

School-Based Health Services is a community service offered by Kalispell Regional Healthcare at NO COST to schools. We aim to provide schools with a health care center directly on your campus.

- Why are School-Based Health Centers Important?\*

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) will help improve the lives of Montana's children because they bring essential services to students and staff where they are—in school. SBHCs support student success because healthy students are better learners.

#### **Advantages of SBHCs:\***

- Students have direct access to health care providers while they are at school.
- SBHCs serve all students, whether or not they have insurance.
- Students do not have to miss as much class time to receive basic health care.
- Parents do not have to miss work to take their child to the doctor.
- Transportation problems in seeking health care are reduced.
- Risky behaviors are identified and addressed.
- Students learn how to be effective consumers of health care in a non-intimidating environment.
- Referrals are made to appropriate community providers for services not provided at the SBHC.

#### **Students Who Have Access to Health Centers Inside Their Schools:\***

- Are more likely to seek services they need.
- Get services from on-site providers who can follow-up informally and who have a broader understanding of the student's functioning in his or her peer group and in school.
- Can get integrated primary and mental health care.
- Have positive role models of health care professionals.

#### **Proven Effectiveness of SBHCs:\***

- SBHCs have proven to be effective points of entry into the health care system for children because they lower barriers to accessing care. In addition:
- SBHCs improve school attendance.<sup>1</sup>
- SBHCs improve rates of graduation.<sup>2</sup>
- SBHCs decrease emergency room and urgent care visits.<sup>3</sup>
- SBHCs decrease hospitalizations for children with asthma.<sup>4</sup>
- SBHCs improve access to and use of mental health services.<sup>5</sup>
- SBHCs improve access to and use of preventive services and improve vaccination rates.<sup>6</sup>
- SBHCs reduce Medicaid expenditures related to inpatient, drug, and emergency department use.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Types of Services**

Each local community determines which services will be offered at its SBHC. Health center staff aim to build cultural sensitivity into all the services they provide. Services vary but many SBHCs include the following:

##### **Medical\***

- Diagnosis and treatment of illness and injury
- Comprehensive well-child and well-adolescent exams with risk assessment
- Sports physicals
- Management of chronic conditions, such as asthma and diabetes
- Immunizations

- Laboratory tests
- Over-the-counter medications and prescriptions
- Referrals and coordination of outside services such as x-rays, medical specialists, and other services not available at the SBHC, some will be available via telehealth

#### **Behavioral Health\***

- Mental health screening (for depression, anxiety, and other conditions)
- Comprehensive behavioral health assessments
- Crisis intervention
- Individual, family, and group counseling
- Substance abuse screening and treatment
- Mental health awareness and outreach, including suicide prevention

#### **Prevention and Health Education:\***

- School-wide wellness and health promotion services
- Individual and small group targeted health education, such as weight management, nutrition education, asthma management, and smoking cessation

#### **Other Services that May Be Offered**

- Medicaid/Child Health Plan Plus outreach and enrollment assistance
- Preventive dental services such as exams, teeth cleaning, sealants, and fluoride varnishes
- Telemedicine, enabling SBHC practitioners to consult with off-site medical specialists via closed-circuit television or phone

What services will we offer at no cost to your school?

School-Based Health Centers vary based on the needs of your school.

Services can include but are not limited to:

- tests for strep throat
- flu shots/immunizations
- sports physicals
- scoliosis screenings
- medicine and check-ups for chronic conditions, like asthma and diabetes
- teaching students about healthy eating and exercise
- counseling for mental health and emotional issues
- referrals to specialists, if needed
- help applying for health insurance
- behavioral health care to help students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) focus in class, or enable stressed or anxious students to talk privately with a therapist without leaving school
- Besides one-on-one care, some school-based health centers lead small-group and classroom activities, like lessons on active lifestyles.

Another goal is to identify and meet the needs of school staff to help reduce the need for time off and ever present challenge of finding substitutes on short notice.

Your school clinic will have untold benefits including less absenteeism of both students and staff.

- “Chronic absenteeism—when a student misses ten percent or more of school days for any reason (excused or unexcused absences)—is linked to poor grades and dropout. Research shows that chronic absenteeism increases a student’s risk of academic failure and is an early predictor of high school dropout.<sup>8</sup> Nationally, one in ten kindergarten and first grade students misses a full month of school in a single year, and the rates of chronic absenteeism in middle and high schools are even higher.<sup>9</sup> Supports and strategies that reduce chronic absenteeism are important for students’ educational outcomes.”

- Research has found many links to SBHCs and absenteeism, including: high school SBHC users in one 2000 study had a 50 percent decrease in absenteeism and 25 percent decrease in tardiness.<sup>10</sup>

Our goal is to provide every child, family, and staff convenient access to the healthcare they deserve. By doing this, we can all help ensure a healthier tomorrow.

Overall, health and academic achievement are connected in the life of a child. Conditions such as chronic illness, lack of physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, missing routine appointments, food insecurity, and other health-related conditions have been linked to poor academic outcomes. In turn, students and adults who achieve less academic success are more likely to have long-term health challenges. Staff will also benefit by not having to take time off work to attend routine medical appointments; creating a healthier, happier work environment making for increased job satisfaction and improved retention.

We would love the opportunity to further discuss this no-cost service with you. Brittany Coburn, the Director of School-Based Services, and I are traveling around the Flathead and Mission Valleys and throughout the Highline area; we will be talking with schools about the benefits of having School-Based Health Center and how we can cater to everyone’s specific needs.

Please feel free to contact me at 406-871-6226 to set up a meeting, and we will come to your next board meeting to discuss how we can serve your school best.

In my experience working with children for the past twenty years I have found that healthy kids make better students and our main objective is help kids have access to health care they deserve.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Rusty Cash  
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