BARRIERS to School-Based Health Center (SBHC)-school collaboration

Creating and maintaining positive relations between your SBHC and school can be challenging. There can be frequent staff and administration turnover, varied understanding of the services provided by the SBHC, and concern about students missing class for appointments. Additionally, the importance of maintaining confidentiality can be hard to express to professionals outside of the health field.

STRATEGIES to improve SBHC relationships

Participate in school events and initiatives.

- Immerse yourself in the school.
  - Observe and learn about your school's climate and culture. Every school is different.
  - Be present during passing times so SBHC staff can get to know students and teachers. Also, since passing time is a common time for incidents to happen, SBHC staff can serve as informal hall monitors – a presence that will be appreciated by teachers and administration.
  - Offer school-wide programs or initiatives to promote students' personal development, peer support, respect, safety, and academic engagement. This YAC toolkit[1] has project samples to work from.
- Attend school events such as parent/teacher nights, fundraisers, open houses, school board meetings, athletic events, and other extracurricular events.
  - Set up a table and provide information, answer questions, and assist in filling out enrollment forms with family members. Translate forms into languages spoken by parents or have an interpreter available.
  - Establish relationships with the Athletic Director and coaches to encourage them to recommend the SBHC for sports physicals (which should be well child exams) or injuries during practice or games.
  - If it is within your budget, offer to sponsor a school event.
- Promote school events through the SBHC's bulletin board, website, social media, etc.
- Coordinate SBHC enrollment with school and sports enrollment to increase students with consent to be seen in the health center.
  - Add SBHC consent forms to the school registration forms to increase the chances of receiving completed consent forms.
  - The front desk office is often the most centrally used location for all students at the school and their parents. Place extra consent forms in the front office and educate front desk staff on how to help parents complete the form.
  - Establish relationships with the Athletic Director and coaches to ensure that they are recommending the SBHC for sports physicals (which should be used as an opportunity to do well-child exams) over any other options.
- Get involved in attendance initiatives.
  - Absenteeism and health are often correlated.[2] To build better relationships with the school, collaborate with staff, teachers, and/or administrators to identify students who are chronically absent. Once students are identified, conduct physical health and psychosocial assessments to better understand the barriers they experience in attending school that your SBHC could help to address.

Provide active teacher and staff support

- Provide an annual teacher and staff orientation to your SBHC.
  - Give staff and administration a tour through the health center and inform them of the services offered.
  - Point out how the SBHC benefits teachers. Talk about the influence your SBHC can have on minimizing instructional disruptions and absenteeism and improving academic achievement.
  - Ask staff members about their preferred methods of communication, whether email, phone calls, or face to face. Keep track of their preferences and use the method that is most convenient for them.
  - Offer to teach a lesson on a health-related topic if that would be helpful for a teacher.
- Offer professional development opportunities to teachers and staff on health topics that might benefit them.
  - Educating teachers on how to identify and react to trauma-related behaviors can be extremely helpful in both getting the students the help they need as well as mitigating classroom disruptions. Here[3] are resources on implementing trauma-informed care.
  - Provide teachers with one-pagers or other resources to refer back to at a later time.
- Have a presence at school meetings and events.
  - Attending regularly scheduled staff, department, or committee meetings can show how much you care about the students and are invested in the school as a whole.
- Build personal relationships with teachers and staff and show appreciation for their hard work.
  - Opportunities may include participating in teacher appreciation day, inviting staff to participate in the SBHC advisory board, conducting cooking demonstrations at lunch, offering a free blood pressure/other health screening day, or starting a walking club.
  - Give teachers small gifts like hand sanitizer, tissues, or mini first-aid kits to show your appreciation for them. Don't forget to include handouts about the health center!
  - Remember that it can be frustrating for teachers to see students frequently called from class to go to the SBHC. Be mindful of this and try to alternate which classes you pull students from.
  - Be respectful of the entire school community. For instance, a positive relationship with custodial staff can keep you informed about power outages, which may impact the safety of your vaccines.
- Ask for feedback.
  - Create opportunities for teachers and staff to provide feedback to your SBHC by filling out end of year surveys (see sample survey on page 4). This can also be a way to generate ideas for future teacher presentations or professional development opportunities.

Establish and maintain close relationships with school administrators

- Set up meetings with school administrators.
  - Meetings should occur at the beginning of every school year and on a regular basis throughout the year, such as once every quarter. It is also important to schedule additional meetings as needed rather than waiting for an already scheduled meeting to discuss time-sensitive issues.
  - Meetings at the beginning of the school year provide an opportunity to review services offered at the SBHC and to keep school administrators up to date on new services, staff, and upcoming events.
  - Create systems for regular as well as urgent communications with school administrators. Ask your administrators what their preferred method of communication is and use that method consistently.
  - Many schools experience frequent changes in school administration, staff, and even culture. Use meetings to ensure that administration and staff are up to date with and supportive of health center offerings and practices, such as procedures for calling students down to the health center confidentially.

- Learn about the school's goals and priorities for the year. Take the opportunity to identify ways in which the SBHC can support the school and the academic achievement[4] of students.
- Discuss potential collaborative funding opportunities that may be available for the school and SBHC. In Michigan, one potential funding source is the Child and Adolescent Health Center[5] program. SBHCs can also be written into funding applications led and submitted by the school or district, particularly in grants requiring multiple partners or collaborating organizations that provide healthcare, behavioral health, or public health services.
- Share outcomes data with school administrators to highlight successes and review needs and concerns, both for the SBHC and administration, to identify opportunities to collaborate and priorities for improvement efforts.
- Review HIPAA, FERPA, and state confidentiality laws with school administrators, who can remind school staff.
  - Have a short training and/or handout for school administration and staff to share this information broadly and accurately. Refer to this 30-minute webinar[6] for the National Association of School Nurses and see additional resources at the bottom of this page.
  - Make sure that your SBHC staff are up to date on HIPAA, FERPA, and confidentiality laws in your state.

Have Youth Ambassadors to foster connections.

- Establish or maintain a Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Refer to this manual[7] on Creating and Sustaining a Thriving YAC for recommendations and resources.
- Create opportunities for your YAC to present health education in classrooms, assemblies, & lunch events.
- Present the YAC's perspective – or, better yet, invite them to present – at administration or staff meetings.
- Foster YAC members' creativity by encouraging them to create a PSA campaign (e.g. posters, screen savers on library computers, announcements) relevant to the health needs of the school. Here[8] is one example created by the Adolescent Health Initiative's Youth Advisory Council.

Additional RECOMMENDATIONS

- Visit the School-Based Health Alliance's website[9] for additional resources to support your SBHC.
- Find guidance on the application of FERPA and HIPPA to student health records here.[10] This[11] is also a helpful overview.
- FAQ[12] on HIPAA and School Health.
- Comparison of FERPA and HIPAA Privacy Rule for Accessing Student Health Data Fact Sheet.[13]
- Visit the American Public Health Association's Center for School, Health and Education's website[14] for additional resources, publications, and information.

SAMPLE END-OF-YEAR SURVEY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My students are absent from class due to health issues.				
My class is disrupted by student health issues.				
My students' health issues limit their academic achievement.				
The SBHC has a visible presence in this school.				
I know what services the SBHC offers.				
I know who SBHC staff are and how to contact them.				
SBHC staff care about this school and its students.				
I feel supported by SBHC staff.				
SBHC staff usually communicate in the way that is most convenient for me.				
I understand the impact the SBHC has at this school.				
I find it disruptive when students are pulled from my class to go to the SBHC.				
I understand student privacy laws related to accessing health services at the SBHC.				
The SBHC benefits students.				
The SBHC benefits teachers.				

What are the biggest health challenges faced by students in this school? Think broadly to include physical health complaints, chronic conditions, mental health issues, behavior problems, and home and community environments.

What health services are needed in this school that are not already provided by the SBHC?

What procedures for calling students down to the SBHC confidentially have you seen work well? Why do you think that was?

What challenges have you seen students face in terms of being called down to the health center confidentially?

Would you like more professional development opportunities on health topics from SBHC staff? If yes, what topics would benefit you most?

Would you be interested in SBHC staff teaching a health-related lesson in your class? If yes, please list any topics you would find helpful for your students.

Please share any additional comments or questions.

1 http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_4911_4912-342474--,00.html

2 http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X%2809%2900264-X/abstract

3 http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/TI_Toolkit_Resources_484512_7.pdf

4 http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379716000350

5 http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_4911_4912-342503--,00.html

6 https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/communities/community-home/librarydocuments/viewdocument?DocumentKey=a7f0b602-409b-4638-9e3a-67c53a7941b1

7 http://www.umhs-adolescenthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/manual-for-website.pdf

8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4C3mLDOjnU

9 http://www.sbh4all.org/

10 http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/doc/ferpa-hipaa-guidance.pdf

11 http://ww2.nasbhc.org/RoadMap/PracticeCompliance/HIPAA%20and%20FERPA%20and%20SBHC%20NASBHC%20part%202.pdf

12 http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/laws-regs/privacy-security/school-health/hipaa-and-school-health-frequently-asked-questions.html

13 http://www.astho.org/uploadedFiles/Programs/Preparedness/Public_Health_Emergency_Law/Public_Health_and_Schools_Toolkit/04-PHS%20Comparing%20F%20and%20H%20FS%20Final%203-12.pdf

14 http://www.schoolbasedhealthcare.org/