

WHAT IS A SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER?

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) provide quality preventive and primary care in order to keep students healthy, in school, and ready to learn. They are staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of medical and mental health specialists. Sometimes dental hygienists are also included on the multi-disciplinary team.

Each SBHC is developed by a local advisory committee made up of medical professionals, educators, parents, students and other community members. The services offered are based upon an assessment of student needs. In general, services include comprehensive well-child and well-adolescent exams, immunizations, diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury, management of chronic conditions, mental health assessment and treatment, substance abuse counseling, and health education and prevention programs. Dental services include prevention education, screening, cleaning and sealants. All programs are designed to identify health issues early and provide continuity of care.

SBHCs help schools do their job of educating by improving the health and well-being of students and marshaling existing community resources to address behaviors that interfere with learning. Colorado schools and communities have tested the SBHC model since the first center opened in Commerce City in 1978. With the help of seed money from private foundations and state government, the number of SBHCs in Colorado has grown to over forty. Colorado is not alone. Communities across the nation have embraced SBHCs as a cost-effective way to address the unmet health needs of children and adolescents. Educators, health professionals, government officials and business people have endorsed the concept. They have worked together, forming partnerships to facilitate and support expansion.

KEY FEATURES OF ALL SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

- Are located in a school or on school grounds
- Deliver high quality, low cost preventive and primary health care
- Provide care especially tailored to school-aged children and adolescents
- Work toward improving school attendance, academic success and graduation rates
- Offer an array of services determined by a local advisory committee made up of educators, medical professionals, parents, students and others
- Require parents to sign a detailed consent form before their child may receive any service

School-Based Health Centers have proven to be effective points of entry into the health care system for children and adolescents because they lower barriers to accessing care such as transportation and cost.

SBHCs INCREASE ACCESS TO CARE

School-Based Health Centers serve all students regardless of ability to pay. They are located in communities where access to care is limited for a large number of children, either because of low-income, lack of health insurance, or geographic isolation.

SBHCs PROMOTE HEALTHY CHOICES

Programs are designed to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent disease, intervene early when problems arise, and provide integrated services and continuity of care. SBHCs also teach health care consumer skills so that students learn how to access the health care system appropriately.

SBHC'S REDUCE SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

Students receive needed physical, mental and dental health care quickly and conveniently, thus reducing hours away from classroom instruction.

SBHCs: COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF COLORADO CHILDREN

School-Based Health Centers are a powerful approach for addressing student health issues **together**. SBHC's build linkages between parents, school and community to improve health, increase academic achievement, and prepare the workforce of tomorrow.

HOW WE CAN HELP

The Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care (CASBHC) was established in 1996 as a not-for-profit membership organization. We are affiliated with the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care in Washington, D.C.

CASBHC advocates for health care in schools for Colorado's children and adolescents. Our mission is to keep children healthy, in school, and ready to learn.

As a non-profit organization, CASBHC's funding comes from a variety of sources including grants, membership dues, conference registrations, and individual contributions. CASBHC provides policy leadership, training, technical assistance, and quality assurance programs.