

School-Based Health Centers: On the Front Line for Mental Health

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are the **ideal location** for primary care and mental health staff to **collaboratively address students' physical and mental health needs** – leading to greater success in school and in life.

- **Seventy-five percent** of SBHCs have a mental health provider.¹
- In studies of SBHC service utilization, **mental health counseling** is repeatedly identified as **the leading reason for visits by students**.²
- One 1998 study found that adolescents who had access to SBHCs were **ten times more likely** to make a mental health or substance abuse visit than those without access to an SBHC.³
- In one study, inner-city students were **21 times more likely** to make mental-health related visits to SBHCs than to community health centers.⁴
- A national survey of SBHCs found the following **mental health and counseling services** are provided at SBHCs where mental health professionals are included as center staff: crisis intervention, mental health assessment, grief and loss therapy, substance use therapy, mediation, and others.¹
- School-based health centers offer **high quality mental health care** by using an integrated strategy for addressing health and mental health issues. Several studies have shown that the **barriers experienced in traditional mental health settings** (2) – stigma, non-compliance, inadequate access – **are overcome in school-based settings**.^{2,5}
- One study found that students served by SBHCs had **fewer discipline problems, course failures, and school absences**.⁶

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