

Building School Based Health Centers in New Mexico

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The School-based Health Center (SBHC) movement in New Mexico evolved within a larger context of coordinated school health. The first actual SBHC opened in 1981 at Española High School, followed two years later by the ACL Teen Center and the UNM SBHC program at East San Jose Elementary School. The concept of school health grew in the later 1980s and early 1990s, and in 1995 the first “School Health” bill was passed by the NM Legislature. This bill established the state funding for expanded infrastructure for school health, established the position of “School Health Officer” within the Department of Health (DOH), and also funded five School Health Advocates, one in each public health district of NM. Community support for SBHCs really grew as a result of the work of these School Health Advocates. The mid-90s was also a time of expanded funding for SBHCs through DOH and Medicaid funding, so that by the year 2000 there were approximately 40 functioning SBHCs in NM.

In 2005, Governor Richardson made SBHCs a priority of his administration. He vowed to double the number of SBHCs in NM, deciding to make sure there was a SBHC in every county in the state. DOH, PED, CYFD, HSD and the Governor’s office came together to plan and develop this expansion, and the Legislature funded this project with a \$2 million appropriation. Nationally, the eyes of school health advocates were on NM to see how this would be accomplished, and by 2007 NM had 65 SBHCs funded by DOH. Because of various issues such as funding, provider availability, school board changes, etc, the total number of DOH-funded SBHCs now stands at 59. Creating these new components of the health system for children has not been a simple task, and impressive progress has been made.

Envision NM is a program that provides training, development and evaluation services to improve the quality of health services for children and youth throughout the state. As part of the Department of Pediatrics at UNM, Envision maintains an expert staff, utilizes up to date information technology, and draws upon the resources of the UNM Health Sciences Center to train and support health care providers in employing ‘best practices’ to ensure effective and efficient health services.

In the Fall of 2008, Envision New Mexico surveyed SBHCs about their operations and capacities as part of its work for the OSAH at NMDOH. While all 59 sites received financial support from OSAH, 7 sites are also affiliated with Indian Health Service facilities, 10 with universities, and 17 with federally qualified health centers. These SBHCs are located throughout New Mexico in 47 communities and 29 counties. Interviews were completed with 56 of the 59 sites (see Table 1). This review of state funded SBHCs provides a snapshot of how these programs are progressing.

Staffing and Operations

Staffing among the SBHCs varies considerably. Each SBHC has a designated Coordinator in addition to varying medical, behavioral health, and other support staff. The on-site hours, number, and types of providers was inventoried for each Center.

The average number of on-site hours for the Coordinator was approximately 19 hours, with total administrative time averaging almost 35 hours. Half of the sites had 16 or more hours of Coordinator time on-site each week; while one in four sites reported more than 30 hours.

The count of Medical providers included physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners. Hours for these providers were combined into an overall Medical staffing measure. Total medical hours for all 55 sites reporting ranged from 4 hours to 80. The average was 16.5 hours, with one in four having 8 hours or less, and the top 25% having 24 or more hours of Medical service.

Behavioral health providers reflect a variety of disciplines, including social workers, counselors, PhDs and MDs. Sites averaged 20 hours of combined behavioral health services per week, with only 3 sites reporting less than 8 hours. Seven sites had 40 hours or more.

In addition to the core staff for these SBHCs, 10 sites reported that services were also provided by staff employed by the school. Twenty-eight sites reported other kinds of service providers; the list includes a wide variety of roles including dental and vision screening, health educators, nutritionists, and counselors for substance abuse and smoking cessation. On average these other providers together contributed 20 hours per week to services available in the sites.

SBHCs are open from 9 to 12 months per year with most open for 10 months or more (93%) and one in five open 12 months. Sites maintain various weekly schedules ranging from 1 to 5 days, with the average being 3.3 days. Forty-five percent are open 4 or more days.

Standards of Practice

One potential indicator of the capacity of sites is the degree to which they have been able to achieve specific standards of practice defined by OSAH. As part of this assessment, sites were surveyed regarding 27 standards of practice in the operation of a school based facility. Items ranged from the availability of a sound proof treatment room to the use of an appointment system. With only a few exceptions, SBHCs reported compliance with virtually all of these standards.

Looking at specific standards where 5% or more of the sites fell short, the findings included sites:

- that lacked a “no-show” appointment management system (6%)
- lacking a sound proof room for patient encounters (7%)
- where providers did not display current licenses and/or nametags (9%)
- with facilities that lacked private phone, fax and/or email dedicated to the site (12%)
- that could not verify compliance with CLIA standards (13%)
- lacking written policy and procedure for management of psychotropic medication (22%)
- lacking verified compliance with New Mexico pharmacy regulations (27%)

Deficiencies tended to be clustered in a limited number of sites. Two-thirds of the sites had 1 or fewer unmet standards. Overall, these relatively new programs report considerable progress to establishing operations in compliance with a number of complex standards. However, these findings point to some areas for improvement.

Capacity

These findings shed some light on the capacity of SBHCs to provide health services and meet applicable operating standards established by the State. Table 2 places sites into three tiers based on seven measures of capacity in our survey.

- **First Tier:** These sites are characterized by lower average medical provider hours (10 vs. 18+), and fewer behavioral health hours, but reported a larger number of support staff hours and more days of operation each week.
- **Second Tier:** These sites had similar levels of medical provider hours and fewer behavioral health hours when compared to the Third Tier. These 14 sites had significantly fewer Coordinator and total support staff hours.

- **Third Tier:** These sites have a combination of at least 16 hours of both medical provider and coordinator time. They also have considerably more behavioral health hours.

Interestingly, these groups did not differ in any meaningful way on meeting OSAH standards. While issues around standards tend to be clustered in certain sites, those sites were equally likely to be in each of these three groups.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

Considering that most of these SBHCs have only been on the map since 2005, it is clear that they have made great strides in meeting OSAH standards and overcoming operational hurdles in their clinics and schools. This survey provides information about SBHCs as reported by participating staff. The information collected was used to recruit sites into the Envision New Mexico Quality Improvement Initiative for 2008-2009. In the end, 22 sites began this multi-year, intensive, quality improvement program. Participating sites are involved in initiatives on Pediatric Obesity Prevention and Treatment (5 sites); Teen Lifestyle Change (3 sites); Behavioral Health (4 sites); Improved Clinical Practice (9); and Community Collaboration (1 site). Envision NM will continue to work directly with these and other SBHCs to assess their strengths, needs, and opportunities to become the best possible resource for students in New Mexico.

Table 1: SBHCs for Initial Interview

SBHC Site Name	School Name	City	County	Zip
Laguna-Acoma Teen Center	ACL Laguna Acoma HS	Casa Blanca	Cibola	87038
To'Hajiilee Teen Center	ACL To'Hajiilee K-12	To'Hajiilee	Cibola	87026
Albuquerque HS SBHC	Albuquerque HS	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87102
Belen HS SBHC	Belen HS	Belen	Valencia	87002
Spartan Health Center	Bernalillo HS	Bernalillo	Sandoval	87004
Teen Health Ctr @ Capitol HS	Capital HS	Santa Fe	Santa Fe	87505
Career Prep SBHC	Career Prep Alternative HS	Shiprock	San Juan	87420
Carlos Vigil MS SBHC	Carlos Vigil MS	Espanola	Rio Arriba	87532
The CAVE Health Center	Carlsbad HS	Carlsbad	Eddy	88220
Chaparral HS SBHC	Chaparral HS	Chaparral	Dona Ana	88001
Cobre Wellness Center	Cobre HS	Bayard	Grant	88023
Cuba Schools Wellness Center	Cuba Independent Schools	Cuba	Sandoval	87013
Deming Wildcat Health Center	Deming HS	Deming	Luna	88030
Dexter MS SBHC	Dexter MS	Dexter	Chavez	88230
Des Moines SBHC	Des Moines	Des Moines	Union	88418
Dulce Teen Health Center	Dulce HS	Dulce	Rio Arriba	87528
East San Jose SBHC	East San Jose Elementary	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87102
Teen Wellness Center at Escalante HS	Escalante HS	Tierra Amarilla	Rio Arriba	87575
Espanola High SBHC	Espanola HS	Espanola	Rio Arriba	87532
Ft. Sumner SBHC	Ft. Sumner HS	Ft. Sumner	De Baca	88119
Gadsden HS SBHC	Gadsden HS	Anthony	Dona Ana	88021
Gallup Teen Life Center	Gallup HS	Gallup	McKinley	87305
Goddard HS SBHC	Goddard HS	Roswell	Chavez	88201
Hagerman SBHC	Hagerman	Hagerman	Chavez	88232
Highland HS SBHC	Highland HS	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87109
Jemez Valley SBHC	Jemez Valley HS	Jemez Pueblo	Sandoval	87024
Lake Arthur SBHC	Lake Arthur	Lake Arthur	Chavez	88253
Las Cruces HS SBHC	Las Cruces HS	Las Cruces	Dona Ana	88001
Lordsburg Municipal SBHC	Lordsburg HS	Lordsburg	Hidalgo	88045
Lovington Student Healthcare Center	Lovington Schools	Lovington	Lea	88260
Maxwell Wellness Center	Maxwell Municipal School	Maxwell	Colfax	87729
Mesa MS SBHC	Mesa MS	Roswell	Chavez	88203
Mesa Vista SBHC	Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools	Ojo Caliente	Taos	87549
Mescalero Apache School Based Health Center	Mescalero Apache School	Mescalero	Otero	88340
Mora SBHC	Mora Schools	Mora	Mora	87732
Mustang Health Center	Mountainair HS	Mountainair	Torrance	87036
McKenzie SBHC	Navajo Prep School	Farmington	Rio Arriba	87401
Ocate HS SBHC	Ocate HS	Las Cruces	Dona Ana	88011
PB & J Preschool SBHC	PB & J	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87105
Pojoaque Valley HS SBHC	Pojoaque Valley HS	Pojoaque	Santa Fe	87506
Quemado SBHC	Quemado Schools	Quemado	Catron	87829
Tiger Den Wellness Center	Raton High School	Raton	Colfax	87740
RFK SBHC	RFK Charter School	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87106
Roosevelt MS SBHC	Roosevelt MS	Tijeras	Bernalillo	87059
Roswell SBHC	Roswell HS	Roswell	Chavez	88201
Roy High School SBHC	Roy Municipal Schools	Roy	Harding	87743
Ruidoso SBHC	Ruidoso HS	Ruidoso	Lincoln	88345
San Felipe Pueblo EL SBHC	San Felipe Pueblo Elem	Pueblo of San Felipe	Sandoval	87001
San Jon School Based Center	San Jon	San Jon	Quay	88434
Santa Fe HS SBHC	Santa Fe HS	Santa Fe	Santa Fe	87505
Lion Care Health Center	Santa Rosa Schools	Santa Rosa	Guadalupe	88435
School on Wheels SBHC	School on Wheels	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87105
Silver Schools Health Center	Silver City Consolidated School	Silver City	Grant	88061
Socorro HS SBHC	Socorro HS	Socorro	Socorro	87801
Taos HS Wellness Center	Taos HS	Taos	Taos	87571
Taos MS Wellness Center	Taos MS	Taos	Taos	87571
Van Buren MS SBHC	Van Buren MS	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87108
Washington MS SBHC	Washington MS	Albuquerque	Bernalillo	87102
West Las Vegas Student Health Center	West Las Vegas High School	Las Vegas	San Miguel	87701

Table 2: Screening Results: First Tier, Second Tier, and Third Sites by Health Service Capacity

<i>Group Description</i>	<i>Number of Sites</i>	<i>Support Staff hours per week</i>	<i>Coordinator on-site hours per week</i>	<i>Medical provider hours per week</i>	<i>Behavioral Health hours per week</i>	<i>How many months open</i>	<i>How many days of the week</i>	<i>Avg Number of Capacity Standards Met</i>
1 st Tier	12	29.58	18.67	10.00	19.50	10.33	3.75	24.33
2 nd Tier	14	11.21	10.43	18.14	25.43	10.64	2.79	25.93
3 rd Tier	29	20.00	18.00	16.00	40.00	10.00	3.00	26.00