



Services

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School Behavioral Health. The program, funded by the U.S. Army Medical Command, was budgeted at \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2011.

Based on a model developed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, JBLM's program is the Army's second such effort.

It places mental health experts such as Shoch in each of the six on-base elementary schools operated by the Clover Park School District: Carter Lake, Evergreen, Hillside, Clarkmoor, Beachwood and Greenwood.

These specialists provide free on-site help to students and families, including individual therapy, family therapy, medication management and more. In addition, a psychiatrist travels between the six schools to see children.

"It takes the providers out of the clinic and into the school," said Jennifer Alford, deputy director of the program.

That's one of the keys to its success, according to those involved with School Behavioral Health. School is an environment where kids feel comfortable. It has the added advantage of being convenient for families, and reducing students' time away from the classroom.

A trip to school also carries much less social stigma for families than a visit to a mental health clinic or hospital.

One measure of the program's success shows up in statistics that reveal how faithfully appointments are kept. The compliance rate at JBLM is more than 95 percent - much better than other programs in similar

settings, where Army officials say about one-third of patients are no-shows.

The School Behavioral Health program serves kids in all grades, kindergarten through fifth grade. It provides one-on-one therapy as well as small therapy groups.

On average, at any given time, there are 24 students receiving individual services through the program at each elementary school. The most frequent diagnoses are:

Depression or other mood disorders, which account for 26 percent of students in the school behavioral health program.

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Anxiety disorders, which account for 12 percent of students.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, which includes 47 percent of students. (JBLM sees a higher-than-usual number of kids with ADHD because it offers additional resources for those students, Army officials said.)

Families and teachers with students who receive individual services through School Behavioral Health complete before-and-after treatment questionnaires. According to

data from those surveys, parents reported that kids' behavior and emotional stress improved significantly following treatment. Teachers also reported significant improvements in student conduct, attention problems and peer interactions.

In addition to working with individual students, counselors offer lessons in the classroom and after-school programs that any student in the school can participate in.

Shoch started an after-school craft club for kids at Carter Lake. She got a big boost from volunteers Dianna Putnam of Gig Har-

Father's Day.

The craft club helps kids practice social skills, and it provides a therapeutic way for them to feel like they're helping their parents or their friends' parents, Shoch said.

One fourth-grade girl whose mom had recently deployed summed up her feelings this way: "I like making the cards and knowing they are going to make someone happy who might be in a situation like me."

About 31 percent of all students in the Clover Park School District live on the military base, and an estimated 40 percent of students district-wide are military dependents. So far, School Behavioral Health operates only in schools behind the gates of Lewis-McChord. Alford said the program would like to expand to off-base schools with high numbers of military kids, if it could solicit the help of a partner in the Lakewood community.

For now, kids at off-base schools such as Mann and Woodbrook middle schools and at Lakes High School - all with a high percentage of military families - rely on a program called Military and Family Life Consultants. It's operated jointly by the military and the school district.

The MFLC program offers students and families support on issues such as stress reduction and self-esteem building, but they do not delve into the same medical and mental health issues that the School Behavioral Health specialists can.

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