
School Health Collaborative

MA Coalition of School-Based Health Centers | Mass. School Nurse Organization | Mass. Nurses Association
Mass. Organization of Nurse Executives | Mass. Public Health Association | Parents Alliance for Catholic Education

INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN IN FY'09! - School Health Services Help Reduce Health Disparities; Optimize Learning

Please add \$3.3 million to the School Health Line Item (4590-0250) in FY' 09 and increase the bottom line appropriation from \$16.7 million to \$20 million.

- **Increase the earmark for “school nurses and school based health centers” from \$15 million to \$18 million.** This would enable 35- 40 additional school districts to be eligible for funding to support school nursing services and additional communities to develop much needed school-based health centers. Currently 102 school districts or half the State, receive ESHS Grant funding that supports nursing services and 49 school-based health centers are funded as a result of this line item.
- **Increase the earmark for “mental health and substance abuse services in school based health centers” from \$300,000 to \$600,000.** This increase would allow nearly twice as many students to access mental health and substance abuse services in school-based health centers.

School Health Background

- School nurses are present in every school system and work to: meet state mandates for immunizations and screening, administer medications and treatments, assist with educational planning for kids with special health and education needs, serving on the front line as medical first responders for disasters and other public health emergencies, and coordinating care to primary care providers, often with School-based health center staff who also provide this care along with mental health services, monitoring health outcomes, and enrolling families into MassHealth, the Children’s Medical Security Plan, and Commonwealth Care.
- School nursing and School health services reduce absenteeism, decrease the number of emergency room visits, and provide a full range of nursing and health care services. School Based Health Centers provide medical care and social support to underserved and difficult to reach children and youth. 91.1% of students seen in the school nurse office are returned to class.
- Significant health disparities exist among Asian, Black and Latino children. Asian, Black and Latino children with asthma, diabetes, cancer and other chronic illnesses have shown to have less access to quality health care and health insurance.
- The health of school children has become more complex. Children with severe allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, cancer and other special health care needs and chronic medical conditions are enrolled in our schools. In addition, there has been a rise of social problems among our youth such as substance abuse, depression, and violence.
- School-based health centers offer comprehensive health services in 59 schools of which 49 receive state funds. Comprehensive health services which may include primary care, acute care, mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services and oral health services are available to approximately 68,000 students annually. Mental Health and substance abuse services were strengthened in 5 pilot sites in FY’07 and FY’08.
- The services of the school nurses are available to every child, not exclusive of cultural background and socioeconomic or health insurance status
- The Goals of the Essential School Health Services Grants are to
 - Strengthen the school health nurse infrastructure
 - Implement health education/tobacco control programs
 - Promote linkages with community providers and health insurance programs

- Implement school health data systems
- Provide consultation and assistance to recipient public school districts and non public schools
- The Essential School Health Services Grants provide a support system in 102 school districts that enhances the nursing care services to over 543,000 students (approximately half of MA students). School nursing services were provided in 1,637 public and 260 non-public schools. In 2006, there were over 6 million student encounters with school nurses in addition to the state mandated screenings required by law.
- In FY'04, funding for school health services was cut by 50%, curtailing access to health care for the Commonwealth's school children and impacting the standards of health care and services provided in the public and private school settings

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