

School-Based Health Centers

FAQs Answered
for Schools & Communities in Arkansas



What is a school-based health center (SBHC)?

- A healthcare facility located in or next to a school
- Presents a coordinated model for health and education
- Provides students access to high-quality health care where they spend most of their time—a school environment that is safe, convenient, and accessible

What range of services do SBHCs provide?

- Services offered may vary, but must include physical and mental health services
- Physical health services may include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Age-appropriate comprehensive health exams and preventive care
 - ✓ Diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic medical conditions
 - ✓ Immunizations and laboratory testing
 - ✓ Sick-visit consultation
- Mental health services may include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Mental health awareness
 - ✓ Outreach including suicide prevention
 - ✓ Screening for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other mental health conditions
 - ✓ Behavioral health care, including: assessment, treatment, referral and crisis intervention; individual, group, and family therapy; case management and social service assessment, referral, and follow up as needed
- Other optional services include: dental; optometry; nutritional counseling, physical activity promotion; health promotion and risk prevention/reduction programs; health risk assessment; and telehealth services

Do SBHCs serve all students, regardless of their ability to pay?

- Yes. Wellness and preventive care is prioritized over costs
- SBHC staff should discuss this priority with providers prior to their contract

How will we serve students who don't have health insurance?

- SBHCs may consider billing parents/guardians based on a sliding fee scale
- SBHC staff may assist families of students without insurance with ARKids/Medicaid enrollment

What are the benefits to my school/community of having a SBHC?

- SBHCs make it easier for students to learn and teachers to teach
- Reduce barriers to learning such as absenteeism, acute and chronic illness detection and management, mental health issues, and trauma
- Eliminate many barriers to care that many families face, such as lack of transportation or missed work

How are SBHCs funded?

SBHCs get their funding from many sources, including the federal government, state-funded grants like the Arkansas School-Based Health Center Grant, city and county government funding, private grants, and donations.

Do SBHCs eliminate the need for school nurses and school counselors?

No. School-based health centers provide services beyond the scope of the school nurse. They are designed to work in conjunction with school nurses—not to replace them. School nurses and school counselors often serve as links between schools and SBHCs.

Do SBHCs interfere with parental authority?

No. Written parental or guardian consent is required for all students. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the students' plan of care as appropriate.

How do we determine our hours of operation?

The School-Based Health Alliance of Arkansas recommends that SBHCs in the state provide services a minimum of 12 hours per week with a physical health provider on campus, including some before or after-school hours at least one day each week when school is in session. School-based health centers may also consider remaining open when school is not in session, according to the needs in their communities.