



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL HEALTH CENTERS ASSOCIATION
Putting health care where kids are ... in school.

NEWS RELEASE

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Schools Bring Health Care to Kids: 13% Growth in School-Based Health Centers This Past Year

(Oakland, CA) – Nearly 230,000 California students in grades k-12 will have access to school-based health care when they return to classes this fall, an increase of more than 25,000 students from just one year ago. This is the largest one-year jump in access to school-based health centers (SBHCs) since the [California School Health Centers Association](http://www.schoolhealthcenters.org) (CSHC) began tracking this data in 2004.

There are now 226 school-based health centers (SBHCs) in California, up 13 percent from last August. Another 37 schools are in the process of opening new SBHCs. The clinics—which are generally located on campuses where 70 percent or more of students receive free and reduced price meals—have more than doubled in the past decade, from 108 in 2002.

SBHCs have risen in popularity because they are convenient, offering health care for kids in a setting families already know and trust. SBHCs can offer a range of services including medical, mental health, and dental care. Of the 226, 130 offer mental health services, 42 offer dental services, and 60 offer youth engagement programs that give kids unique leadership opportunities at school.

The result is that students who utilize SBHCs are less likely to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized, keeping costs down. SBHCs also improve attendance, reduce dropout rates, improve school climate, and support students' academic achievement. Schools and school districts partner with health service providers to finance SBHCs.

"Schools already grapple with students' health problems, so communities look to SBHCs as a solution to address these challenges head on and improve students' lives--as well as their overall school performance," said CSHC Executive Director Serena Clayton.

The Affordable Care Act helped boost SBHCs by setting aside federal funding for construction of new clinics nationwide. California received \$30 million in 2011 and 2012. There is currently a bill in Congress that would provide ongoing funding for SBHCs.

More opportunities are coming. California recently adopted changes to how schools are funded, which provides more support for school districts that educate low-income students. Many of these students would benefit from increased access to health care that districts will be in a better position to offer.

Those interested in setting up a school-based health center – including school districts, parents, health care providers, and community members – can contact the California School Health Centers Association to get more information on financing and partnerships at www.schoolhealthcenters.org.

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