



NAPNAP Position Statement on School-Based Health Care

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs), located on or near school campuses, provide comprehensive primary care to infants, children and adolescents living or attending school in the local area. They are a safe and accessible source of health care for children who may not otherwise have care, and provide an effective way to advocate for children. The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) supports the use of pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) in school-based health centers to minimize access to care barriers for children by providing comprehensive primary care and management of acute and chronic illnesses, and by linking these services with other community resources. PNPs, collaborating with school personnel, improve health care delivery and promote effective, timely, and accessible services for children. Early intervention provided in SBHCs is cost effective and has been proven to improve school attendance (NASBHC, 2005) and academics (Geierstanger & Amaral, 2005).

Major gaps exist in today's healthcare system for children, such as inaccessibility to health care and lack of preventive services for youth (AAP, 2008; Brener, Wheeler, Wolfe, Vernon-Smiley, & Caldart-Olson, 2007). There is a significant lack of a stable funding source which affects the sustainability of SBHCs (Brindis et al., 2003). SBHCs fill these gaps by providing comprehensive physical, mental, and dental health services to children in need of care at locations accessible to children (Scudder, Papa, & Brey, 2007). SBHCs do not replace an ongoing relationship a child may have with a primary provider. Rather, the centers are designed to overcome social and economic barriers to health care.

NAPNAP supports the following:

- SBHCs should be available to youth, from infancy through high school. In some instances, primary care is provided to infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers who are siblings of patients, children of adolescent patients, or reside in the area served by the SBHC.
- A multidisciplinary team, consisting of nurse practitioners, educators, school nurses, physicians, social service, and mental and dental health professionals, collaborate to best meet the needs of children and adolescents in SBHCs.
- With parental involvement, infants, children and adolescents receive comprehensive primary care, management of acute and chronic illnesses, including social services, mental health, dental health, and health education with a focus on wellness in all SBHCs (Story, Kaphingst, & French, 2006).
- School-based health care is delivered in the context of individual, family and community.
- All students deserve the health-related programs and services necessary for them to derive maximum benefit from their education.

- SBHCs must meet standards of care using current evidence-based practice guidelines, including certification, credentialing of providers, and a systematic evaluation of the outcomes of services (Gance-Cleveland, Costin, & Degenstein, 2003).
- SBHCs receive local, state, and federal legislative support on an ongoing basis.
- SBHCs receive local, state, and federal financial support on an ongoing basis.
- The reimbursement of services provided in SBHCs if the services would be covered under the policy in another setting.
- The reimbursement of care and services provided in SBHCs without prior authorization.

In summary, SBHCs are an important and necessary component to health care for youth, from infancy through high school. They provide a comprehensive range of services that specifically meet the needs of children and deliver health care to all children, including many who are uninsured or underinsured. The multiple models of school based health centers allow for creativity in serving the specific needs of the community based population. The school-based healthcare setting provides a unique opportunity to implement a multidisciplinary team approach, utilizing integrated services to manage issues affecting a child's health, school performance, and school attendance (Scudder et al., 2007).

NAPNAP is an organization whose mission is promoting optimal health for children through leadership, practice, advocacy, education, and research.

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Roberta Bavin, RN, MN, CPNP-BC, School Based Health Care SIG Chair
Renee P. McLeod, PhD, PNP, BC, CPNP-PC, Clinical Practice Chair
Bonnie Gance-Cleveland, PhD, RNC, PNP
Marjorie M. (Peg) Heinzer, PhD, PNP-BC, CRNP
Debbie Martinez, RN, MSN, PPNP
Susan Robins, MS, CFNP, PNP
Susan Rowley, RN, MS, CPNP
Esther Sikorski, RN, MS, PNP-BC
Victoria Trabucchi, MS, CPNP, SNP
Sharon Yearous, PhD(c), RN, CPNP, NCSN
Heather Keesing, MSN, RN, FNP-BC (Staff)

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