



# Project Report

MAY 2025

## Rural Collaborative Opportunities for Occupational Learning in Health (R-COOL-Health) Scrubs Camps and Scrubs Academies

*Nicole Threadgold, MBA*

“Dear UND,  
Thank you  
for putting on  
Scrubs Camp  
and I loved every  
part of it! My  
mom wished  
that she had  
gotten to go  
when she was a  
kid.”

— Bailio Boehler, 5th  
grade Scrubs Camp  
attendee

### Why Scrubs?

Students who learn at an early age about the wide range of healthcare careers may be more likely to consider a career in healthcare. Further, students made aware of career opportunities in their hometown may also consider returning home to practice after completing their education.

### What is a Scrubs Camp?

Scrubs camps are one-day events held in rural North Dakota communities to introduce students in grades 5-12 to a variety of careers in healthcare. They utilize interactive, hands-on activities led by local healthcare professionals. Students learn about specific careers and opportunities available in their communities. Presenters also share their own experiences in training and education and what it is like to work in a rural North Dakota community.

Community partners conducting a Scrubs Camp (which must include a local school system, healthcare entity, and economic or job development authority) can choose to work with multiple grades, one grade, or can make attending the camp a competitive process within their community.

### What is Scrubs Academy I?

Scrubs Academy I is an expanded version of the Scrubs Camps. It is an opportunity for North Dakota students to participate in numerous sessions covering a multitude of health careers led by local health professionals, instructors, and college students. This is a four-day/three-night camp held on the University of North Dakota (UND) campus. Students stay on campus throughout the duration of the camp, and it is open to any North Dakota junior high student who has completed grades six, seven, or eight.

### What Is Scrubs Academy II?

Scrubs Academy II is a four-day/three-night camp for North Dakota high school students who have completed grades 9, 10, or 11. Students learn what it is like to be a health professional and see an array of healthcare professions they may consider as careers. Students spend their days in various health facilities (Tertiary Hospitals and their networking Critical Access Hospitals, clinics, long-term care and assisted living facilities, ambulances, etc.), enjoy evening activities, and spend the overnights in higher education residence halls. Students have the opportunity to job shadow multiple professions during the course of the camp. The first Scrubs Academy II was held in July 2024.

“I think the program is a really great thing. I don’t think kids realize the amount of opportunities in health besides nursing, medical doctors, etc. It’s helpful to show them all of this at a younger age than later in high school so they can start thinking about career paths.”

— Jennifer Metz,  
Northwood Deaconess  
Health Center, Scrubs  
Camp Site Coordinator

More Than a Lecture

The key success of these programs is the interactive opportunities they provide. For example, students learning about physical therapy will hear a firsthand account of a therapist’s school and work experience. They then spend the majority of their time learning physical therapy skills through hands-on activities.

Scrubs Camps Impact

| Year      | Camps Funded | Communities Involved | Students Involved | Volunteers Involved |
|-----------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2009/2010 | 14           | 61                   | 1,016             | 292                 |
| 2010/2011 | 9            | 36                   | 441               | 239                 |
| 2011/2012 | 9            | 56                   | 407               | 211                 |
| 2012/2013 | 9            | 57                   | 682               | 286                 |
| 2013/2014 | 9            | 56                   | 635               | 197                 |
| 2014/2015 | 8            | 56                   | 699               | 263                 |
| 2015/2016 | 9            | 57                   | 830               | 382                 |
| 2016/2017 | 10           | 70                   | 891               | 363                 |
| 2017/2018 | 10           | 57                   | 931               | 419                 |
| 2018/2019 | 9            | 64                   | 953               | 240                 |
| 2019/2020 | 8*           | 28                   | 381               | 158                 |
| 2020/2021 | 7**          | 86                   | 1,226             | 202                 |
| 2021/2022 | 9***         | 121                  | 1,048             | 302                 |
| 2022/2023 | 13           | 134                  | 1,406             | 411                 |
| 2023/2024 | 16           | 160                  | 1,684             | 462                 |
| 2024/2025 | 11           | 119                  | 1,089             | 309                 |

\*an additional 8 canceled due to COVID-19 \*\*an additional 2 canceled due to COVID-19 \*\*\*an additional 1 canceled due to COVID-19

|       |     |       |        |       |
|-------|-----|-------|--------|-------|
| Total | 160 | 1,218 | 14,319 | 4,746 |
|-------|-----|-------|--------|-------|

Scrubs Academy I Impact

| Year  | Students Involved        | Communities Involved |
|-------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 2011  | 38 (25 rural)            | 21                   |
| 2012  | 45 (34 rural)            | 22                   |
| 2013  | 56 (45 rural)            | 27                   |
| 2014  | 51 (33 rural)            | 25                   |
| 2015  | 56 (44 rural)            | 25                   |
| 2016  | 55 (35 rural)            | 26                   |
| 2017  | 56 (44 rural)            | 21                   |
| 2018  | 80 (52 rural)            | 38                   |
| 2019  | 84 (63 rural)            | 27                   |
| 2020  | canceled due to COVID-19 |                      |
| 2021  | canceled due to COVID-19 |                      |
| 2022  | canceled due to COVID-19 |                      |
| 2023  | 77 (58 rural)            | 32                   |
| 2024  | 81 (51 rural)            | 31                   |
| Total | 670                      | 295                  |

Scrubs Academy II Impact

| Year | Students Involved | Communities Involved |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2024 | 20 (20 rural)     | 21                   |

How Is the Scrubs Program Supported?

The R-COOL-Health Scrubs Program is supported by the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration, State Office of Rural Health (SORH) grant program along with state-appropriated funds designated for workforce development.

AUTHOR

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More information

[ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/scrubs-program](https://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/scrubs-program)