

School-Based Health Centers



School-Based Health Centers Help Keep Kids Healthy

School-based health centers (SBHCs) ensure young people have access to safe, comprehensive, youth-friendly care. SBHCs are usually in or next to a school property, making them convenient for youth and their families.

SBHCs are partnerships between communities, schools, and community health providers. The Washington State Department of Health promotes and supports SBHCs and is currently working to expand them.

With youth-focused health education and services available at school, more students are likely to stay healthy, feel supported, be in class ready to learn, and graduate.

About SBHCs in Washington

There are over 70 SBHCs in Washington. SBHCs provide access to comprehensive primary care, including:

- Annual doctor visits
- Sports physicals
- Immunizations
- Medications
- Illness and injury
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Behavioral health
- Resource connections.

SBHCs are open to all students in the school. Some SBHCs also serve families, staff, and people in the community. Students must be enrolled by their families to receive the full range of services provided by the SBHC. Students not enrolled in the SBHC by their families may access confidential reproductive or behavioral health services, if available in the SBHC, in accordance with Washington State's minor consent laws.

Clinical services are provided by a qualified health provider such as a nurse practitioner or a licensed clinical social worker. Dental and other health providers may provide care at the SBHC.

Benefits of SBHCs

- SBHCs provide direct access to high-quality healthcare students regardless of insurance coverage.
- Students do not miss as much class time when they access SBHC services, and parents do not have to miss work to take their child to the doctor.
- Transportation challenges related to health care are reduced.
- Students learn how to initiate, access, and use health care, which are important components of health literacy.
- SBHCs advance health equity by improving access to youth-friendly services for young people from all types of backgrounds, and are in locations that are convenient to young people.
- Behavioral risk factors, like substance use that may affect judgment, can be identified by a qualified provider, and referrals are made to community providers for services not provided at the SBHC.

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SBHC Grant Program

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed [Substitute House Bill 1225](#) to create a grant program for SBHCs at DOH. The program funds planning, start-up, and operations grants to expand and sustain SBHCs across the state.

DOH also collaborates with internal and external partners to promote policy change, build relationships with communities that want and need SBHCs in their district, and promote the sustainability of SBHCs in the state. We continue to build relationships to promote systems changes to make it easier for communities to open their own SBHCs.

To learn more...

- About the DOH SBHC program, go to waportal.org/partners/adolescent-health/school-based-health-center-program
- About SBHCs in Washington, visit the Washington School-Based Health Alliance webpage at wasbha.org
- About SBHCs nationally, check the National School-Based Health Alliance webpage at sbh4all.org



Adolescent and Young Adult Health

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