

School-Based Health Quick Guide

Tips to Improve Integration with Schools

Introduction

School-based health centers and wellness centers (SBHC/WCs) are most effective and sustainable when they are well integrated into the school community. Research shows that SBHC/WCs have a positive impact on absences, dropout rates, disciplinary problems, and other academic outcomes.

Together, schools and SBHCs/WCs can align their efforts and focus on shared outcomes such as improved student academic achievement and well-being. Below are some best practices in integration that SBHCs/WCs can utilize to help align efforts with schools.



Improving Integration with Students

- Host SBHC/WC tours with a particular grade level or classes (e.g. health, physical education) and conduct universal screenings as a way to increase visibility and utilization of the SBHC/WC.
- Conduct schoolwide health campaigns or events. This can be done in partnership with a health class or a student health advisory committee.
- Conduct presentations in classrooms encouraging students to visit the health/wellness center.
- Engage with students by partnering with them to raise awareness on a wide range of health topics. SBHCs/WCs have hired students as greeters, developed student advisory committees, and enlisted students as peer advocates.

Improving Integration with School Staff

- Develop mutually supportive policies and procedures that advance student health and learning. For example, school and health providers co-develop an appointment scheduling policy that guides pull-out during the school day to reduce disruption on the academic schedule.
- Establish collaborative systems and structures to plan programs and direct resources to students and their families. For example:
 - Participate in Coordination of Services Team (COST) and encourage the use of a universal referral
 - Establish a Student Wellness Council that includes key partner organizations and stakeholder groups (students, parents, and school staff)
- Establish a referral pathway for students with health concerns and train all school personnel on the pathway.

School-Based Health Quick Guide

Tips to Improve Integration with Schools

Improving Integration with School Staff *(continued)*

- Partner with the school nurse to improve communication and coordination.
- Train school staff in health topics such as adolescent development, Youth Mental Health First Aid, sleep, sexual Health, trauma informed practices, depression and anxiety awareness and skills, and crisis intervention and response.
- Attend school staff meetings and professional development, as well as Back-to-School nights and other family-centered events. For example, one SBHC conducted asthma screening at Back-to-School night in order to capitalize off high foot traffic and opportunities to engage with parents while identifying chronic conditions among the student population.
- Hold a SBHC/WC open house for school staff and faculty to tour the health/wellness center and learn about services and referrals; this can be scheduled during a professional development day.
- Support school staff wellness through mindfulness practices, yoga, or other movement opportunities, healthy food options in meetings, and resources to support staff health and resilience.

Improving Integration with School Administration

- Meet with the school principal at least twice a year – once at the beginning of the school year to establish priorities and again at the end of the school year to evaluate partnership, programs, and services.
- Assign a SBHC/WC “point person” for communication with school administrators; usually, the “point person” will be the coordinator/director.

Improving Integration with Parents

- Include SBHC/WC outreach in school registration events and include parent consent forms for health/wellness center services in school registration packets to ensure high access and participation rates.
- Engage with parents by including parent representatives in SBHC/WC coordination meetings or holding workshops on parent-chosen topics.

APPENDIX
H1 Sample Parent Consent (English)

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

To give your child permission to receive medical/dental/behavioral health care at [COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER NAME], please complete this consent form and return it to school or health center staff as soon as possible. Information on privacy practices, policies, and procedures are available at the end of this form, and at the school office and/or clinic.

As the Parent and/or Legal Guardian, I hereby give my student consent to receive services offered by [COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER NAME] at my child's designated school under the following terms and conditions:

Sample Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form
From Vision to Reality: How to Build a School Health Center from the Ground Up

School-Based Health Quick Guide

Tips to Improve Integration with Schools

Tools to Measure Integration

1. **Integration Self-Assessment Rubric**: This tool can help school partners and SBHC & WC staff determine what stage of integration your services, programs, and providers are currently in. We recommend that each staff member completes this self-assessment privately first, and then the school health/wellness team convenes to share and discuss each individual's perspective on strengths and gaps in your program's integration into the school. It is ideal to use this tool on an annual or biannual basis, especially when new partnerships are developed or when there is new school leadership.
2. **Integration Principles Worksheet & Examples**: These tools are related to the integration rubric mentioned above. The examples outline how some school health/wellness programs are working to implement each principle across related structures, processes, and anticipated outcomes.
3. **School Integration Measurement Tool**: This tool is organized by five domains: health authority; integrated programming; marketing and recruitment; shared outcomes; and staff collaboration. It can ideally be used in learning collaborative settings at the beginning of an academic year; each school and health/wellness partner can complete the tool individually and then aggregate scores to create a baseline score to determine areas of improvement.

