



School-based health care support toolkit: Plan for engaging and partnering with the provider community



Ohio | Governor's Office of
Health Transformation

Reaching out to providers in your community: Information to share and questions to ask

What is school-based health care and what are our goals?

- **Before the first meeting, it could be beneficial to send the provider the following in advance:**
 - Information on school academic and health goals, needs and available resources, as well as community interest in utilizing school-based health services
 - Link to the online toolkit, highlighting provider specific materials

What is the provider's role?

- **In the first meeting, the school can further share the high-level responsibilities of school-based health care**
 - Make clear you are looking for a partner in both designing and executing a care delivery model that is the best fit for the school community
 - Share high-level materials on care delivery models and how other schools have gone about designing their model

Is the provider a fit?

- **The following questions would be helpful for the school to ask to better understand if the partnership could work**
 - What is your experience with off-site care models?
 - Do you have a sense of your capacity and other resources that could be utilized for such a model?

There are many reasons care providers would want to enter a school-based health partnership

Improve access to care

- **More regular access to patients you treat** – Greater exposure to patients gives you a broader understanding of the student’s functioning in his or her peer group
- **Increased adherence to treatment plan** – Students are more likely to attend scheduled appointments to receive and comply with treatment as needed
- **Access to new patients** – Treat a new group of patients, as well as increase name recognition and outside referrals to grow further

Improve patient experience

- **Greater convenience** – Connecting with providers becomes a simpler proposition for students and families
- **Reduced stigma of care** – Students receive treatment in a non-intimidating environment that becomes just another part of the school day

Improve quality of care

- **Increase rate of early intervention** – Potential to address physical and/or behavioral health issues earlier to minimize long-term issues
- **Increase depth of services** – Greater ability to weave preventative services and counseling into each visit to improve effectiveness and ability to follow-up
- **Improved clinical competency** – The experience can grow a provider’s understanding of pediatric health issues

Improve community connections

- **Support an innovative model** - Join a statewide program that helps you support the health and academic outcomes of high need students in your community
- **Deeper impact** – Improve long-term relationships with patients/families and schools

Most common provider partner agencies

Potential partners

Community Health Center

Federally Qualified Health Center

Private Provider Groups

Hospitals/ Universities

Public Health Departments

Benefits to schools in partnering

- Personnel are accustomed to handling a wide range of health needs
 - They have systems in place for handling medical records, insurance billing, and government regulations
 - Relieve the school district from handling most of the day-to-day operations of the school health center
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- Services must be available to all residents in their service areas, with fees adjusted upon patients' ability to pay
 - Reimbursed at a much higher rate for eligible services provided
 - Provide much of the staffing and billing infrastructure a school health center needs
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- Build upon relationship most common in smaller communities where few larger health agencies exist
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- Helps with provider supply, as many programs are affiliated with training for medical residents, nursing, optometrists and allied health personnel
 - Hospitals may be incentivized to partner as they have a Federally-mandated community health goal that school-based health can satisfy
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- Strong public health infrastructure and typically understand the community and its health needs
 - May also be certified as FQHCs, which grants them the same benefits in terms of billing

Your partnership should have one lead agency to assume overall responsibility for school-based health efforts

What are responsibilities of the lead agency?

- Assuming legal responsibility for the health center
- Hiring, training and supervising core health center staff
- Orienting health staff about school policies
- Conducting outreach and education with school staff
- Ensuring regular communication between school and health center staff and between different health agencies
- Securing ongoing funding for the school health center
- Communicating with parents about the school health center
- Ensuring adherence with HIPAA and FERPA requirements
- Collecting data for program evaluation purposes
- Developing reports for school administration and the school board as appropriate
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive cultural competence training
- Providing liability coverage
- **Many current participants in school-based health care efforts highlighted that the lead partner should come from the provider and not the school side, as providers have primary control over service outcomes as well as the necessary expertise**

State of Ohio endorsed service agreement between providers and schools is in the following section

Further details on the benefits of partnering with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)



Opportunity to build and grow community partnership

With the experience FQHCs have in serving the greater community, it becomes easier to have impact on patients ranging from students to adults and build trust quickly

Partnering with high-need schools gives FQHCs the opportunity to build new relationships with young Medicaid-enrolled patients and fits within their mission to serve the highest need populations

Conducive model for treating in high need areas

FQHCs have experience working with a high rate of patients on Medicaid and treating patients for mental and behavioral health issues

FQHCs earn an extra prospective payment for treating patients on Medicaid – this makes the school-based model more sustainable and likely to persist

Improves access to and compliance with treatment

School-based health care models often have difficulties setting up care outside of school hours – FQHCs allow for access to service in non-standard hours for a wider range of services than available at school

High Medicaid-enrolled populations often have lower appointment attendance and treatment compliance rates – seeing students consistently in school has been associated with improving both of those metrics

As schools are considering a partner provider for school-based health care, they should look to see if there is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in the county (full list in Resources section)