

School Based Health Center

Strategic Action Group Update 12-8-14

A new CT Kids Report Card strategic action group focused on school based health center matters was recently formed. The School Based Health Center Strategic Action group (SBHC SAG) will support our children's report card project Leadership Committee by: assessing indicator data trends related to School Based Health Centers, identifying best practices, proposing actions to achieve better results, and helping to evaluate strategy implementation.

Like its Chronic Absenteeism counterpart, the School Based Health Center Strategic Action group (SBHC SAG) is intended to serve as a statewide coordinating mechanism, promoting communication and collaboration across the many partners in our state working to make children healthier and better learners. It will become a centralizing force for current and future action, incorporating and building upon the work of the School Based Health Center Advisory Committee established under P.A. 13-287.

The SBHC SAG had our first very well attended meeting on December 2, 2014 with representatives from all the relevant state departments, many community providers and stakeholders. Mark Keenan, Supervising Nurse Consultant for the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Dr. Christine Dauser, Director of the Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic at the Yale Child Study Center are the co-chairs.

Several areas of need were identified and will remain central to the work of the SBHC SAG. Among them are:

- There is a need for a clear definition of SBHC in CT. Currently, there are many versions of what has loosely been called SBHC. Most SBHCs in CT provide comprehensive primary care and behavioral health services full-time during school hours. Some of the comprehensive SBHCs also provide dental care. Other SBHCs provide only primary care or only behavioral health services. Most SBHCs in CT are licensed and funded by DPH, while others receive no state funding and are privately funded. The parent agencies of most SBHCs are private community providers, some are Federally Qualified Health Centers and others are managed by the Board of Education. With such disparity in services provided, funding source and management of SBHC, it is difficult for a lay person to understand the SBHCs. Furthermore, this range of "SBHCs" creates difficulty for DPH in regulating and licensing the entities. The work of the SBHC Advisory Committee will largely inform this discussion.
- It was agreed that we would move forward with a demonstration project to determine the feasibility of and technical aspects required to link data from the Local Educational Agency and SBHC records. If successful, such linked data will be tremendously valuable in validating the outcomes of SBHC services on academics, attendance, health, social emotional wellbeing and reduced rates of urgent and emergent health and behavioral health services. Additionally, linked data will suggest areas on needed improvement in order to turn the curve for children's health in CT. The potential SBHCs have for impacting children's health and wellbeing on a number of indicators is remarkable.
- Two workgroups of the SBHC SAG were established, a data/demonstration workgroup and a systems/barriers workgroup. The former will be tasked with planning, overseeing, interpreting and analyzing the results of the demonstration project. In addition to the demonstration project, the data workgroup will review and make recommendations for consistent uniform measures to be collected at all SBHCs. The systems/barriers workgroup will review the barriers to opening, licensing and operating SBHCs.