

Minnesota School-Based Health Center Grant Program

Background and History

Minnesota's first School-Based Health Center (SBHC) opened in 1973 at the Mechanic Arts School within St. Paul Public Schools. Operated by the Maternal and Infant Care Project, this integrated team of medical providers, nutritionists, social workers, and health educators paved the way for what would become the model for school-based health centers nationally. This integrated model of care continues to be the foundation for SBHCs over 50 years later.

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has convened SBHC leaders since 2015. Meeting as an informal group of clinic managers and supporters, this group moved from an informal networking group to become a state affiliate with the National School-Based Health Alliance. The Minnesota School-Based Health Alliance is a standalone non-profit with a working board and a strong technical assistance and training presence throughout Minnesota. MDH staff also serve as the MN State Resource Office in partnership with the National School-Based Health Alliance.

What is a School-Based Health Center?

SBHCs complement existing school health services by facilitating access to primary care, behavioral health, vision, dental, and other services through school-community partnerships for children and youth who experience barriers to accessing care due to systemic inequities, family income, or where they live. SBHCs operate through partnerships between health care organizations, school communities, community-based organizations, families, and youth. Services at

a SBHC are accessible to all students and youth within a school or district regardless of ability to pay, insurance coverage, or immigration status.

SBHCs are youth-friendly, culturally competent, affordable, accessible, convenient, and confidential.

Impact on Education

Health and education are closely connected as students who have poor health have a harder time learning. Research confirms that health disparities affect educational achievement* and improving student health is essential for optimal learning.

There is strong evidence that communities that have schools with SBHCs have increased attendance; improved student behavior; increased mental and dental health treatment; higher graduation rates; and improved school learning environments as reported by students, teachers, and parents.**

* Basch CE. Healthier Students Are Better Learners: A Missing Link in School Reforms to Close the Achievement Gap. 2010.

** National School-Based Health Alliance

School-Based Health Centers in Minnesota Today

In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature passed a state definition of SBHCs and the first-ever dedicated state funding for SBHCs and infrastructure. In 2024, Minnesota started with 30 established SBHCs and 17 new and emerging clinics throughout the state. With the new legislative funding, MDH was able to award six grants to new and emerging clinics

and will continue to fund and support SBHCs in the future.

Minnesota recommends increasing the number and comprehensiveness of SBHCs and supporting school nurses as key components to leverage schools with the goal of improving the responsiveness of health care for young people.

2024-2025 Minnesota SBHC New and Emerging Grantees

Health Finders – Faribault
Winona Health – Winona
Deer River ISD 317 – Deer River
Brooklyn Center ISD 286 – Brooklyn Center
Family HealthCare – Moorhead
Osseo ISD 279 – Brooklyn Park
MN School-Based Health Alliance

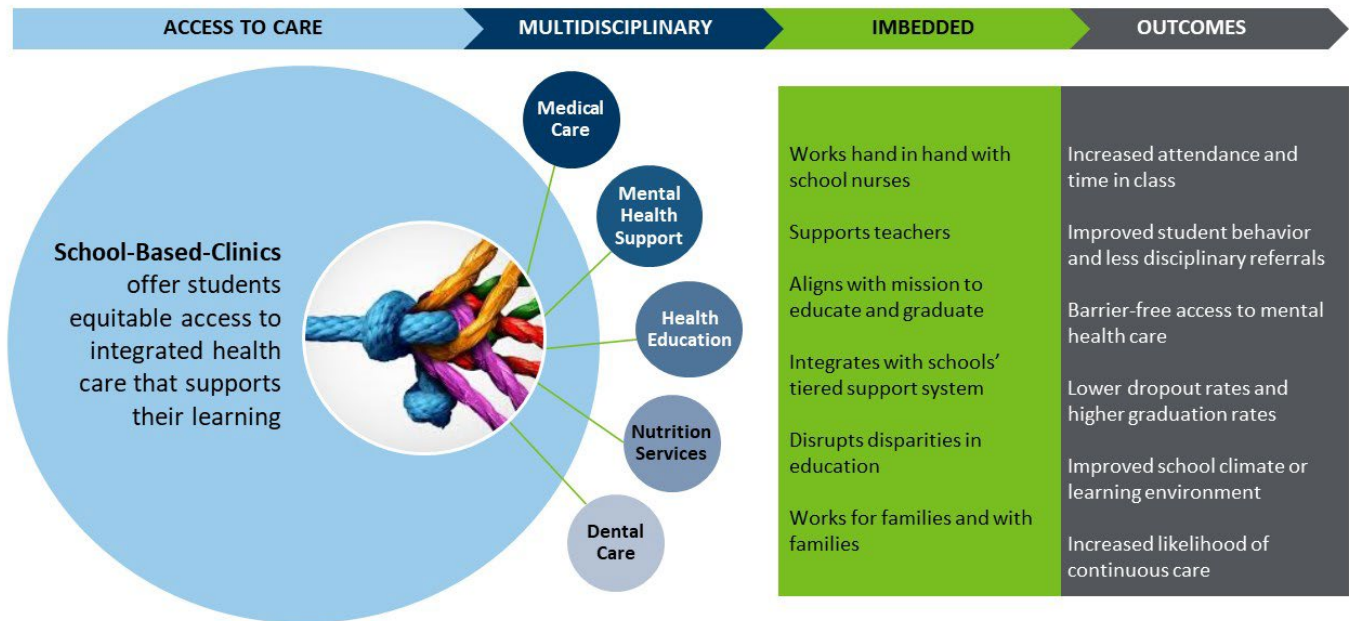
Equity, Inclusion and Access

Integrating and coordinating health and education through the SBHC model efficiently and cost-effectively addresses health inequities like access to mental health support, vaccines, vision care, and other essential medical care for children and youth in Minnesota.

All SBHCs in Minnesota offer equitable services for every student and turn no one away for their ability to pay. Providing immediate and easy access to care as needed for students reduces the inappropriate use of emergency rooms and decreasing Medicaid costs. *

* MN School-Based Health Alliance

SBHC Logic Model for Student Equity



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