

Planning a School-Based Health Center Tour

The power of the School-Based Health Center model is best experienced in person. Whether you want your supportive Congressman to become a champion or you need an undecided Senator to vote “yes,” a tour of your center is a great way to achieve these goals. Below are 12 steps for you to plan a successful tour for any elected official. *Are you ready?*

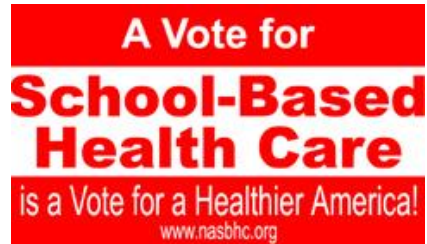
1. IDENTIFY YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS
2. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH SBHC MESSAGES AND THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS' AREAS OF INTEREST
3. MAKE THE DATE
4. ADVISE AND INCLUDE SPONSOR AGENCY & SCHOOL
5. CREATE THE PROGRAM & IDENTIFY TOUR PARTICIPANTS
6. DECIDE WHETHER TO INVITE MEDIA
7. ORGANIZE MATERIALS & HANDOUTS
8. REHEARSE
9. CONFIRM PARTICIPANTS
10. CONDUCT TOUR
11. DEBRIEF
12. GIVE THANKS



Have fun with all of these steps!

The full description of the suggested 12 steps and timeline for planning a school-based health center tour is provided on the following pages.

**This resource was adapted from more comprehensive materials created by NASBHC and the Massachusetts Coalition for School-Based Health Centers. For more information, please visit <http://www.nasbhc.org/advocacyresources>*



12 steps for planning a successful school-based health center tour

1. IDENTIFY YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

- ❑ Look up the elected official for the city where your school is located online at <http://www.nasbhc.org/actioncenter> or www.congressmerge.com .

2. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH SBHC MESSAGES AND YOUR MEMBER'S AREAS OF INTEREST

For the school-based health center presentation

- ❑ Gather your thoughts about how to approach your member of Congress by determining what areas of policy interest him most and aligning your messages to that interest. A comprehensive website to find out information about your member is www.congressmerge.com.
- ❑ Prepare by writing down what you would like to say to the legislator.
- ❑ Obtain the latest SBHC fact sheet from your state association or from NASBHC's website, information about your SBHC and two or three potential dates for the tour to occur.

3. MAKE THE DATE

- ❑ Call the elected official's office and make the request using your prepared messages. You may also have a community member who has a connection with the elected official call to schedule the tour.
- ❑ Follow up with the scheduler/staff person to confirm the date.

4. ADVISE AND INCLUDE SPONSOR AGENCY & SCHOOL

- ❑ Let the school administration and SBHC administrative team know the date and time of the tour (i.e. sponsoring agency executive director, SBHC administrator, school principal, school nurse, additional SBHC personnel).

5. CREATE THE PROGRAM & IDENTIFY TOUR PARTICIPANTS

- ❑ Identify whom you would like to participate in the event. Important people to consider include the school principal, school counselor, teacher, SBHC administrator, SBHC medical provider, other SBHC personnel, parents and several students. Consult with your sponsoring agency to determine the most appropriate people to invite.
- ❑ Consider the population served by the school-based health center and consider whether it is necessary to hire an interpreter.
- ❑ Prepare the agenda/program for the day of the tour, keeping these points in mind:

Before the meeting:

- Make sure the SBHC and school nurse waiting area is tidy.
- Have a table of refreshments ready (if applicable).
- Have a student posted in front of school in the event the elected official is early.
- Have the provider and another school official (i.e. principal or his/her designee) greet the elected official at the main entrance of the school.

Visit agenda:

- Lead the elected official on a tour of the SBHC.
- Once everyone had convened at the school-based health center, each tour participant should introduce herself to the elected officials and provide a point of reference as to how she is associated with the school-based health center.
- Make sure that there is a presentation by an adult to thank the member of Congress for taking the time to visit an essential model of access to quality health care for students – our SBHC.

- h. Share information about school-based health care in general, and specifically the programs or services they provide.
- i. Have a few student presentations, including:
 - How the SBHC has helped him/her.
 - Why it is important to have the SBHC in the school.
 - What services are available through the SBHC.
 - Why students like to come to the SBHC.
 - Consider having a teacher emphasize how the SBHC helps keep students healthy and in class, and highlight any stories of teachers using SBHC services, if applicable.
- j. Consider having the SBHC/sponsoring agency financial person talk about the state budget and how it is important that the state continue to fund SBHCs.
- k. Ask the legislator to support the School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act. If they already do, ask them to do more to support the Act. If you are unsure of your legislator's support, consult your state association or NASBHC.
- l. Allow time for questions and be prepared with two questions to ask the legislator. Be prepared for the elected official to ask both the adults and the students questions as well.

6. DECIDE ON MEDIA

- ❑ Determine with your team what the goal would be of having media participate in the tour. Then determine if you have the time and resources to invite them. For more information on making this decision, please see the site visit guide at http://www.nasbhc.org/APP/APP_Advocacy_Communications1.htm.

7. ORGANIZE MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ❑ Prepare folders of information for the legislator and tour participants. In the folder, include information about the SBHC:
 - a. SBHC fact sheets found at www.nasbhc.org.
 - b. Your SBHC's marketing materials.
 - c. A fact sheet about your SBHC that includes data (i.e. number of patients; demographics serviced, services provided, insurance info, community agency referral info).
 - d. Information on the School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act found at www.nasbhc.org
 - e. Information on local or state policy initiatives.

8. REHEARSE

- ❑ Either individually or in a group setting, have each participant write down and rehearse what they will be saying as part of the tour. This helps ensure you and other participants will be more comfortable during the tour.

9. CONFIRM PARTICIPANTS

- ❑ Making a brief call to them all the day before the event will demonstrate the importance of the tour and their role in it.

10. CONDUCT TOUR

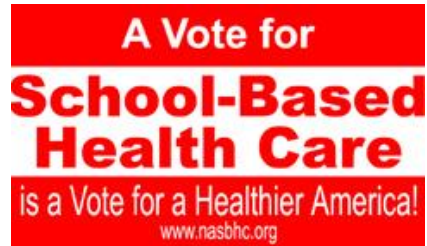
- ❑ The entire tour should take place in under an hour.

11. DEBRIEF

- ❑ Debrief with your participants:
 - What was the highlight of the tour?
 - What did we accomplish?
 - How was the preparation process?
 - What could have gone better?
 - What is the next step?
- ❑ Take a deep breath and give yourself a pat on the back!

12. GIVE THANKS

- ❑ Send thank you notes to the elected official and all other tour participants.



Sample Tour Planning Timeline

One Month before:

- Develop an agenda.
- Pick potential site visit dates (make sure the dates work with your key messengers).
- Contact decision makers by letter and follow-up over the phone with potential dates.
- Once date is set, place it on school, hospital and legislator calendars.
- If possible, work with the sponsoring agency to publicize and strategize about the visit.
- You may also want to contact school departments to arrange for school music or special entertainment.

Three Weeks before:

- Forward invitations to agencies/organizations involved in the school-based health center, as well as local businesses, industry, education, school board members and personnel, and the media (if you are planning to invite the media).
- Recruit and select students to be involved in assisting that day with greeting visitors at the school's entrance, handing out programs, serving food, etc.
- Select parents, teachers, principal(s) to share their experiences and success stories.

Two Weeks before:

- Plan menu/refreshments.
- Schedule a photographer for the day of the event or designate someone to take photos.
- Reserve any audio-visual or technical equipment you may need. You could also include the school audio visual department, if your school has one.

One Week before:

- Send out a media advisory (if you are planning to invite media) to newspapers, radio and TV stations and begin follow up calls to the media.
- Confirm the invitees (especially legislators).
- Run through the agenda/program and the key messages with all those who have a specific role that day.

One Day before:

- Confirm the invitees (especially legislators).

Day of:

- Decorate and set-up equipment.
- Confirm the media the morning of the event.

One-Three Days after:

- Send thank you to elected officials and all other participants.
- Debrief with participants.
- Follow up with media who did not attend (if media was invited).
- Record any media.
- Enter interaction in database

DATE

The Honorable _____
Washington Office
ADDRESS
Washington, DC

Local Office
ADDRESS

Dear *CONGRESSIONAL MEMBER*,

We all know that students learn better when they show up for class. But too many students are missing school due to health-related factors. The best way to make sure students are getting the medical care they need is to bring quality health care services to them—right inside their school buildings. In order to support school-based health centers, The School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007 was filed on February 14 that would authorize the first-ever federal program for school-based health centers – a proven model for making sure students get the medical care they need to grow up strong and healthy. We'd like you to see the power of this health care access model for yourself at a school-based health center in your district.

The *Name of SBHC (and the state association, if applicable)* invite you to take a 30-minute tour of a school-based health center and meet with the students and families who are being positively impacted by this model every day. The center serves # students and provides x, x care.

We look forward to working with your staff to schedule a visit to our school-based health center. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
PHONE NUMBER
EMAIL