



Hazel's mental health services expand student access while building a culture of prevention, rooted in culturally competent care delivery

In 2015, Hazel set out to provide high quality physical health care to students across the country to reduce inequities in healthcare access. However, Hazel's care team realized that providing physical health care alone was not enough to address the ways that mental health affects physical health, and vice versa. In order to truly improve attendance, quality learning time, and the impacts of SDoH, Hazel expanded to offer whole child care - integrated physical and mental health care services.

Top 3 most common mental health visit reasons during 2021-2022 school year

19% Anxiety

7% ADHD

6% Depression

Launch of youth mental health service

In July 2021, Hazel launched its mental health service to bring direct therapy to K-12 students at school and home, and has grown to be a leader in school-based mental health care. In less than one year, Hazel has built a thorough mental health program to meet the needs of the communities we serve, including:

- **Built a robust mental health clinical practice** with experienced providers licensed to serve students across the country
- **Grew the mental health program across 8 states**, offering direct teletherapy to students in over 20 unique school districts
- **Provided direct teletherapy to thousands of students** who were able to receive timely care

instead of being put on a waitlist, resulting in **over 15,000 total mental health sessions**

- Assembled a large, high quality team of **Family Resource Managers (FRMs)**, who serve as care navigation experts to support families

Building a culture of prevention, rooted in timely intervention and early detection

Factors like provider shortages, cost, stigma, and other SDoH introduce challenges that are making it hard for families to find mental health care for their children. Many families wait months for an appointment; without timely access to care, many children end up with worsening symptoms, and some families in crisis seek treatment in emergency rooms. Hazel builds a culture of prevention by ensuring timely access to mental health care to address concerns quickly and eliminate waitlists. Once a referral for care is submitted, **Hazel's FRMs reach out to the family within 48 hours to schedule an appointment.**

Hazel's focus on early detection through multiple referral streams (school staff, families, and Hazel's physical health team) builds a system where mental health services are commonplace and can be preventative, rather than accessed only when symptoms become dire. **The average age of intake for Hazel mental health services is 12 years old, two and a half years younger than the global peak age at onset**, which means **Hazel is both intervening early, and minimizing a delay between symptom onset and treatment.**¹

Initial feasibility pilot data suggests improvements in clinical wellbeing and strong patient-therapist rapport due to Hazel's short-term therapy model

In a small feasibility pilot program in one region (n=19), students who were referred for Hazel services, but not in crisis, completed an evidence-based mental health survey about their wellbeing and rapport with their therapist (called PCOMS), after each therapy session with Hazel, to help Hazel better understand the impact of short term therapy. Initial data suggests that **students enter Hazel therapy over the survey's threshold for "clinical distress," a state of needing clinical support, and after completing three sessions are no longer in that state of clinical distress.** The magnitude of improvement in the scores shows that the **change is due to Hazel therapy.** In addition, initial pilot data suggests that **students report strong therapeutic alliance with their Hazel therapist after the first session,** and improved alliance over time,

meaning they report agreement on goals, agreement on tasks in therapy, and emotional bond. This pilot signals that a short-term therapy model can have clinically significant outcomes.

Expanding access to culturally humble therapists

Understanding that cultural competency is essential for quality care delivery, Hazel has focused on hiring therapists who mirror the communities they serve and have diverse experiences and cultural backgrounds. **A core Hazel value is offering a team of providers reflective of each districts' communities – over 60 percent of Hazel's mental health providers identify as Persons of Color (POC), and over 30 percent are bilingual, speaking over 10 languages.** Hazel's FRMs also support families in multiple languages, either through bilingual fluency or language line assistance.



15,000+

total mental health sessions conducted by Hazel therapists since the launch of mental health services



71%

of Hazel parents/guardians say their child's relationships with family and friends have improved since starting therapy

“It's important to highlight the need for creating a culture of prevention around mental health services. We've got to create systems and create resources that don't wait for our children to have a crisis or come in with significant symptoms. We've got to come up with strategies to identify children more proactively and link them to support services to address their needs.”

– Dr. Travis Gayles, Chief Health Officer, Hazel Health