

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS & SCHOOL NURSES



What Do They Do?

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs):

- ▶ Are located in schools or on school grounds
- ▶ Work cooperatively with schools
- ▶ Focus of culturally competent, patient-centered care to school-age children (and sometimes families) using a medical model to provide primary care with a multidisciplinary team to provide:
 - Laboratory services and diagnosis
 - Illness treatment including prescription services
 - Comprehensive health assessments
 - Screening and early interventions
 - And may include oral and mental health care
- ▶ Reduce health disparities & improves health outcomes for underserved youth who are enrolled
- ▶ Integrate increased access to primary care in the public
- ▶ Receive funding from billing third party payors (including Medicaid) and support by foundations or healthcare systems
- ▶ Serve the school and the surrounding community
- ▶ **Learn more at www.sbh4all.org**

School Nurses

- ▶ Are registered nurses (Generalist to Specialist) who practice in schools
- ▶ Serve the entire school population
- ▶ Coordinates the development of individualize student health (IHP) and emergency plans (ECP)
- ▶ Member of school health teams
- ▶ Collaborates on school education teams (e.g., IEP, 504)
- ▶ Typically employed or contracted by local school districts
- ▶ Promote health and well-being through:
 - Health promotion
 - Health education
 - Immunization compliance
- Securing insurance and access to a medical home
- ▶ Mitigate potential health issues with:
 - Health screenings
 - Healthcare provider referrals
 - Ongoing health issue surveillance
 - Preparation for school emergencies
- ▶ Provide care coordination and case management:
 - Chronic and communicable diseases
 - Life threatening allergies
 - First aid and emergencies
- ▶ **Learn more at www.nasn.org**



What Happens When They Work Together?

Expertise in the intersection of health AND education fosters an environment that is culturally competent and patient-centered, supporting academic success

- Better attention to social determinants of health and health disparities
- Complimentary planning & implementing school-based health promotion and disease prevention programs
- Increases disease management and supports disease self-management
- Provides seamless care when school nurses triage and refer to the school health center
 - Enhances continuity of care through information sharing
 - Supports transition from pediatric to adult healthcare
- Further reduces student absences and increases classroom seat time
- Supports faculty and school administrators allowing them to teach and lead
 - Saves school dollars when students progress toward graduation
 - Reduces emergency room and medical office visits
- Decreases time parents/guardians must miss work for medical office visits
- Enhances students' health, overall well-being, and academic success

Questions & Answers

Q: When budgets are already tight, how can funding both school nurses and school health centers be justified?

A: Care provided by school nurses and school health centers are complementary – one does not replace the other. School nurses are salaried with dollars from education, local public health, grants, foundations, or hospital systems. School health centers are funded by state and federal dollars, grants, or foundations. Some, but not all, schools bill for reimbursable school nursing services. School health centers are more likely to seek for reimbursement from public and private insurance. Current funding models vary; potential new models to fund health services must be explored.

Q: What is the effect on the students when both school nurses and school health centers are in place?

A: Healthy students learn better. Collaboration between school nurses and school health centers can reduce disparities that prevent children from reaching their health and academic potential. Students spend more time in school, in class, and test scores and graduation rates improve; care coordination enhances disease management, increases symptom-free days, and reduces unnecessary emergency room visits; teachers and school administration can teach and lead; and parents/guardians do not lose time at work.

Q: How does the role of a school health center differ from the role of the school nurse?

A: The school nurse is responsible for the day-to-day oversight and management of the school population's health. School health centers – which may include primary, behavioral, and oral care providers - serve as a medical home providing primary care for an enrolled student and sometimes his/her family.

Q: Should schools have both a school nurse and school health center?

A: Yes! With 98% of school-age children in the U.S. attend school and many come with known and unknown health issues. Health promotion, disease prevention, and disease management can more effectively be delivered in the school setting when both school nurses and school health centers are accessible. School nurses can provide health education, health screening, care coordination for chronic disease management, collaboration with families for enrollment in public insurance programs, and referrals to school health centers for complex issues. School health centers diagnose and treat illnesses, prescribe and dispense medication, and may provide oral and mental health care services.