



School-Based Health Center

F.A.Q.



Community Care of West Virginia, Inc. (CCWV) is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), with sites throughout central West Virginia. We have been working with your county's Board of Education, Superintendent, Principals and PTOs in preparation of opening a new school-based health center (SBHC) in your child's school. We realize that the SBHCs are new to you and that you may have questions about how these health centers work, so we have developed this Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.) sheet to help you better understand SBHCs. CCWV is excited to be partnering with your child's school and our goals are to improve the health of the students, provide enhanced access to healthcare-related services that are not currently available and supplement the services currently provided by the school nurses and counselors.

What is a School-Based Health Center?

A school-based health center (SBHC) is a doctor's office inside the school. SBHCs provide comprehensive preventive and primary health care services and education to the students and faculty on a school campus. While school-based health centers vary to meet the community's needs, there are general characteristics of all school-based health centers. The following are descriptions of those characteristics:

- School-based health centers are designed to serve students and faculty.
- A school-based health center is staffed by a multidisciplinary team which could consist of a nurse practitioner, physician assistant or a physician, a licensed clinical social worker, a nurse and/or a clerical staff person.
- The school-based health center works cooperatively with school nurses, coaches, counselors, classroom teachers, and school principals and their staff to assure that the school-based health center is an integral part of the life of the school. We do not take over or replace your school nurse; instead we assist them in caring for the healthcare needs of your child in the school setting.
- Written consents signed by parents are required for children before services can be provided in the school-based health center.
- The school-based health center provides a comprehensive range of services that specifically meets the health problems of students and faculty, as well as provides general medical care.

What are the benefits of a school-based health center?

- Attends to unmet health care needs by placing health care where the students and faculty are when they need it, allowing health problems to be identified and addressed early and managed more carefully
- Reduces student's missed class time and parent's missed work time for health-related appointments and reduces time and costs for transportation to health-related appointments

- Supports students by providing a safe place to talk about sensitive issues such as depression, family problems, relationships, and substance abuse
- Supports the school environment by helping children and faculty stay in school and by identifying and addressing health problems that may intervene in the learning and teaching process
- Saves money by keeping children and faculty out of hospitals and emergency rooms
- Teaches students and faculty to be better health care consumers
- Strengthens the connection between the community and the school
- Will work with your child's Primary Care Provider (PCP) to provide care in the school setting.

What types of services does a school-based health center provide?

Physical Health Services: Some of these services include care for acute illness and injury, care for chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and obesity, preventive well-child care, sports physicals, immunizations, referral and follow-up to specialists, acne treatment and follow-up, prescriptions, lice treatment, and nutrition and exercise counseling.

Health Screening, Counseling and Education: These services may include vision and hearing testing, baseline screening, assessment and referral for crisis intervention, and individual, group and family counseling, and medication and case management for the treatment of depression, anxiety and other illnesses, substance abuse, violence prevention counseling, family problems, tobacco/drug/alcohol cessation and prevention, and suicide and bullying prevention.

Health Promotion Activities: School-based health centers are prevention-oriented. Providing preventative health services for students and faculty on early identification, education and intervention for potential injury and disease is an important function of a school-based health center. Health promotion activities can include teaching health consumer skills, encouraging avoidance of health risks through promotion and awareness programs, and providing venues for community partners in teaching healthy lifestyles.

How does the School-Based Health Center operate?

Hours and Coverage: Each SBHC has a set schedule for hours of operation (typically 2-3 half days per week) during the school day. Students may be seen on a walk-in basis for acute care needs and SBHC staff works with parents and teachers to schedule appointments for well-child, chronic care, counseling and immunization visits during the school day. If a student does not have a "medical home" (a place where they REGULARLY receive healthcare), the SBHC can serve as their medical home.

Staffing: Staff at the SBHC is highly qualified and experienced in providing health care to young people. The physician, pediatrician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant is qualified to diagnose and treat illnesses and prescribe medications. In addition to the medical provider, the SBHC team includes a nurse and sometimes a clerical staff. The SBHC staff work with, but do not replace your family doctor or school nurse.

Billing & Costs: No student will be denied emergency access to health care services due to the inability to pay. As in any health center, the child's health insurance will be billed and it is possible that parents/guardians may have some co-pay and/or deductible. However, most insurances provide full coverage for well-child exams and immunizations. Students who are eligible for the free/reduced lunch program will likely qualify for CHIPS or Medicaid insurance. Families with private insurance may also qualify for some programs to assist with the cost of care. Information about various programs and how to apply is available from the SBHC staff. The SBHC depends upon the ability to collect payment from your insurance carrier in order to maintain the services at the school site. If you have a co-pay or deductible, you will be billed after your child's healthcare visit; your child will not have to pay for the service at the time of the visit. It is extremely important to provide accurate and up-to-date insurance information to the SBHC in order to avoid any unnecessary charges being billed to you. If your insurance changes during the school year, you will need to provide the SBHC with that new information.

Parental Notification and Student Health Confidentiality: When your child has a SBHC visit, details of the visit are communicated with the parent/guardian after the student's health care visit is complete (except when prohibited by law). Typically, this communication is by a "SBHC Visit Summary" (a form completed by the provider/nurse with details of the visit). Depending upon the complexity of the student's health visit, sometimes the provider or nurse will call the parent/guardian to discuss the visit and provide additional treatment instructions.

Confidentiality between the student, parents and the SBHC is assured. Since one purpose of the SBHC is to reduce high-risk behaviors of some youth, it is important for the students to feel they can have a confidential relationship with their health care provider. Staff from the SBHC seeks to communicate with parents without compromising the confidential patient-provider relationship that students desire and expect. While protecting the student's privacy, the staff strongly encourages family communication regarding their health care decisions. However, as is with your child's family doctor and school nurse, by law, some information requires the student's signed consent prior to disclosure to anyone, including parents/guardians.

How can I enroll my child in the SBHC and when will it be open?

At the beginning of the school year, Parental Consent forms will be sent home with your child. The consent form provides information about the student, such as health conditions, medications, allergies, contact information, insurance information and the student's medical home. Parents should complete the consent form at that time and return it to the school. Your child then has access to receive services at the SBHC. We are planning to open the SBHC in your child's school at/near the beginning of the 2012-2013, school year (August/September, 2012).

Where can I get more information?

- **Community Care of West Virginia, Inc.** www.communitycarewv.org
- **National Assembly on School-Based Health Care** www.nasbhc.org
- **West Virginia School-Based Health Assembly** www.wvsbha.org
- **Center for Health and Healthcare in Schools** www.healthinschools.org