HealthySteps Transforms the Lives of Children and Families

HealthySteps, a program of ZERO TO THREE, is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care program that promotes the health, well-being and school readiness of babies and toddlers, with an emphasis on families living in low-income communities.

The HealthySteps National Office at ZERO TO THREE conducts two large data collection efforts each year: the annual update of Site Profile forms, which takes place every May, and Annual Site Reporting (ASR), which occurs every July.

The Site Profile provides administrative data around sites’ location and setting; staffing and partnerships; funding and reimbursement sources; data collection practices; and other descriptive program components. ASR follows the Site Profile updates, and includes key service delivery and child and family data. This requires sites to extract data from the practice’s electronic health records (EHRs) and other HealthySteps-specific databases.

Because HealthySteps sites are onboarded on a rolling basis and these two data collection efforts request information from specific points in time, the summary of information provided herein reflect data from a subset of current, active HealthySteps sites.

231
ACTIVE SITES
(close of 2022 calendar year)

191
SITES COMPLETED SITE PROFILE UPDATES
(June, 2022)

183
SITES COMPLETED ASR
(Oct., 2022)
HealthySteps Site Reporting

In 2022, HealthySteps added sites in two new states - Arkansas and Pennsylvania. This brought the total number of HealthySteps sites to 231 across 24 states and Washington, D.C. at the close of the 2022 calendar year. HealthySteps’ largest presence is in New York, accounting for over a quarter (27%) of the network’s sites, followed by Colorado (12%) and California (8%).
HealthySteps Site Characteristics

One hundred and ninety-one HealthySteps sites completed Site Profile updates in 2022. Almost two-thirds (63%) of HealthySteps sites are located in urban communities, and the remaining 37 percent are split almost evenly between rural (19%) and suburban (18%) communities.

A majority (83%) of sites report being part of a larger network (e.g., a health system or medical center).

The most common settings in which HealthySteps programs are implemented are community health clinics or centers (32%), pediatric practices (27%), and academic medical centers (13%). There continues to be growth in community health centers implementing HealthySteps over the last five years.
HealthySteps Site Accreditations

HealthySteps practices hold a variety of designations and accreditations; the most common is the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) with almost two-thirds of sites (64%) reporting that they hold this designation. This is followed by Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), with over a third (35%) of HealthySteps sites identifying as such, and National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Certification rounding out the top three with 29 percent.

HealthySteps practices are also successful at establishing relationships and collaborating with community partners and other evidence-based programs: 65 percent report referring families to one or more Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs in their community or enrolling them onsite, and 74 percent offer Reach Out and Read onsite.

HealthySteps practices report partnering with or offering additional onsite programs that include Help Me Grow (23%), Medical-Legal Partnership (20%), and Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) (13%).

*Totals will sum to more than 191 and 100% as sites were allowed to choose more than one response to this question.
A Diverse Group of Payers Support HealthySteps

State-Allocated Funding
There are notable state-level investments in HealthySteps in states such as Colorado (Colorado State General Fund legislation), New York (New York State Office of Mental Health), and Texas (state child welfare prevention funds).

Department of Defense
The Department of Defense funds HealthySteps sites in Alabama, California, Hawaii, North Carolina, and Washington.

Tobacco Tax
Almost all Arizona and California HealthySteps sites receive funding from state tobacco tax initiatives (First Things First and First 5 California, respectively).

Property Tax Dollars
All HealthySteps sites in Palm Beach County, Florida receive funding from the Children’s Services Council, an investment of property tax dollars.

Reimbursement
In 2022, 63% of sites reported receiving reimbursement for HealthySteps services.
(Up from 56% of sites receiving reimbursement in 2021)

Electronic Health Record Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eClinicalWorks</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athena</td>
<td>9%</td>
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HealthySteps Served Over 230,000 Children in 2022

Each year in July, the National Office collects data from sites on key demographic and service delivery metrics. The reporting is organized around the HealthySteps’ Core Components and broken out by each Tier of Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIER 1</td>
<td>Universal Services</td>
<td>233,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIER 2</td>
<td>Short-Term Supports</td>
<td>23,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIER 3</td>
<td>Comprehensive Services</td>
<td>29,908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection and Reporting

Universal screening is foundational to HealthySteps, transforming it into a true population health model that has the potential to both ensure equity and close chronic gaps in the U.S. social safety net. HealthySteps’ Tier 1 metrics, which include all child and family screening data, are generally extracted from sites’ Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems in order to obtain the aggregate data for this universal 0-3 population. However, data documentation and extraction from EHRs is an ambitious undertaking, and HealthySteps sites continue to face challenges in documenting and reporting screening numbers for all children age 0-3 in the practice. Numbers pulled from EHRs sometimes reflect gaps in staffing or documentation, rather than actual service delivery.

In 2022, 183 sites participated in ASR. Across these 183 sites, 233,973 children received a well-child visit and 106,230 received a developmental screening. This accounts for almost half (45%) of the Tier 1 children receiving a developmental screening this year, which is an increase from 43% in 2021 and exceeds the 2021 national average of 33%, per the National Survey of Children’s Health.
Similarly, in 2022, 84,788 children had a mother screened for maternal depression, which represents over a third (36%) of Tier 1 families receiving this critical service, which is an increase from just 25% getting screened in 2021. Also in 2022, the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) released the first set of national maternal depression screening rates (based on 2021 data). Among Medicaid plans, just 17% of postpartum women were screened, and across commercial insurance plans, only 11%. While there is still much growth to be achieved across HealthySteps sites, they are already outperforming “standard” screening practices.

While there have been consistent, positive trends across HealthySteps screening rates, the current data undercount the true reach of screening, as significant amounts of data remain locked in EHR systems. As such, the National Office continues to invest in tools to increase sites’ capacity for high-quality data collection and reporting, including [Welly](#) and the newly released [HealthySteps Epic Implementation Playbook](#).
We’re well on our way to reaching more than 1 million children and families.

HealthySteps has grown tremendously, and our 2022 data show the incredible work done each day across the country and our steady progress to serve more than 1 million children and families annually by 2032. The HealthySteps National Office at ZERO TO THREE is committed to ensuring the program model is implemented with fidelity as the national network grows to meet the increased demand in communities.
HealthySteps is an evidence-based program of ZERO TO THREE, the nation’s leading nonprofit working to ensure all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. HealthySteps transforms the promise of pediatric primary care through a unique team-based approach that integrates a child development expert, the HealthySteps Specialist, into the health care team to improve outcomes in areas where there are persistent inequities for children and families of color or with low incomes. All children ages 0–3 and their families receive a tiered model of services, including universal screening, risk-stratified supports, care coordination, and onsite intervention. HealthySteps practices serve as trusted and valuable partners as families foster their children’s healthy development. Together, the national network of HealthySteps sites aims to reach more than 1 million young children and families annually by 2032.

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