

Contact: KATIE FLANIGAN
Emplify Health
(920) 655-1326
katie.flanigan@emplifyhealth.org



Contact: Liz Smith
Reach Out and Read
(405) 464-9122
liz.smith@reachoutandread.org



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Reading is good medicine: All Emplify Health by Bellin clinics now live with Reach Out and Read

GREEN BAY — At every [Emplify Health by Bellin](#) clinic that treats pediatric patients, well-child visits for babies through preschoolers now come with something extra: a new book to take home to help build literacy skills and encourage bonding among families.

All 25 Emplify Health by Bellin clinics serving pediatric patients are now part of [Reach Out and Read](#), a national, evidence-based program that partners with health care providers to put books in families' hands during well-child visits and emphasize reading as a key social driver of health during a period of critical brain development. Through the program for ages birth to 5, clinicians use a new book to observe the child's development, offer parents guidance on reading and early relationships, and give the book to the child to build their home library. Emplify Health by Bellin has partnered with Reach Out and Read for 12 years, working toward today's milestone of every clinic being live with the program.

"When we hand a child a book in the exam room, we're doing far more than encouraging a love of stories – we're supporting healthy brain development, strengthening the bond between parent and child, and giving families a tool that builds language and literacy skills for life," said [Dr. Laura Gallistel, Emplify Health by Bellin pediatrician](#). "Having Reach Out and Read present at every clinic that cares for kids means every family of children in this age group leaves their visit with books of their own and guidance on how to make it an everyday part of their lives."

The scale of the local impact is significant. Emplify Health by Bellin clinics conduct over 15,000 well-child visits annually – translating to over 10,700 families served each year. This data matters, because the need is very real.

More than half of U.S. adults read below a sixth-grade level, and 37 percent of fourth graders cannot read at a basic level, according to Reach Out and Read. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is the strongest predictor of high school graduation and career success. Reach Out and Read steps in during the most critical window – the first five years, when rapid brain development occurs and before children enter school. The program not only supports early language development but also improves well-child visit attendance and helps build safe, stable and nurturing relationships.

“Reach Out and Read works because it meets families where they already are – in their child’s pediatrician’s office, during the visits that happen 14 times in the first five years of life”, said DeDe Williams, executive director for Reach Out and Read Wisconsin. “Emplify Health by Bellin’s commitment to reaching every pediatric patient they serve is a powerful example of what it means to treat literacy as a social driver of health. We’re proud to partner with them, and we look forward to the day the program is live across all Emplify Health clinics.”

And, that day is coming. [Emplify Health](#) is actively working with Reach Out and Read to have all pediatric-serving clinics live with the program across the enterprise – including all [Emplify Health by Gundersen](#) locations. Most already have the program, with just a handful left to go. When complete, over 25,000 families will benefit from Reach Out and Read and have access to books and literacy guidance to build healthier and happier lives.

To learn more about Reach Out and Read, visit reachoutandread.org. To learn more about how this program will be incorporated into your child’s upcoming well-child visits, connect with your child’s care team.

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About Emplify Health

Emplify Health is a not-for-profit, patient centered, community-focused healthcare network with headquarters in Green Bay and La Crosse, Wisconsin. Emplify Health has more than 16,000 employees, including more than 1,400 clinicians, in 11 hospitals and more than 100 clinic locations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Upper Michigan, and Iowa. With community partners, Emplify Health strives to lead (with love) local, regional and national healthcare transformation to inspire people’s best lives at every stage. Learn what we are becoming at emplifyhealth.org.

About Reach Out and Read Wisconsin

With 343 participating sites in medical clinics across Wisconsin, Reach Out and Read Wisconsin provides more than 147,000 children and their families in 66 counties with books and resources to empower parents as their child’s first and best teachers. Reach Out and Read Wisconsin is a two-generation intervention built and backed by science and a growing body of academic research. It utilizes the existing medical infrastructure to encourage supportive, educational conversations with parents on the importance of reading aloud and the impact of nurturing relationships. For more information about Reach Out and Read Wisconsin, visit reachoutandread.org/wisconsin.