About the School-Based Health Alliance

The School-Based Health Alliance is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1995. We are the national voice for school-based health care. We serve the school-based health care field by providing technical assistance, resources and trainings so they can provide the best-quality health care to their patients. In addition, we advocate for policies on the local, state and federal level that strengthen school health. We support our technical assistance and advocacy work – and the entire school-based health care field – through quality research and evaluation.

Our work in schools & communities

There are more than 2,000 school-based health centers (SBHCs) in 49 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to an SBHC – they offer a variety of services and delivery models based on their community’s needs – SBHCs all function under the same assumption: students perform better when they show up for class healthy and ready to learn.

SBHCs provide comprehensive care to children and adolescents in school a setting that is trusted, familiar and easily accessible. SBHCs across the country provide a wide range of services, including but not limited to: primary care, prevention and early intervention, behavioral health care and oral health services. SBHCs encourage parent involvement, working in concert with parents on a variety of issues, including substance abuse prevention and healthy eating/active living activities. Many SBHCs help adolescents take ownership of their health and get involved in their school by establishing youth boards or creating peer mentoring groups.

For many families, school-based health care means their kids and teens can get a flu shot, have an annual physical, have their teeth examined and their eyes checked or speak to a mental health counselor in a safe, nurturing place – without the barriers to access that too many people often face.
Hallways to Health

The School-Based Health Alliance launched Hallways to Health to test how we could change a school’s landscape, using SBHCs as the catalyst. The concept is that health should spill out of the SBHC and into a school’s hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, teacher’s lounge, and neighborhood. The School-Based Health Alliance selected 15 high-performing SBHCs in California, Georgia, Maryland, Oregon and Washington for this initiative. These sites are testing new and innovative techniques to promote healthy eating, active living and social and emotional health. Along the way, the School-Based Health Alliance and our state affiliates are there to serve as vital partners by generating new strategies, convening the sites to learn from one another, evaluating the effectiveness of their programs and sharing best practices with the larger school-based health care field. Working with our affiliates allows us to form national-state partnerships to advance school-based health care at the local level.

Hallways to Health SBHCs have replanted school gardens, expanded culturally-based healing circles, held school-wide health fairs and modeled Biggest Loser competitions for faculty staff. A closer look at some of the grantees shows the tremendous success they are experiencing:

- The Roosevelt Middle School in Oakland, California implemented a new BOOST curriculum to address nutrition, food justice and social and emotional health. This curriculum reinforced the capacity of the SBHC to move beyond the clinic walls and implement programing that has a public health focus.

- The SBHC at Turner Elementary in Georgia was able to provide health education lessons for its students, and all teachers were in-serviced on the importance of “brain breaks.”

- Northwood High School in Maryland is now measuring the BMI for every student seen in the SBHC. In addition, the school implemented the TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) program for all school employees.

- Century High School in Oregon mobilized its first-ever wellness council, with students and faculty as members to advocate for school policy changes that promote healthy living.

This is just a small picture of what the 15 participating SBHCs have accomplished. For more information, visit www.sbh4all.org/hallwaystohealth.