Clinical Directors and medical volunteers. The university will use their online presence to actively convey information about Special Olympics, athlete stories, and opportunities to support local events.

The Region similarly held a Special Smiles event and CD training at the Seoul, Korea International Association for Disability and Oral Health 2024 conference.

East Asia Region made strides in the child and family health space, recruiting more than 300 new Young Athletes this grant year, not including Special Olympics China.

Liu Hongyuan of Special Olympics China is a Health Messenger and athlete leader. When he first participated in Special Olympics at age 12, even a short sprint presented a significant physical challenge; but he grew into an athlete through consistent practice and a commitment to fitness and exercise. With time, he accepted

the challenge of Health Messenger training. Liu Hongyuan now plays active roles in Special Olympics China’s health events at schools and community centers, particularly at recurring fitness events, where he helps to lead sessions and get athletes and families motivated.

90
new Clinical Directors
(CDs) trained

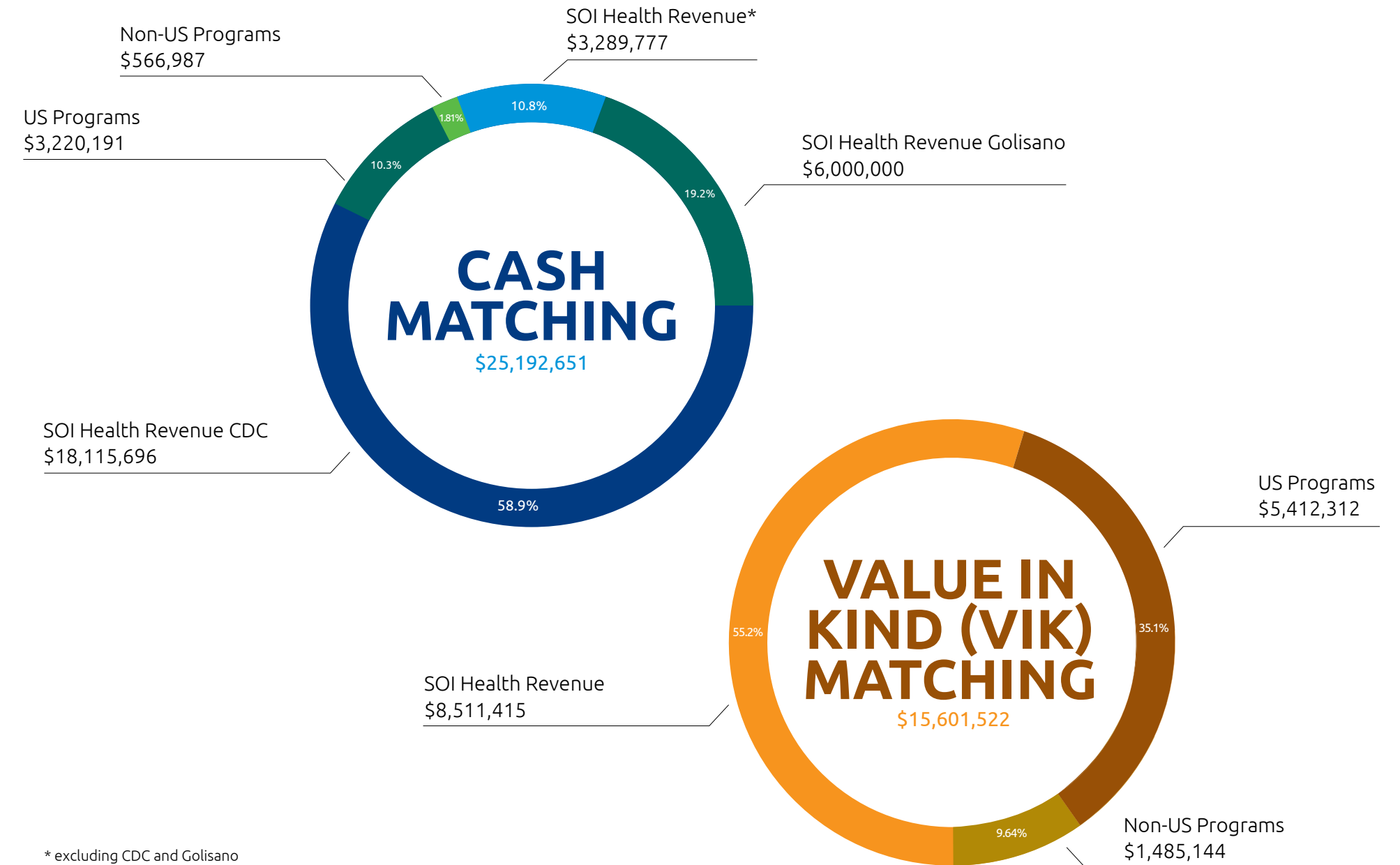
250
clinical volunteers helped
at HA events

2,500
Healthy Athlete screenings



ADDENDUMS

ADDENDUM A MATCHING FUNDS



ADDENDUM B: METRICS CHARTS

	SPECIAL OLYMPICS AFRICA	SPECIAL OLYMPICS ASIA PACIFIC	SPECIAL OLYMPICS EAST ASIA	SPECIAL OLYMPICS EUROPE EURASIA	SPECIAL OLYMPICS LATIN AMERICAN	SPECIAL OLYMPICS MIDDLE EAST NORTH AFRICA	SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA & THE CARIBBEAN	SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH AMERICA USA	TOTAL
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
New Young Athletes with ID	1,516	6,026	337	697	13,468	2,561	1,046	23,428	49,079
Total HA Screenings	8,894	5,105	2,539	5,499	10,065	8,940	3,228	54,349	98,619
Athletes in Fitness	7,793	4,701	2,428	250	673	1,526	17,728	92,215	127,314
New Health Messengers Activated for health Advocacy	128	40	19	33	87	311	26	430	1,074
Students Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	390	78	148	494	2,087	888	257	3,867	8,209
Clinicians Trained Outside of Healthy Athletes	530	1,251	490	575	2,290	1,695	682	11,709	19,222
Clinical Volunteers Trained at HA	654	546	92	420	696	658	307	3,492	6,865
Student Volunteers Trained at HA	583	598	207	464	1,567	608	961	7,031	12,049
Community Health Workers Trained with SOI Resource	391	65	84	21	90	82	3	152	888
Community Health Workers Trained by Other Methods	64	12	39	109	205	72	2	204	707
Athletes Trained as New Health Messengers	120	17	12	33	77	432	21	197	909

ADDENDUM C

PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

PUBLICATIONS

- Dixon-Ibarra, A., Stanish, H, Watkins, J., Hanley, J., Apgar, G., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. *Participation of Special Olympics athletes in the USA Games step challenge.* Paelestra, 39 (3).
- Dixon-Ibarra, A, Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., Weeks, J., Baio, J., Holbrook, J., & Rice, C. (under review). *Functional limitations among U.S. adults with intellectual disabilities participating in Special Olympics: A comparative analysis to the general population.*
- Forquer, M., Stanish, H., Apgar, G., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. (2025). *Special Olympics “Road to the 2022 USA Games” Fitness Challenge: A Process Evaluation.* Paelestra, 39 (3).
- Pittaway, M., Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., & Foley, J. (under review). *Bone health surveillance in adults with intellectual and developmental disability.*
-
- Smith, A., Ralston, Barker, R., Anderson, E., Christakis, D. (under review). *The impact of a play-based early child development intervention on adaptive behavior skills for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities* (Submitted)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY (AADMD)

- Lincoln, A., Tobin, A., & Garcia-Williams, A. *Exploring Mental Health Challenges Across the Lifecourse of Special Olympics Participants.* Presented at the American Academy of Developmental Medicine & Dentistry 2024 One Voice Conference; June 8, 2024; Chicago, Illinois
- Rice, C., Holbrook, J., Partch-Davies, T., & Tobin, A. *Toward Inclusion in Data Collection: Identification of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).* Presented at American Academy of Developmental Medicine & Dentistry 2024 One Voice Conference; June 7, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (AAIDD)

1. Smith, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Krahn, G., Tobin, A., & Lincoln, A. *Development of an Inclusive Research Model to Support the Special Olympics Longitudinal Sport and Health Evaluation*. Poster at the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 148th Annual Meeting; June 11, 2024; Louisville, Kentucky

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING (AAN)

1. Williams, A.D., Fettekether, R, and Hanley, J. (2024). *Transformation Towards a More Equitable Future: Special Olympics Inclusive Health Interprofessional Education Model*. American Academy of Nursing’s 2024 Health Policy Conference, Washington, DC, October 31. <https://aannet.org/>

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PODIATRIC SPORTS MEDICINE (AAPSM)

1. Rodriguez, K., & Jenkins, D. *Special Olympics International: Special Olympics International: Fit Feet Screening & Research Update*. Presented at the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine 2024 Stand Alone Meeting; September 27-29, 2024; Columbus, OH.

AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION (AMHCA)

1. Lebersfeld, J. & Routh, B. *Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® Strong Minds Program: Emotional Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)*. Presented at the American Mental Health Counselors Association Annual Conference; June 9-12, 2024; Charlotte, North Carolina.

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (APHA)

1. Boseman, C., Otterbein, M., Duong, M., Cummings, L., Hanley, J., Dixon-Ibarra, A., & Lincoln, A. *Expanding Reach of Special Olympics fitness programs: Outcomes from the SONA Move Virtual Fitness Challenge for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. Presented at the American Public Health Association 2024 Annual Meeting; October 27-30, 2024; Minneapolis, Minnesota
2. Routh, B., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Williams, A., & Lincoln, A. *Multidisciplinary Health Screenings for Special Olympics Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities Insights from Special Olympics World Games 2023*. Presented at the American Public Health Association 2024 Annual Meeting; October 27-30, 2024; Minneapolis, Minnesota

3. Richardson, E., Morris, J., Scholle, S., Singleton, A., Weston, R., Kennedy, J. *In Pursuit of IDD-Inclusive Health Systems: Special Olympics International as a Champion of Health Equity*. Presented at the American Public Health Association 2024 Annual Meeting; October 27-30, 2024; Minneapolis, Minnesota

AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION COMBINE SECTIONS MEETING (APTA CSM)

1. Rodriguez, K., Lucas, K., & Overturf, S. *Be Brave in the Attempt: Providing inclusive care to athletes in special populations*. Presented at the American Physical Therapy Association 2024 Combined Sections Meeting; February 15-17, 2024; Boston, MA

AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (APTA) PEDIATRICS

1. Rodriguez, K. Routh, B., & Ralston, R. *Unstoppable Together: Expanding inclusive health for youth with intellectual disabilities through sport and play*. Presented the American Physical Therapy Association Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy 2024 Annual Meeting; November 22 -24, 2024; Providence, RI.

AMERICAN SPEECH LANGUAGE HEARING ASSOCIATION (ASHA)

1. Cardona, D., Routh, B., Landon, A. *Inclusion Revolution: Supporting and Providing Inclusive Hearing Healthcare to Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. Presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2024 National Conference; December 5-7, 2024; Seattle, WA.

DIVISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (DEC):

1. Smith, A.S., Ryan, C., Ralston, R., & Bruder, M.B. *Let’s Play Together: Engaging Families and Young Children in Inclusive Play Using Technology*. Presented at the Division for Early Childhood Conference: September 2024; New Orleans, Louisiana

GATLINBURG CONFERENCE ON IDD:

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Helsel, B., Cox, K., Sherman J., Stanish, H., Forquer, M., Otterbein, M., McDaniel, E., & Lincoln, A. *Assessing Fitness and Lifestyle Factors Among Special Olympics Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities: A Feasibility Study*. Poster at the Gatlinburg Conference 2024; April 18, 2024; Kansas City, Missouri
2. Smith, A., Leidholt, A., Hansen, J., & Ralston, R. *A Formative Evaluation of the Adaption of Special Olympics Young Athletes to School Based Lesson Plans*. Poster at the Gatlinburg Conference 2024; April 18, 2024; Kansas City, Missouri

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION ON THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF IDD (IASSIDD)

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Hoegh, B., Hanley, J., Murray, H., Krahn, G., & Lincoln, A. State Program Insights from the Feasibility Phase of the Special Olympics Inclusive Health Longitudinal Evaluation. *Charting the Course: Crafting a Longitudinal Evaluation to Uncover the Transformative Impact of Special Olympics Engagement on Athletes' Well-being* Symposium Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 6, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

2. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Stanish, H., Forquer, M., Hanley, J., Apgar, G., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. *Developing a Lifestyle Survey for Special Olympics Athletes: Lessons from the 2023 World Games*. Poster at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 5, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

3. Hanley, J., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Murray, H., & Lincoln, A. Data Science and Technology: Designing a Data Infrastructure for the Inclusive Health Longitudinal Evaluation. *Charting the Course: Crafting a Longitudinal Evaluation to Uncover the Transformative Impact of Special Olympics Engagement on Athletes' Well-being* Symposium Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 6, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

4. Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Hanley, J., Murray, H., & Krahn, G. Current State of Knowledge and Project Aims for the Special Olympics Inclusive Health Longitudinal Evaluation. *Charting the Course: Crafting a Longitudinal Evaluation to Uncover the Transformative Impact of Special Olympics Engagement on Athletes' Well-being* Symposium Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 6, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

5. Lincoln, A., Hanley, J., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Routh, B., Lloyd, M., Foley, J., Temple, V., & Krahn, G. *Responding to a Call to Action: Maximizing the Utilization of Special Olympics Health Data and Enhancing Collaborations with Research and Evaluation Initiatives*. Roundtable Discussion at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 6, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

6. Lincoln, A., Jenkins, A., Williams, A., Christakis, D., Hill, A., Heydt, P., Scherer, N., Kuper, H., Hameed, S. *Developing a Health System Assessment Framework for Inclusion of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 7, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

7. Smith, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., Murray, H., & Lincoln, A. *Fostering Inclusive Research Strategies Among Special Olympics Athletes*. Roundtable Discussion at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 7, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

8. Smith, A., Ralston, R., Bornman, J., & Wepener, C. *Evaluating the Impact of an Integrated Child and Family Health Early Intervention Program: A Four-Country Comparison*. Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 8, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

9. Tobin, A., Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Hanley, J., Murray, H., & Krahn, G. Significance and Contributions of the Special Olympics Athlete Advisory Board and Scientific Advisory Board of the Inclusive Health Longitudinal Evaluation. *Charting the Course: Crafting a Longitudinal Evaluation to Uncover the Transformative Impact of Special Olympics Engagement on Athletes' Well-being* Symposium Presentation at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2024 Congress; August 6, 2024; Chicago, Illinois

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BEHAVIORAL NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (ISBNPA)

1. Stanish, H., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Forquer, M., Hanley, J., Apgar, G., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. *Variability in Self-Reported Health Behaviors Among Special Olympics Athlete Across Seven Global Regions*. Presented at the International Society for Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2024 Annual Meeting; May, 23, 2024; Omaha, Nebraska

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH (ISPAH)

1. Smith, A., Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Hanley, J., & Murray, H. *A Longitudinal Health Study of Special Olympics Athletes: Tracking Physical Activity and Fitness Over Time*. Poster at the International Society for Physical Activity and Health Congress; October 30, 2024; Paris, France

2. Stanish, H., Forquer, M., Hanley, J., Lincoln, A., Apgar, G., Otterbein, M., & Dixon-Ibarra, A. *Health Behaviors of Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities Competing at Special Olympics World Games: Sports Comparisons*. Presentation at the International Society for Physical Activity and Health Congress; October 29, 2024; Paris, France

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CITY AND COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS (NACCHO) 360

1. Martinez, A., Mackey, C., Gammon, L.; Quade, T., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Shaffner, L., Pittaway, M., Jones, A., & Lincoln, A. *National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability and Special Olympics: Collaborative Efforts to Enhance Inclusive Tobacco Programs for People with Disabilities*. Poster Presented at the National Association of County and City Health Official 360 Annual Conference; July 25, 2024; Detroit, Michigan

NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ADAPTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (NAFAPA)

1. Apgar, G., Ralston, R., Murray, F., Lahart, J., & Dixon-Ibarra, A. *Empowering Athlete Leaders: Evaluating the Impact of Special Olympics Fitness Captains*. Presentation at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Biannual Conference; September 26, 2024; Ithaca, NY

2. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Apgar, G., Stanish, H., & Pitchford, A. *Exploring Special Olympics Fitness Resources and Evaluation Tools for Research Collaboration*. Presentation at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Biannual Conference; September 25, 2024; Ithaca, NY

3. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Stanish, H., Hanley, J., Helsel, B., Cox, K., Sherman, J., McDaniel, E., Conley, K., Varnell, M., Gurchiek, E., & Hammell, C. *Standardizing a Fitness and Health Assessment Toolkit for Special Olympics Athletes: A Feasibility Study*. Presentation at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Biannual Conference; September 26, 2024; Ithaca, NY

4. Hammell, C., Stein, C., Trisolini, C., Palmer, J., Dixon-Ibarra, A., & Lincoln, A. *Special Olympics Pennsylvania Athlete Performance Training: Assessing Fitness and Health Outcomes*. Presentation at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Biannual Conference; September 25, 2024; Ithaca, NY

5. Lincoln, A., Lloyd, M., Foley, J., & Temple, V. *Responding to a Call to Action: Maximizing the Utilization of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Database and Enhancing Collaborations with Research and Evaluation Initiatives*. Presentation at the North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity Biannual Conference; September 27, 2024; Ithaca, NY

2025 CONFERENCE ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (AAIDD)

1. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Watkins, J., Stanish, H., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. *Evaluating Health Behaviors in Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Insights from the Special Olympics Youth Lifestyle Survey*

2. Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Murray, H., Hanley, J. & Krahn, G. *Navigating Complexity in Longitudinal Evaluation of Health Programs: The Evolution of Special Olympics Project ALL STAR*

3. Rosanoff, M., Lincoln, A., Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Murray, H., Hanley, J. *SO-Link: A registration platform for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enhance the evaluation of Special Olympics Health programs*

4. Smith, A., Ryan, C., & Ralston, R. *Empowering Families: Evaluating the usability and feasibility of the Special Olympics Young Athletes Mobile Application*

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY (AADMD)

1. Rosanoff, M., Routh, B., & Lincoln, A. *Gaps Between Recommended and Accessed Healthcare for Athletes with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) following Special Olympics Health Screenings*

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS MEDICINE (ACSM)

1. Lincoln, A., Watkins, J., Stanish, H., Hanley, J., Otterbein, M., Dixon-Ibarra, A. *Use of Physical Activity Wearables with Special Olympics Junior Athletes with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

GATLINBURG CONFERENCE ON IDD

1. Smith, A., Ryan, C., & Ralston, R., Bruder, M.B., & Reichow, B. *Let's Play Together: Engaging Families and Young Children with IDD in Inclusive Play Using Technology*

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ADAPTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (ISAPA)

1. Lincoln, A., Pitchford, A., Lynch, L., Iqbal, N., & McPeake, S. *Enhancing Physical Activity and Behavior Change in People with Intellectual Disabilities Through Wearables and Digital Technology*

2. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Smith, A., Murray, H., & Lincoln, A. *Engaging Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in Inclusive Research: Practical Strategies for Adapted Physical Activity Researchers*
3. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Trisolini, C., O'Neil, S., Hanley, J., Helsel, B., & Lincoln, A. *Adherence to Physical Activity Wearables: Pilot Data from Special Olympics' Project ALL STAR Longitudinal Evaluation*
4. Dixon-Ibarra, A., Watkins, J., Stanish, H., Otterbein, M., & Lincoln, A. *Evaluating a Special Olympics Youth Fitness Testing Manual for Athletes with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*



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Special Olympics

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