

2020-2021 Policy Priorities

- **School-Based Health Center (SBHCs) funding –** California is one of the only states with a significant number of SBHCs and no state funding. SBHCs are an important part of the healthcare safety net, providing access to comprehensive health care to thousands of underserved children and adolescents. SBHCs are playing a valuable role in supporting students and families during school closures and they will be a critical asset for students this next school year. **State funding is necessary to support the continued expansion and sustainability of SBHCs, especially given school closures and the increased need for health services among marginalized students.**
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- **Mental health in SBHCs –** SBHCs can help address the escalating mental health needs among students as a result of the COVID pandemic and racial injustices. SBHCs are a prime location to provide a continuum of mental health services - from providing teacher training and staff wellness to supporting improved school climate to conducting screenings and assessments to providing treatment and linking to more intensive services in the community. SBHCs are particularly effective because mental health services are embedded in the multidisciplinary services the center provides including primary care, youth engagement, and academic supports. **MHSA funding and other resources should be directed to SBHCs to ensure they can provide needed mental health services.**
 - **Substance use prevention and early intervention in schools –** School-based services to address (not punish) student substance use need significant investments and attention. Adolescent substance use is often linked to trauma or underlying mental health concerns. In fact, 65% or more of youth with substance use disorders also have a mental health disorder. Due to stigma, school policies, and siloed substance use and mental health systems, California is missing an opportunity to address the intersection of these health needs among students. **Prop 64 investments should support trauma-informed, youth-empowering, substance use prevention, and early intervention practices. California should prioritize school-based services rather than punitive discipline practices.**
- 65% of youth with SUDs also have a mental health disorder**
- **State coordination –** The Department of Education (CDE), Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and Department of Public Health (CDPH) can play a vital role in encouraging increased health services in schools. **State staff devoted to school-based health programs is necessary to strengthen the institutional partnership between the departments and coordinate various health programs and services delivered through the schools.**

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Eisenberg, Policy Director, at 510-268-1033 or leisenberg@schoolhealthcenters.org.