

Behavioral Health Services in School-Based Health Centers 2023-2025 Overview

School-Based Health Centers:

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are comprehensive health care clinics in or on school grounds. SBHCs are:

- Access model clinics designed to reduce barriers to care.
 - All students at a SBHC host school are eligible for services regardless of ability to pay. In many cases, SBHC services extend to the entire school district or community.
- Invested in a robust partnership between schools, state and local public health, medical sponsors, mental health agencies and communities.
- Dedicated to collaboration between medical providers and mental health providers with a focus on youth centered clinical care and youth feedback.

To learn more about Oregon’s certified SBHCs visit the Oregon Health Authority SBHC State Program Office (SPO) website: www.healthoregon.org/sbhc.

Mental Health Expansion Grant:

Since 2013, the Oregon State Legislature has dedicated behavioral health funding to SBHCs to support student wellness. During the 2023-2025 biennium, the Oregon Health Authority will distribute \$7 million through the **SBHC Mental Health Expansion Grant (MHEG)** to enhance behavioral health¹ services in [state certified SBHCs](#). MHEG funding is currently distributed to 32 systems² in **26 counties representing 80 SBHCs**.

Behavioral Health in SBHCs:

Unfortunately, not all SBHCs receive MHEG funding and award amounts are often inadequate to cover the cost of a full-time employee. SBHCs rely on additional investment from the mental health agency, medical sponsor, local public health, schools / school districts, other State or Federal Grants, and billing reimbursement.

- In the 2022-2023 school year **96% of Oregon’s certified SBHCs** had some level of mental health staffing.
- During the 2021-2022 school year, more than **5,400 SBHC clients** received care from a mental health professional over the course of **39,404 visits**.
- **Forty-four percent** of SBHC visits for school-aged (5-21) youth were to a behavioral health provider in the 2021-2022 school year.

¹ Behavioral health is used to encompass mental health, behavioral health, substance use treatment and other services designed to support mental or emotional wellness.

² A system is one or more SBHCs operating under the same medical sponsor within a county.

SBHC behavioral health provider types include:

- Mental Health Therapists
- Integrated Behavioral Health Providers
- Peer Support Specialists and Community Health Workers
- Skills Trainers and Case Managers

Behavioral health services provided include:

- Individual, group and family therapy
- Integrated behavioral health visits (brief, solution focused sessions in collaboration with a physical health provider visit and billed under a medical diagnosis)
- Care coordination, resource navigation or referral services
- Screenings and assessments (such as substance use screening, depression screening, suicide risk assessments, behavioral health assessments, etc.)
- Classroom presentations
- Prevention and education programming
- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Consultation and collaboration with school staff

Behavioral health staff at some SBHCs may provide services beyond what is listed above such as school-wide crisis response, classroom based therapeutic interventions, community-based services, or medication management. The range of services offered at each SBHC is largely dependent on local needs, capacity, provider type and the agency responsible for behavioral health staffing.

SBHCs are not immune to the challenges facing most behavioral health programs such as staffing shortages, inadequate funding, difficulties recruiting or retaining staff who can provide culturally specific care and system challenges related to increased care needs with less referral options. However, with the right resources SBHCs are well positioned to respond to these challenges with creative and community-oriented solutions.

For more information about behavioral health services in SBHCs or the Mental Health Expansion Grant please contact Mikah Rotman – School Mental Health Specialist at Mikah.Rotman@oha.oregon.gov or 971.278.0124