



# SCHOOL HEALTH CENTERS IN CALIFORNIA

School health centers are an innovative way to make sure all kids get health care and do well in school. They are located on school campuses and offer services in a place that is familiar, trusted, age-appropriate and convenient for all students and families.

School health centers encompass a variety of models – from clinics with full-time medical and mental health staff to part-time clinics offering a limited set of services. “School linked” health centers are off campus and have formal operating agreements with schools. In some areas, health services are provided by mobile medical vans.

The number of school health centers has continued to grow over the past decade, weathering the ups and downs of the economy because schools, providers and communities know that supporting healthy children is a smart investment. In 2000, California had 108 school health centers; today, there are 183 with about 40 in the works.

## Where are California’s school health centers?

- Of California’s 183 school health centers, 42% are in high schools, 32% are in elementary schools, 12% are in middle schools, and 14% are “school linked” or mobile medical vans.
- School health centers spread from Del Norte to San Diego County with large concentrations in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Many school health centers are located in schools serving some of the state’s most vulnerable children. On campuses with school health centers, about 70% of students receive free or reduced price meals.

## What types of services are provided?

School health centers offer a range of services with the most common being basic primary care services. Many also play an important role in managing students’ chronic illnesses such as asthma and diabetes. Some school health centers offer reproductive health services, such as abstinence counseling, pregnancy prevention, and STD/HIV testing and treatment. Other services include mental health counseling and youth development.

Services Provided at School Health Centers in California

Service	% Centers
Medical Services	85%
Health Education	61%
Mental Health Services	59%
Reproductive Health - Screening and Education	59%
Reproductive Health - Clinical Care	47%
Nutrition and Fitness Programs	36%
Dental Services - Prevention	30%
Dental Services - Treatment	14%
Youth Engagement Programs	14%

## Who determines which services are offered?

School health centers are supported by many communities because they respond to local needs. School boards have the final say over what services are provided so the community is always in control.

## Who operates school health centers?

Different organizations support school health centers, depending upon resources. The most common are: community health centers that are designated Federally Qualified Health Centers; school districts; hospitals; and county health departments. Other organizations include community-based agencies and private physician groups.

## How are school health centers financed?

- Reimbursement through the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP), Family PACT, Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, and EPSDT contracts for mental health services.
- Health plan reimbursement for out-of-network services.
- School district contributions or in-kind support of space, utilities, and custodial services.
- Sponsoring agency contributions or subsidies.
- Government and private grants.