

SBHC Outreach & Student Enrollment

To engage students in school-based health center (SBHC) services, there are a number of strategies SBHCs use to advertise their services and encourage enrollment in the SBHC. Some strategies used by SBHC sponsors in Washington are included here.

Disseminating SBHC registration packets

Back-to-school packets. Collaborate with school administration to include SBHC registration forms in the back-to-school packets the school provides to all enrolled students and their families at the start of the school year. This one strategy can result in the majority of SBHC registrations during the school year.

School and SBHC sponsor websites. Make SBHC registration forms accessible through an online link that can be posted on the school and SBHC sponsor websites, for printing a hardcopy that can be completed and returned in person or for completing and signing electronically via a platform such as [DocuSign](#).

Email introduction. Ask the school principal to send an email introduction about the SBHC to the school community, including families and school staff. This is especially helpful if the SBHC is a new collaboration and SBHC services are just getting started. The email could include links to the SBHC sponsor website / registration forms and where to access the SBHC registration forms in different languages.

Hardcopies. During the school year, SBHC registration packets should be available via hardcopy in the SBHC to send home with students interested in receiving services (if their parents/guardians haven't already registered them) and in the front office of the school with other resources for families.

Visibility, outreach & relationship-building

Ensure that the SBHC care team is visible, especially at the beginning of the school year and especially if they are new members in the school community. Introducing SBHC staff to students, families and school staff, and intentionally building relationships and trust within the school community, will be key for SBHC enrollment, referrals, and student utilization of services. Outreach strategies might include:

- **Beginning of year introductions.** At the beginning of the school year, introduce SBHC staff and services to:
 - Incoming students and families during orientations, school tours, or open houses
 - Incoming students through their advisory or health classes
 - School staff at a staff meeting
 - Families at a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) meeting. *Recognize that PTSA meetings may be attended by a subset of parents/guardians that are already highly*

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engaged in the school community, so be sure to also consider your strategies for reaching those parents/guardians who are not.

- **Targeted outreach within the school.** Build relationships with key school staff and student groups to raise awareness of SBHC services and increase student referrals, particularly among student populations who may be in greater need of access to care. Establish communication with, for example:
 - School nurse, school counselor and school psychologist to reach all students, and particularly those with special education needs or disabilities
 - School social worker, family support worker and McKinney-Vento liaison to reach low-income students and students experiencing homelessness
 - ELL (English language learner) teachers and instructional assistants to reach English learners
 - Special education teachers and instructional assistants to reach special education students
 - Athletic director and coaches to reach students who may need sports physicals
 - GSAs (Gender and Sexuality Alliances / Gay Straight Alliances) to reach LGBTQ+ students
 - Culturally-specific student groups or student unions to reach students of color
- **School events.** Have SBHC staff present at school events throughout the school year.
 - Some SBHCs keep a “tabling” box ready with supplies for school events, e.g. a table cloth, banner with SBHC sponsor logo, brochures, registration packets, pens, stickers and other giveaways.
 - If the event is for new incoming students starting their first year at an elementary, middle, or high school, consider offering welcome packages to these students.

A high school welcome package might include information about SBHC services, a healthy snack, pen, Chapstick, stress ball, hand sanitizer, health education materials, and other teen resources such as crisis line information and a list of teen-friendly community health providers.
 - Ensure SBHC materials are available in key languages, and an interpreter is available particularly if the event is for a language- or culturally-specific population in the school.
- **Student health council.** Engaging and listening to the students at a school is one of the key responsibilities of a SBHC. Initiate a student health council that welcomes student advisors to inform the SBHC care team about important health information needed in the school community and any trending risky behaviors is beneficial in keeping SBHC services up-to-date

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and responsive to students' health care needs. Engage the student health council in planning and doing outreach, health education, and classroom presentations. Developing informative bulletin boards inside and outside of the SBHC featuring different health topics monthly is also a great way to engage students in health education. The student health council provides a student voice to the SBHC.

- **Community advisory committee.** Establishing a community advisory group that includes parents/guardians could be beneficial, especially at the elementary school level, where parents will be better advocates for their children's health care needs. This also provides an opportunity to keep parents/guardians informed about SBHC operations and collect their feedback throughout the school year.
- **Teaching assistants.** Student teaching assistants (TAs) can also be a great resource for the SBHC. Most middle and high schools have TA opportunities and a busy high school SBHC that is serving 20-30 students per day will need some assistance in running hall passes to classes so that students know when to report to the SBHC for their appointment. Appropriate TA training is necessary during SBHC orientation including a thorough overview of patient confidentiality. The TAs can also be great advocates for the SBHC and help spread the word about the services offered at the SBHC.
- **SBHC events for school staff.** Host school staff appreciation events in the SBHC, for example a SBHC open house for school staff with coffee and food after school hours.
- **Community provider outreach.** Reach out to community health care providers to inform and remind them throughout the year that the SBHC is available and students can access care at school.

The SBHC clinic coordinator can be key to outreach, as the face of the clinic and the go-to resource for questions, referrals, and coordination between the school and SBHC. In general, SBHC staff getting out of the SBHC and circulating in the school hallways and lunchroom as much as possible is helpful for getting to know students and becoming a familiar face to students and school staff.

How does outreach differ at different grade levels?

At the elementary level, outreach efforts will be mostly focused on parents/guardians as they must consent for their children to be seen in the SBHC and are more directly involved in their children's care. Specific themes for outreach might include, for example, that students can receive their immunizations at the SBHC.

Outreach at the middle school level will focus on both parents/guardians and students, as students at the middle school level start to become their own health advocates and may be eligible to self-consent for needed confidential services. Specific themes for outreach might include, for example, that students can receive their sports physicals at the SBHC.

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At the high school level, outreach may focus primarily on the students themselves, as parents/guardians tend to be less involved, students are farther along in their self-advocacy, and they may have more need for confidential services for which they can self-consent.

Outreach appointments

Once the SBHC collects students' registration forms, the SBHC may start the school year with outreach appointments to engage students in care. These appointments might be initiated by the SBHC clinic coordinator for all students whose parents/guardians consented for them to receive services in the SBHC. The outreach visits are an opportunity for the students to come in and meet the SBHC care team and learn more about the services available at the SBHC.

Student word-of-mouth is key

In the end it is the students who will be the best outreach resource. If the students have a positive experience at the SBHC and feel welcomed, taken seriously, and not judged, then they will tell their friends and classmates about their experience and more students will self-refer for appointments.

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Outreach During COVID-19

In a Community of Practice call hosted by WA SBHA in September 2020, SBHC sponsors statewide shared strategies they were using for outreach and student enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning. Some additional strategies worth mentioning from this call:

- SBHC staff connecting with families / providing SBHC enrollment information through:
 - School packets mailed out to families
 - School laptop distribution & drive-through orientations
 - Food distribution sites at school
 - Food bag drop-offs / pickups for families
 - [PeachJar](#) or similar school communication system
 - Recorded videos introducing SBHC and SBHC staff
 - SBHC social media accounts: Instagram, Facebook, Tic Toc
 - A-frame signs outside of school building indicating SBHC is open
 - Phone outreach to established patients
- Outreach re vaccinations:
 - Checking SBHC client list with school nurse re students' vaccination needs
 - Letter to families through school nurse, explaining students can get their vaccines at the SBHC
 - Pop-up / drive-by immunization clinics
 - Home visits for vaccination
- Outreach to school staff:
 - All staff to let them know how they can refer students to SBHC, and that SBHC staff can present to classrooms online
 - Athletic directors re sports physicals
 - School counselors re students' behavioral health needs
 - Family liaisons / social workers
- Outreach to cultural / language / other students groups through, for example:
 - Student cultural identity groups
 - Bilingual patient navigators
 - SBHC virtual lunch group with students
- Enhanced coordination with community-based organizations / partners to ensure streamlined and nonduplicative services