

School-Based Health Centers

Health Equity Council

Executive statement

School-Based Health Centers promote health and health equity at the intersections of education and health care by increasing access to quality care, addressing protective and risk factors, and promoting community capacity.

Background

School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) provide students physical and behavioral health services and connect them to local healthcare organizations. Services provided include medical care, reproductive health care, behavioral & mental health care, comprehensive wellness exams, immunizations, and referrals to services.

Studies have linked SBHC to improved health, well-being and educational attainment. SBHC use has been associated to reducing asthma morbidity, use of vaccinations, fewer emergency department visits, lower alcohol and substance use, reduced violence, higher contraceptive use, higher GPA, and reduced suspension rates. At the community level, SBHCs increase health equity as they increase access through reducing transportation, financial and cultural barriers.

SBHCs thus play a vital role in promoting health at 1) clinical level through screening, programs and services; 2) school-wide level through health-centered programs and policies; and 3) community levels through collaboration with families and communities to address barriers to services, understanding risk factors, and advocating for equitable access to Social Determinants of Health.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Increase SBHCs

Increase the number of SBHCs at all levels of pre-K to high schools, as well as access to telemedicine and mobile clinics.

Recommendation 2: Data Collection

Improve data collection and evaluation to understand trends and needs to inform clinical practices.

Recommendation 3: Promote health screening

Promote comprehensive health risk screening to better understand risk factors and health needs.

Recommendation 4: Access to mental health training

Fund and support health programs to provide youth mental health training.

Recommendation 5: Health campaigns to increase help seeking

Support citywide health campaigns to promote help-seeking among adolescents.

Recommendation 6: Health alerts

Increase coordination such as between the Environmental Health Department and SBHCs to provide information on health alerts to students and families.