

# Independence Blue Cross Foundation

## PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE WITH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA & GIRARD COLLEGE

[www.ibxfoundation.org](http://www.ibxfoundation.org)



The Independence Blue Cross Foundation is leading a comprehensive, integrated tele-behavioral health care model with enhanced socioemotional support for students. The pilot targets children and teens at Girard College, an independent, five-day boarding school in Philadelphia for approximately 300 academically focused students in grades 1-12.

The students come from families with limited financial resources, headed by a single parent or guardian. All Girard students receive need-based full scholarships; African Americans make up 80% of the student body. Eighty percent of students self-reported experiencing a traumatic event on a student experience intake form in 2020.

This collaborative effort addresses untreated behavioral health needs that stem from trauma, brings services directly to students, and increases resources for parents to reduce the likelihood and severity of mental health disorders long term. The program also seeks to remove the stigma around mental health. Clinical services are provided in the school setting by a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) health professional.

In addition, training is also provided to teachers, administrators, and school counselors to ensure all students with undiagnosed mental health conditions are being supported.

### PROGRAM IMPACT

In the first six months of the pilot:

**241** Behavioral or crisis referrals to CHOP's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences for treatment for trauma symptoms, anxiety/depression, ADHD and comorbidities

**22** Interventions in which students are now receiving counseling

**17** Students facing behavioral health crisis and referred to the appropriate level of care

"The impact of mental health on student achievement is a global issue that needs to be addressed. We know that approximately 80% of Girard students have had some type of traumatic childhood experience, such as depression, family or community violence, substance abuse, family incarceration, homelessness, or food insecurity. Our goal in partnering with Children's Hospital and Independence Blue Cross is to provide the necessary intervention and support for our students and equip them with the skills needed to negotiate and overcome obstacles to learning and growth."

– Heather Wathington, Ph.D., former president, Girard College

INDEPENDENCE BLUE CROSS  
FOUNDATION

Independence 