



## **School Based Health Centers: Importance of Extending Health Services to Schools**

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# What is a School Based Health Center?

- Health center located within a school building
- Staffed by nurses, doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, counselors and/or medical assistants
- Provide an array of physical and emotional health services
- Can serve as a connection to student's medical home
- Can connect students to a primary care physician when necessary

# Benefits of a SBHC

1. Increase School attendance
2. Decreases gaps in care
3. Services that support at-risk students
4. Promote healthy school practices through health education
5. Improve wellness policies and health programs
6. Build local partnerships to support expanded health services
7. Reduce emergency room visits
8. Improve child health & access to health services
9. Decrease health disparities

# School Attendance

- 1. Chronic absenteeism, or missing more than 10 percent of school per year, linked to**
  - Lower academic performance
  - Lower rates of school completion,
  - Higher risk of substance use
  - Higher involvement with violence
- 2. Students living in poverty are the most likely to experience chronic absenteeism, as are students with chronic illnesses such as asthma.**
- 3. In addition, students who report being bullied are more likely to be chronically absent.**
- 4. Top health-related causes of absenteeism include**
  - asthma
  - mental health disorders
  - dental emergencies

# At-Risk Populations

- **Provide wrap around services**
  - Health, education, safety, and welfare
  - Removes barriers to learning created by
    - Health conditions
    - Exposure to violence/trauma
    - Instability or stress in home or community
  - Benefit to children
  - Protect children from affects of trauma
    - Promote brain development and learning ability

# Impact on Health Care

SBHCs increase access to health care.

SBHC users are likely to use primary care — both medical and behavioral health — more consistently.

SBHC users are more likely to have yearly dental and medical check-ups.

SBHC users are less likely to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized.

# Impact on Academic Performance

SBHCs have a positive impact on absences, dropout rates, disciplinary problems and other academic outcomes.

Students receiving SBHC mental health services improve their grades more quickly than their peers.

States with SBHCs that serve as Medicaid providers have higher student achievement results.

States that oversee health education and health services have higher test scores and lower dropout rates.

# Impact on Health Care Costs

Research shows that investments in SBHCs generate savings through reduced use of high-cost services, thereby increasing access without increasing overall Medicaid expenditures.

Studies have also found that SBHCs reduce inappropriate emergency room use, inpatient, drug and emergency department use, and hospitalization among children with asthma.

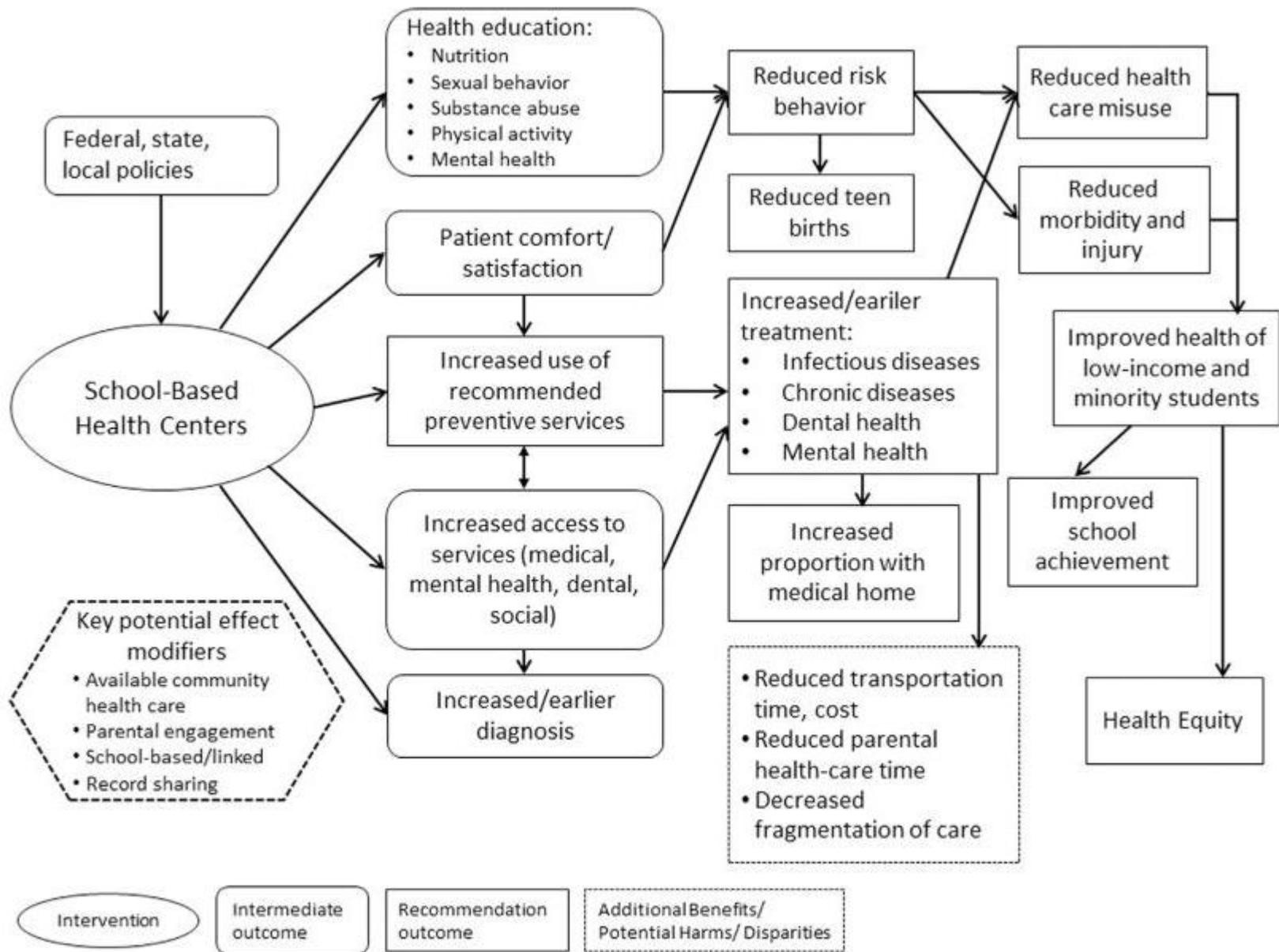
School-based immunization initiatives prevent disease and can also save money for society.

# Services Offered

- 29.2% “primary care only,”
- 33.4% mental health services
- 37.4% offer additional services
- 96.6% comprehensive health assessments
- 96.1% treatment of acute illness
- 96.0% prescriptions
- 94.6% asthma treatment
- 92.7% screening for vision, hearing, and scoliosis

# Primary Prevention Services

- Immunizations; counseling for healthy eating/active living/weight management (90.1%)
- Pregnancy testing (81.2%)
- Substance abuse (53.2%)
- Violence prevention (92.5%)
- Dropout prevention (59.1%)
- Oral health education (77%)
- Dental screenings (64.8%).[36](#)



Analytic framework: school-based health centers to promote health equity.

# Cost-effective Investments

- Dallas SBHCs found that medical services helped
  - **decrease absences by 50%** among students who had three or more absences in a six-week period;
  - students who received mental health services had an **85% decline in school discipline referrals.** <sup>1</sup>
- Attract harder-to-reach populations,
  - minorities and males,
  - do a better job at getting them crucial services such as mental health care and high-risk behavior screens. <sup>2,3</sup>
- Two studies found adolescents were **10-21 times more likely to come to a SBHC for mental health services** than the community health center network or HMO. <sup>2,3</sup>

# Cost-effective Investments

- A study of elementary school-based health centers conducted by Montefiore Medical Center found:
  - a **reduction in hospitalization and an increase in school attendance** among inner-city school children for asthma.<sup>4</sup>
  - decreases in hospitalization rates of **75-85%** and improvements in the use peak flow meters and inhalers.<sup>5</sup>
- Mathematica Policy Research conducted a national multisite study and found a **significant increase in health care access by students who used school-based health centers**:
  - 71% of students reported having a health care visit in past year compared to 59% of students who did not have access to a SBHC.<sup>6</sup>

# Conclusion

- **Educational progress is impacted by health issues impacting students**
- **Student motivation hindered by health problems**
- **Reduce disparities using coordinated approach**
- **Local and state policy**
- **DE HB 129 – sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams**
- **SBHC State Strategic Plan**
- **Questions?**
- **Thank you!**