

School-Based Health Centers

Uniting education and health for success in the classroom and life

What do all of these students have in common?

- Chronic asthmatic
- Pregnant 10th grader
- 11th grade drug user
- Middle school student in foster care
- Depressed adolescent with suicidal thoughts
- Anxious bully victim afraid to go to elementary school
- Homeless ninth grader
- Adolescent experiencing chronic headaches
- Third grader with painful dental abscess
- Overweight sixth grader who is borderline diabetic
- High school sophomore living with violence in the home

They all experience health and social problems that compromise their academic potential — and result in missed classes, poor academic performance, and even school failure.

These students have help: their school-based health center.

Medical care delivered in school-based health centers helps students with chronic and acute conditions cope with disease—and gets them back to the classroom faster.

Mental health services focus on improving students' emotional well-being, and decreasing high-risk, health compromising behaviors such as drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

Health surveillance and preventive services catch health problems early and promote a healthier, safer student body.

Social services help children and families with the basic supports of food, shelter, and safety.

Youth development services build social competencies and strengthen their connectedness to school and community.

Hundreds of communities across the country are transforming health and education by uniting them under one roof. School-based health centers integrate comprehensive medical, mental health, and social services on the school campus to optimize learning readiness.

Why school-based health centers?

It's an indisputable fact: a healthy child is a teachable child.

Educators know all too well that poor health has a direct and negative impact on students' success in school.

School-based health centers address physical, emotional and behavioral health issues and foster learning readiness and academic achievement.

Opening school doors to health care opens pathways to children's educational attainment and lifelong well-being.



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“Rarely has a single problem—high school drop out rates—contributed to so many adverse social, economic, and health conditions. Our nation's young people deserve no less than a concerted effort to improve school completion rates and thus give young people a gateway to lifetime health and success.

Freudenberg N, Ruglis J. Reframing school dropout as a public health issue. *Prev Chronic Des* 2007;4(4).

Create a Healthy Learners Alliance to Improve Student Success

A “Healthy Learners Alliance” promotes partnerships with the SBHC, local public health agencies, community health organizations, and hospitals and involves teachers and coaches, school administrators and staff, and students, to eliminate inequities in educational achievement and health care access.

Contact the National Assembly today for technical support and information.

“ We cannot even think about educating our youth successfully without acknowledging the importance that a student’s mental and physical health plays in academic outcomes. School-based health programs effectively improve a student’s success in schools because SBHC providers work with parents and teachers to eliminate health obstacles that mar student performance. ”

Lauro Cavazos, PhD
Secretary, US Department of Education, 1988-90

22 ways that school-based health centers support a healthy learners alliance

Student Support

- Identify students at-risk for health and behavioral problems
- Treat acute conditions
- Immunize students
- Manage chronic conditions
- Increase attendance
- Assist in IEP development
- Provide mental health services
- Provide preventive health services
- Conduct sports physicals
- Enroll students in health insurance
- Refer students to services not provided in the SBHC
- Encourage student involvement in school activities

School, Family, and Community Support

- Provide individual, group and classroom health education consistent with the school curriculum
- Coordinate with other school and service providers for the well being of the students
- Support teachers concerned about students’ physical or mental health
- Maintain health records for migratory students
- Address the health needs of specific high-risk populations
- Offer selected health services to school staff
- Employ staff that can serve as mentors and role models
- Participate in community initiatives on public health such as obesity and emergency planning
- Encourage parental involvement
- Participate in community public health initiatives

School-based health centers (SBHC) deliver results that matter to schools.

Studies have found direct links between SBHC use and learning readiness:

- SBHC users had a 50% decrease in absenteeism and 25% decrease in tardiness 2 months after receiving school based mental health and counseling

Gall G, Pagano ME, Desmond MS, Perrin JM, Murphy JM. Utility of psychosocial screening at a SBHC. *J Sch Health*. 2000;70:292-298.

- African American male SBHC users were 3 times more likely to stay in school than their peers who did not use the clinic

McCord MT, Klein J, Foy JM, Fothergill K. School-based clinic use and school performance. *J Adolesc Health*1993;14 (2):91-98.

- Medical services helped decrease absences by 50% among students who had three or more absences in a six-week period; students who received mental health services had an 85% decline in school discipline referrals.

Dallas Youth and Family Centers Program: Hall, LS (2001). *Final Report — Youth and Family Centers Program 2000–2001* (REIS01-172-2). Dallas Independent Schools District.

- SBHCs reduced hospitalization and increased school attendance among inner-city school children with asthma.

Webber MP, Carpiniello KE, Oruwariye T, Yungtai L, Burton WB, and Appel DK. Burden of asthma in elementary school children: Do SBHCs make a difference? *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 2003; 157: 125-129.

NASBHC National Assembly on School-Based Health Care

Bringing Health Care To Schools For Student Success

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