



Position Statement:

School-Based Health Centers: A National Definition

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are partnerships created by schools and community health organizations to provide on-site medical and mental health services that promote the health and educational success of school-aged children and adolescents.

The school-based health care team works in collaboration with school nurse and other service providers in the school and community.

SBHCs have a policy on parental consent.

Although the model may vary based on availability of resources and community needs, SBHCs are typically open every school day, and staffed by an interdisciplinary team of medical and mental health professionals that provide comprehensive medical, mental health and health education services. SBHCs make provisions for care beyond the centers' operating hours or scope of service.

Because of the unique vantage point and access to students, the health center team is able to reach out to students to emphasize prevention and early intervention.

Services provided by the school-based health care team are determined locally through a collaborative process that includes families and students, communities, school districts, and individual and agency health care providers. Services typically offered in SBHCs are age-appropriate and address the most important health needs of children and youth. These services may include primary care for acute and chronic health conditions, mental health services, substance abuse services, case management, dental health services, reproductive health care, nutrition education, health education, and health promotion.

SBHCs are supported by local, state, and federal public health and primary care grants, community foundations, students and families, and reimbursement from public and private health insurance.