

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS IN NEW MEXICO

DEFINITION, DESCRIPTION AND DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

DEFINITION OF A NEW MEXICO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER

School-based health centers provide quality, integrated, youth-friendly, and culturally responsive health care services to keep children and adolescents healthy, in school, and ready to learn.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW MEXICO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER

A school-based health center (SBHC) is a health clinic located on or near school property that functions separately from and in cooperation with the school nurse's office. The SBHC includes a team of qualified multidisciplinary professionals (typically employed by a community-based health organization) that supports the health, well-being, and success of students. The SBHC enables children/adolescents to thrive in the classroom and beyond. The center's health care providers and the physical characteristics of the center can vary based on student need and facility resources—among other influencing factors. The ideal SBHC model includes integrated physical and behavioral health care services. At a minimum, primary care, including urgent, acute, prevention and wellness care, is at the core. In addition to behavioral health, expanded services, including, substance abuse support, dental health, reproductive health, nutrition education, case management and health promotion may also be offered at the SBHC. SBHCs provide a youth-friendly environment designed to meet the unique health care needs of all youth, through supportive and collaborative relationships with youth, families, school administration, school health staff (school nurse, school counselor, health educator, etc.), school districts and boards.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEW MEXICO SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER₁



1. **ACCESS:** ASSURES STUDENTS' ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO HELP THEM THRIVE.

- A. **Location:** The SBHC facility is a fixed or portable space located in or near a school, on the school campus, or in close proximity to a school.
- B. **Service availability:** The SBHC is open when school is in session, or as needed to serve the needs of the student population. If the SBHC makes services available to populations other than students or out-of-school youth (such as faculty/school personnel, families of student users, or other people in the community), it prioritizes the care of the student body and assures for their safety and privacy. This is accomplished by offering student-only hours or having a separate waiting room to ensure that students access care in a safe and confidential environment.



2. **STUDENT-CENTERED:** IS FOCUSED ON STUDENTS' HEALTH NEEDS AND IS ORGANIZED AROUND SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND HEALTH PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS.

- A. **Partnerships for health and success:** The SBHC is built upon mutual respect and collaboration among a partnership of education, health, and youth-serving agencies whose chief objective is to promote the health and educational success of school-aged children and adolescents.
- B. **Student engagement:** The SBHC involves students as engaged participants in their health care and encourages the role of parents and other family members as appropriate.
- C. **Evidence-based standards:** The SBHC offers care that is evidence-based, accessible, confidential, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate.
- D. **SBHCs and school nurses:** The SBHC and district employed school nurse collaborate to provide, coordinate and manage student health services; however, they function within two different systems. The SBHC provides, at a

minimum, primary and behavioral health services, including diagnosis and treatment of illness, early intervention and disease prevention; the school nurse provides health screenings and referrals, triages or treats accidents and illness, manages chronic conditions, trains staff on delegation of nursing tasks, and is the direct link in the school district between students' health and their education.

- E. **After hours:** The SBHC has in place a system to instruct patients about where they may seek after hours care (i.e.: primary care physician, nurse hotline, emergency room, urgent care center, and/or behavioral health crisis line).

3. ADMINISTRATION: IS OPERATED BY A SPONSORING AGENCY.

- A. **Sponsoring agency:** This is typically a community health organization (or other collaborating organization) whose chief responsibility is to administer SBHC clinical and managerial operations. Sponsoring agencies may include local health departments, community health centers, federally-qualified health centers, local educational agencies, hospitals/medical centers, managed care organizations, behavioral health agencies, universities (i.e. school of medicine, nursing, public health), private/non-profit agencies, and tribal governments.
- B. **Sponsor functions:** Sponsors provide critical functions such as human resources, medical oversight, purchasing of medical equipment and supplies, liability insurance, quality improvement, training and leadership development, health information technology, and funding and fiscal management.
- C. **SBHC and sponsoring agency shared responsibilities:** The level of support and individual/shared responsibilities of operating the SBHCs are defined in a written memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the SBHC or school district and its sponsoring agency.
- D. **Sustainability:** The sponsoring agency employs sound business practices to ensure SBHC sustainability.

4. OPERATIONS: PROVIDES PRIMARY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TO YOUTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE AND LOCAL LAW, INCLUDING LAWS RELATING TO LICENSURE, CERTIFICATION, AND PROVISION OF CONFIDENTIAL (OR SENSITIVE) SERVICES TO MINORS.

- A. **Scope of services:** The types of health services provided in the SBHC are determined by student need, based upon various data sources and student personal health care needs, including physical, dental, behavioral, emotional and social concerns that impede well-being and school success.
- B. **Health care team:** The SBHC is staffed by a health care team with specific competencies to address the broad range of aforementioned concerns that affect students' healthy development. Team members most often include a primary care provider and behavioral health specialist. Health educators, care coordinators, dental health specialists, and nutritionists may augment service delivery. The SBHC has and follows policies regarding (but not limited to):
- **Confidentiality** of student services, medical records, and data in accordance with New Mexico state confidentiality laws for minors;
 - **Consent** for medical, behavioral health, alcohol and other drug services in accordance with New Mexico state consent laws for minors; and
 - **Protocols for exchange of health information** between the SBHC and the patient's primary care provider, managed care organization, and school personnel.
- C. **Non-discrimination:** The SBHC does not discriminate against consumers based upon race, color, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender, health insurance status, or ability to pay.
- D. **Records and patient data:** Student SBHC records and data are maintained in accordance with HIPAA guidelines and secured separately from school records.

5. STATE REQUIREMENTS: SATISFIES OTHER REQUIREMENTS THE STATE MAY ESTABLISH FOR THE OPERATION OF A CLINIC, WHERE NECESSARY.

- A. **Contractual relationship:** Where required for a New Mexico Department of Health, the SBHC will operate according to New Mexico SBHC Standards and Benchmarks (<http://www.nmasbhc.org/sbhc-documents.html>).
- B. **Medicaid certification:** Where required for New Mexico Human Services Department the SBHC will operate according to New Mexico SBHC Standards and Benchmarks (<http://www.nmasbhc.org/sbhc-documents.html>).

¹ The defining characteristics of the SBHC are a combination of language from the Children's Health Insurance Program Re-Authorization Act (Title V, Section 505), the School Based Health Alliance Core Competencies, and the final revisions of the 2015 NMASBHC SBHC Definition Work Group. Version 9_8_15