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57th Assembly District



AB 2052: School-Based Health Clean-Up

SUMMARY

AB 2052 will strengthen the Public School Health Center Support Program by requiring collaboration between the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) the Office of School-Based Health. This bill would prioritize grant funding for School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) that serve students with difficulty accessing medical care, and schools in which the majority of students are low-income or English language learners.

BACKGROUND

The Public School-Based Health Center Support Program (Program) was established in 2009 and since then the number of SBHCs in California has grown to 377 centers spread across 37 counties. After 15 years of implementation and administration, the California School-Based Health Alliance has identified areas of improvement in the Program.

SBHCs provide accessible and integrated physical and behavioral health care services to students and their families, regardless of their ability to pay for health services. A 2023 study found that students who had access to SBHCs were significantly more likely to have regular dental visits, a regular source of medical care, and health insurance. For some students, the only healthcare they receive is through a SBHC.

Additionally, SBHCs have been proven to improve attendance, academic achievement, and aid in school climate, which allows students to focus on their goals and thrive. This is seen in a Los Angeles study from 2021 which showed that attendance improved by an average of 5 days following “any type of visit to a school based health center.” This is possible because students who have access to SBHCs experience better health outcomes and as a result miss less school days due to illness. The increased attendance associated with SBHCs also translates more school funding which is invested back into the students.

In order to ensure the Program is administered effectively and to schools with the greatest need, a few refining changes need to be made to existing law. First, this bill would improve communication and collaboration by requiring the overseeing department, the Office of School-Based Health in CDE, to coordinate with the grant administrator, CDPH. Second, this bill would make changes to the criteria for grant recipient preference in order to align the program with existing definitions in the Education Code and prioritize SBHCs that increase access to care for California’s most underserved students and communities.

THIS BILL

This bill will require CDPH to collaborate with the Office of School-Based Health within the California Department of Education to administer the Public School Health Center Support Program. This bill would also change the criteria for school-based health centers to be given preference for grant funding. Preference will be given to school-based health centers serving any of the following:

- Areas designated as medically underserved
- Areas with a shortage of health professionals
- Areas experiencing disparities in access to child and adolescent primary care, behavioral health, preventative health, or oral health services
- Schools in which 55% or more of the students serviced are unduplicated, meaning they the student is an English learner, a foster youth, or the student is eligible for free or reduced lunch.

SUPPORT

California School-Based Health Alliance (sponsor)

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