



School Based Health Centers



School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are freestanding medical centers, licensed by the State of Connecticut as outpatient clinics, located within or on the grounds of schools.

SBHCs promote the physical and mental health of children and youth and ensure their access to comprehensive primary and preventive health care. SBHCs emphasize early identification of physical and mental health concerns and the prevention of more serious problems through early intervention.

A Model Program that Ensures Comprehensive Care for Children

SBHCs provide physical and mental health services to students of the school. All students may use SBHC services, once a parent signs a permission/enrollment form for the student, regardless of income or health insurance status.

SBHCs are staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals with particular expertise in child/adolescent health. The team may include: nurse practitioners or physician assistants, an M.D., social workers, medical assistants, health educators, outreach workers and/or other ancillary health professionals. All SBHCs operate under the guidance of a medical director. Some SBHCs have dental services. SBHC staff are a resource for the school and the community and able to provide programs on wellness, disease prevention, health promotion and general health management.

SBHC Services

- Diagnosis and treatment of acute injuries and illnesses (such as colds, ear infections, sore throats, skin problems and sexually transmitted disease)
- Routine check ups
- Physical exams
- Immunizations
- Prescription and dispensing of medications
- Laboratory testing
- Coordination of community care
- Nutrition counseling and weight management
- Crisis intervention
- Health education
- Individual, family and group counseling
- Referral and follow-up for specialty care
- Link with a medical home

How SBHCs and School Health Services Work Together

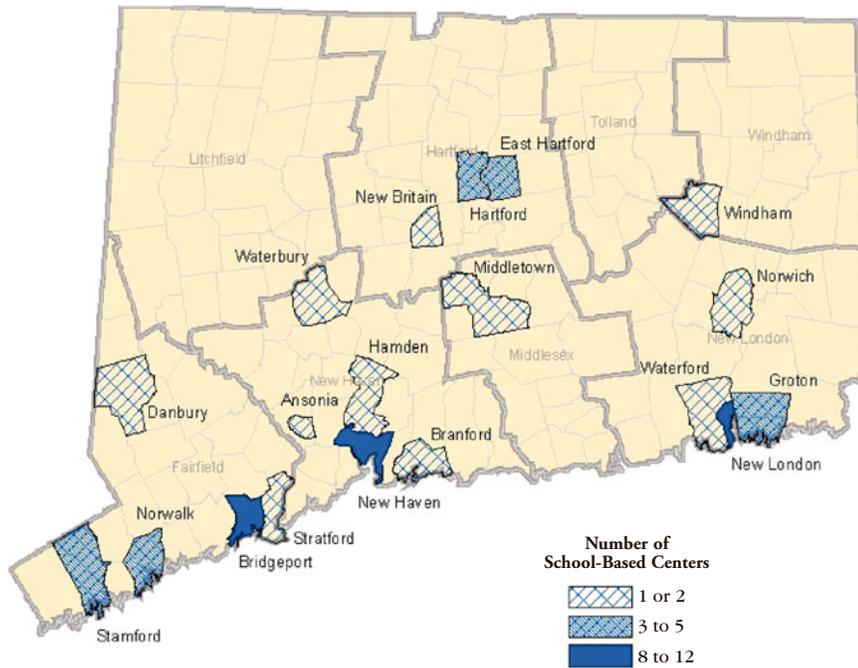
There is a difference between school health services and school based health centers. The role of the school nurse is very important for school health. The SBHC role begins where the school nurse role ends. School



nurses can assess a health problem and recommend actions to be taken. SBHC staff can diagnose the problem, prescribe medications and provide treatment. SBHC staff work closely with school nurses to achieve the best outcome for the student.

School Based Health Centers^a

Funded through the
Connecticut Department of Public Health
State Fiscal Year 2005-2006



Ansonia High School (1)	Branford Middle School (1) High School (1)
Bridgeport Elem School (6) High School (3)	Danbury Middle School (1) High School (1)
East Hartford Elem School (1) Middle School (1) High School (1)	Groton Elem School (2) Middle School (1) High School (1)
Hamden High School (1)	Hartford Elem School (2) Middle School (1) High School (2)
Middletown Elem School (1) Middle School (1)	New Britain High School (1)
New Haven Elem School (3) Middle School (4) High School (2) Mixed ^b School (3)	New London Elem School (6) Middle School (1) High School (1)
Norwalk High School (3)	Norwich Middle School (2) High School (1)
Stamford Middle School (1) High School (2) Other ^c School (1)	Stratford Middle School (1)
Waterbury Elem School (1)	Waterford Early Childhood Center (1)
Windham Middle School (1) High School (1)	

^a - Numbers in parentheses identify the number of school-based health centers.

^b - School with elementary and middle school grades combined.

^c - School serves a middle/high school complex.

There are currently 65 SBHCs funded by CT DPH in 19 communities in the state, in elementary, middle and high schools. Funding for SBHCs in Connecticut comes primarily through the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Support dollars may also come from local or federal funds, private grants and third-party reimbursement. Each site has its own unique sources of funding.

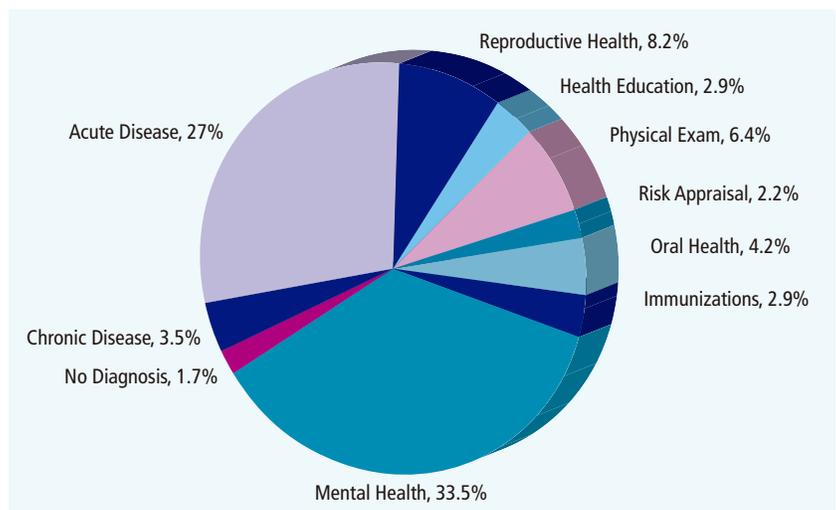
Healthy Kids Make Better Learners

Regardless of the funding source, SBHCs are an investment in our youth. Connecticut's SBHCs help to screen and detect health problems early, preventing more expensive interventions in the future. This investment helps to keep children healthy and in school. SBHCs also help to reduce school absenteeism associated with chronic diseases and acute illnesses. Because SBHCs are located within schools (or on school campuses) the opportunity to access care is granted to *every* student who is enrolled in the health center.

Visits to SBHC

In 2003 - 2004:

- 42,589 students were enrolled in SBHCs,
- 19,439 (46%) visited the clinics
- Of the 131,322 total visits:
 - 88,733 of the visits were for medical, behavioral health, and oral health
 - 42,589 were for care coordination
- Of the 88,733 student visits to the clinic:
 - 62.3% were medical
 - 33.5% were behavioral health
 - 4.2% were oral health



SBHCs Reduce Health Care Costs

In 2002, 940 students with asthma were seen by SBHCs. The average cost of care for a child with an asthma episode requiring medical intervention is \$958. In FY 2002, SBHCs in Connecticut had 2,044 student visits with a primary diagnosis of asthma. 86% of those students were treated by the SBHC and returned to class. Those SBHC site interventions alone saved \$1,684,164 in additional health care costs.

(Source: CASBHC Special Studies)

What students have to say about school based health centers . . .

“SBHC practitioners understand youth better than outside practitioners.”

“SBHCs are much more convenient.”

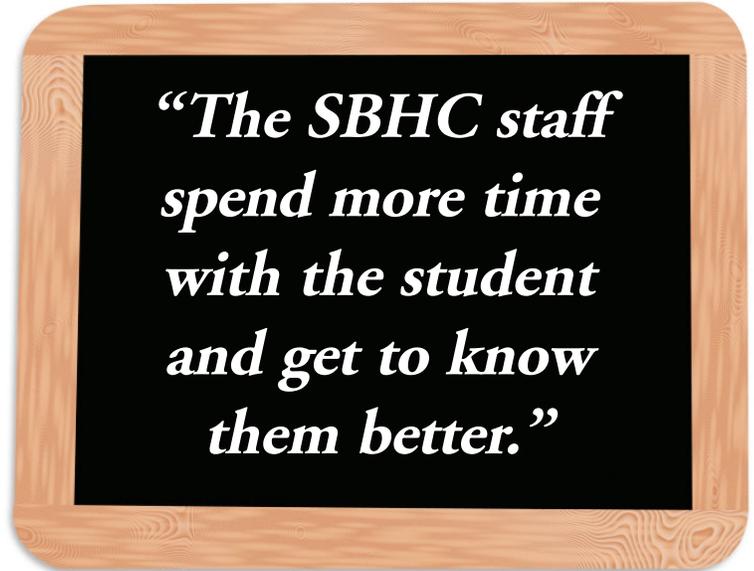
“It is easier to get an appointment at the SBHC than in the community.”

“The SBHC is a friendly and comfortable place to go for help.”

“The SBHC staff are easy to talk with, listen to what is being said and respect youth’s concerns.”

“SBHC staff are trustworthy.”

“SBHC staff can help manage other health care needs.”



(From Connecticut Association for Human Services School-Based Health Center Focus Group Report, 2001)

SBHCs Can Make A Huge Difference in the Life of a Child



R.G. had been bounced around as a child. At the age of 15, his guardian died and he moved from his home state to Connecticut to live with his elderly grandfather. R.G. needed a pre-entrance physical exam for school, so he enrolled in the SBHC. Upon examination, the Nurse Practitioner discovered a severe heart murmur and grossly enlarged tonsils. The SBHC staff worked to enroll R.G. in the CT HUSKY (Medicaid) plan. They obtained appointments for him at specialty clinics. He subsequently had a mitral valve replacement that saved his life, followed by a tonsillectomy. He continues to work with SBHC staff on issues related to his health, his relocation and the death of his guardian.

Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers

The Connecticut Association of School-Based Health Centers (CASBHC), was established in 1994, and received its 501 (c)(3) non-profit designation in 1996. CASBHC is a statewide network of 65 school-based health centers (SBHCs) operating in 19 Connecticut communities. CASBHC has worked toward establishing a strong base of support for SBHCs through community encouragement, delivery of quality services, advocacy and marketing.

CASBHC is committed to the goal of increased access to quality physical and mental health care for all children and adolescents in Connecticut schools. With and through its members, CASBHC provides leadership and advocacy at the state and national level for the development and improvement of school based health centers. CASBHC has accomplished:

- Advancing the acceptance of and education about SBHCs in CT.
- Participation in the national pilot for the Preventive Services Improvement Initiative (PSII) and AMA GAPS (Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services.)
- Improving access to medical, dental and mental health care for children in CT.
- Advocacy that has led to influencing legislation and maintaining funding.
- Providing education and training for caregivers of CT children through the provision of three statewide conferences.

School Based Health Centers: Preparing for a Crisis of a Different Magnitude

CASBHC Bioterrorism Emergency Preparedness Project

CASBHC is addressing the issue of Emergency Preparedness for SBHCs. It hired a Project Director, who conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to establish levels of preparedness and technology needs of each SBHC. Next steps are the education and training of SBHC staff, as well as the integration of SBHCs into local/state preparedness networks. Specific tools have been developed so that each SBHC can assess their preparedness level for a bioterrorism event. A Bioterrorism Emergency Preparedness Manual was developed and each site will keep it up-to-date with information on multiple areas of emergency preparedness.

