



# Meeting the Health Care Needs of Children and Adolescents: School Based Health Centers in Connecticut



**Jesse White-Fresé, M.A., L.P.C.**  
**Executive Director, CT Association of School Based Health Centers**

Yale School of Public Health  
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# What is a School Based Health Center?

In CT, a Comprehensive School Based Health Center is described as:

- ✓ A model that *concurrently* blends medical care with preventive and behavioral health services – many sites provide dental care
- ✓ Staffing *must* include a team of licensed inter-disciplinary professionals (*at minimum, medical and behavioral*)
- ✓ Staff works side-by-side to address and coordinate a broad spectrum of students' health needs
- ✓ Anticipatory guidance and health education are routinely offered to students that utilize the SBHC
- ✓ This model represents the highest standard of care available (National Gold Standard) with respect to the range and quality of SBHC services (*Making the Grade: State and Local Partnerships to Establish School Based Health Centers, 2003*)



## SBHCs: A Model that Works

✿ The medical – mental health model addresses the whole child/adolescent

✿ A recent study indicated a *significant increase in attendance* for [adolescent] SBHC medical users compared to nonusers. Grade point average increases over time were observed for mental health users compared to nonusers\*

✿ 96.4% of children that receive an asthma breathing treatment in the SBHC *return to class* (CASBHC data)

✿ 5,337 CT children/adolescents received mental health treatment in their SBHC in more than 40,000 visits, enabling them to *remain in school and continue to learn* (2007-2008 school year)

\* Journal of Adolescent Health 46 (2010) 251-257



# SBHC Medical Services

Services include:

- *Assessment/Diagnosis/Treatment* of illnesses and injuries; provide prescriptions
- *Management/treatment* of chronic diseases such as diabetes and asthma in coordination with primary care provider
- *Referrals* for specialty care (orthopedics, pulmonology, gastrointestinal disorders, cardiac care, etc)
- *Health education* both in the SBHC and in the classroom
- STD testing and treatment in some sites / Immunizations
- Support groups for medical topics such as asthma, weight management, nutrition
- Case management with students, families, primary care providers, and specialty care providers
- Mental health risk assessment with referral to SBHC mental health clinician when warranted



## SBHC Mental Health Services

### Services include:

- Individual, group, and family *therapy*
- *Referral* for psychiatric evaluations, medical evaluations, and specialty care
- Risk assessment and health education
- *Support groups* for topics such as anger management, substance abuse, bereavement, parental illness
- Case management
- Services are provided by licensed mental health clinicians: LCSW, LMFT, LPC
- Some SBHCs have onsite consultation with *child psychiatrists*; others have direct referrals to care



# Student Mental Health Issues

## SBHC Mental Health Treatment Services: “the community mental health therapist in the school”

Diagnoses seen the SBHCs in the 2007-2009 school years:

- High risk behavior; self-injury such as cutting
- Psychosocial problems with family and peers
- Attention deficit disorder/ ADHD
- Victimization; trauma; traumatic stress
- Alcohol / substance abuse
- Anxiety disorder; Bipolar disorder; Learning disorders; Eating disorders; Autism; Major depression



# SBHC Dental Services



- The majority of CT SBHCs provide dental services through:
  - Onsite fixed dental operatory in or near SBHC
  - Use of their own portable dental equipment that visits school several times per year
  - Partnership with community dental care organizations that provide dental services in the school
  
- Dental Hygiene and Restorative Treatment may be provided:
  - Cleanings, sealants, fluoride treatments, x-rays, health education
  - Exams, fillings, other restorative dental procedures



# Adolescent Health Care in SBHCs



## Key Issues:

- Safety, confidentiality, familiarity
- Easy access without barriers
- Minor Consent Laws
- Reproductive health care
- Less parental involvement at this stage
- Identity issues, peer influences, relationship issues



# About the CT Association of School Based Health Centers (CASBHC)

- The CT Association of School Based Health Centers is the single formalized voice of School Based Health Centers (SBHC) in CT
- CASBHC represents 83 SBHCs sites in 22 communities, funded by the Department of Public Health
- CASBHC advocates for all SBHCs at the state and national level to sustain and expand this model of care to address the health needs of children and adolescents
- CASBHC is a state-affiliate of the School Based Health Alliance, the national voice for SBHCs (2000 SBHCs in 46 states)



## Vision:

*All children and adolescents are healthy and achieving at their fullest potential.*



# Current Issues and Opportunities Impacting SBHCs

## Opportunities for SBHCs in the ACA:

- Person-Centered Medical Homes
- Health Insurance Exchanges:
  - Patient Assisters and Navigators
  - Qualified Health Entities/Essential Community Providers
  - Greater numbers of insured children and youth
- Focus on Care Coordination, one of the hallmarks of SBHCs

## Issues Impacting SBHCs on state and federal level:

- Advocacy for federal funding stream to support SBHC operations
- Maintenance of funding from CT legislature to sustain and expand SBHCs in new schools and communities
- Full integration into the safety net system for vulnerable populations





# *Healthy Kids Make Better Learners*

For more information, contact:

Jesse White-Fresé, Executive Director  
CT Association of School Based Health Centers  
[jesse@ctschoolealth.org](mailto:jesse@ctschoolealth.org)

203-230-9976

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