

Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) Programs and School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs):

▶ A natural partnership for improving access to mental health care

WHAT ARE SBHCs?

School-based health centers (SBHCs) advance health equity for children and youth who experience barriers to accessing healthcare because of systemic inequities, their family income, or where they live. They do this by providing primary, behavioral, oral, and vision care where youth spend most of their time – at school. Most SBHCs are operated by an external sponsoring medical partner, such as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), hospital, nonprofit or community-based organization, or local health department. SBHCs collaborate with school districts, principals, teachers, school staff, families, and students to advocate for the needs of children, youth, and families with low incomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends SBHCs as an evidence-based model that improves educational and health outcomes.

The **School-Based Health Alliance** is a nonprofit organization that advances and informs more than 2,500 school-based health care programs, supports 22 state affiliates, collaborates with SBHC state program offices and partner organizations in the school health field, and serves as a resource to policymakers in the education and health sectors.

SBHCS & MENTAL HEALTH

Schools are the ideal location for students to access mental health care. In fact, the vast majority of children and adolescents who receive mental health services access these services at school.¹ In a recent analysis, 96% of public schools reported offering at least one type of mental health service to their students.²

SBHCs are in a unique position to address the mental health needs of students. By using an integrated primary care-mental health model, SBHC providers can offer the full continuum of services that includes screening, assessment, treatment and/or linkages to appropriate services. Two in three SBHCs are staffed by both a primary care provider and a behavioral health professional,³ thus easing the transition to care through a "warm handoff" to a mental health provider.

Furthermore, SBHCs’ proximity to students and ability to provide mental health care in a safe, confidential, and de-stigmatized environment allows for the development of ongoing relationships between the provider, student, and family to support student well-being throughout childhood and adolescence.



VACCINATIONS
AND LABWORK



ORAL
HEALTH



PRIMARY &
ACUTE CARE



VISION
SCREENINGS



MENTAL HEALTH
& WELLNESS

Why Partner?^{4,5}

ACCESSIBILITY

SBHCs place critical services, like mental health care, directly in schools; students without a medical home can receive comprehensive healthcare, regardless of ZIP code.

INTEGRATED CARE

Embedded into SBHCs are systems to identify, assess, treat, and refer students for mental health services.

STAFFING

SBHCs have on-site primary care providers who can prescribe medication.

HIGH-QUALITY CARE

SBHCs aim to provide children with quality mental health care services through evidence-based standards, performance measures, and quality improvement systems.

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

WHY PARTNER WITH SBHCs?

PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS PROGRAMS

SUSTAINABILITY

Like FQHCs, SBHCs use sound management practices, including a billing infrastructure, financial performance metrics, and diverse funding sources.

TECHNOLOGY

Many SBHCs are actively utilizing telehealth and electronic medical records and therefore are well-equipped to access teleconsultation services.

SYSTEMS COORDINATION

Like PMHCAs, SBHCs coordinate across care systems, make referrals, and involve family members in care.

GROWING MOVEMENT

SBHCs exist in every state!

Together, SBHCs and PMHCAs can ...

1 HELP

to address our nationwide children's mental health crisis

by getting services to young people who suffer from diagnosable mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, especially in rural and other underserved or under-resourced areas.

2 INTERVENE earlier

by increasing recognition and identification of mental health by adults (including teachers, parents/guardians, and physicians) and mitigating the profound adverse effects of untreated mental health issues (e.g., poor academic outcomes, suicide, substance use, and unemployment in adulthood).

3 ADVANCE

mental health equity

by providing mental health services to students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) or whose families have low incomes. These students are less likely to receive needed mental health care.

4 OVERCOME barriers for families

accessing mental health care, including extended distances to providers, lack of reliable transportation, work demands, low income, inadequate health insurance, and high costs.

5 EXPAND

mental health workforce capacity

by providing primary care providers with tools and expertise to accurately recognize pediatric behavioral health conditions and to diagnose, treat and refer children with such conditions.

6 CREATE a continuum of integrated health and mental healthcare

that treats the whole child and improves children's and adolescents' mental health, physical health, and educational attainment.

Partnering with SBHCs. *Where do we start?*

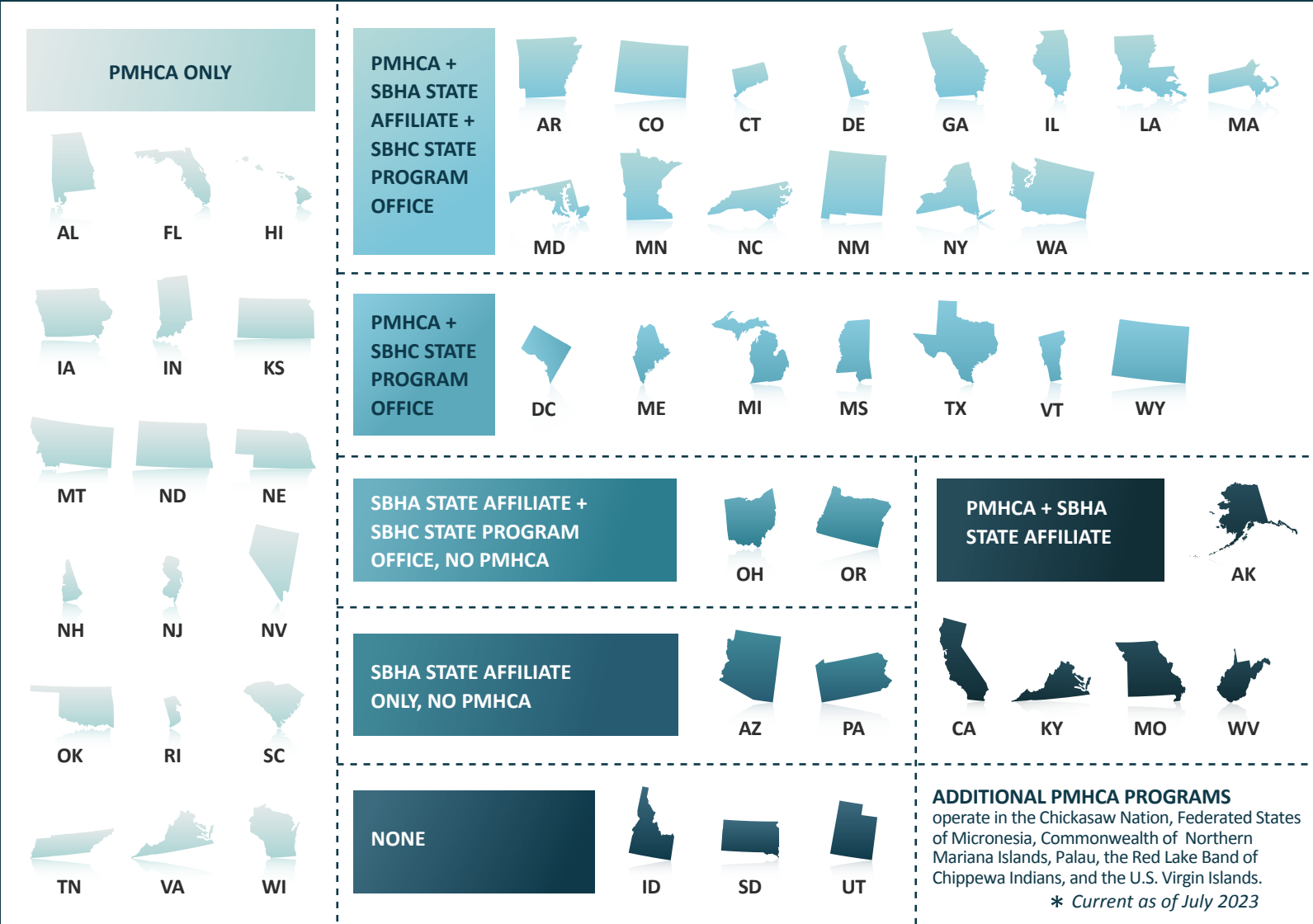
1. STEP ONE

Use this chart to learn whether a SBHC state program office or an SBHA state affiliate operates in your state.

A STATE PROGRAM OFFICE is the regulatory body in a state where SBHCs are supported by state funding. SBHA collaborates with these offices on data collection and reporting, performance measures, and training and technical assistance.

AN SBHA STATE AFFILIATE works with SBHA to advance policy, quality, funding opportunities, training, and awareness of SBHCs as an evidence-based model for increasing equity in healthcare for school-age youth.

PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACCESS NETWORK AND SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CARE*



* Current as of July 2023

2. STEP TWO

Meet with your SBHA State Affiliate and/or State Program Office to locate and reach out to SBHCs in your state. Discuss areas of the state with the greatest need for PMHCA services.

Please email us at states@sbh4all.org for contact information about your SBHA State Affiliate or SBHC State Program Office.

3. STEP THREE

Schedule meetings with individual or groups of SBHCs to discuss how your PMHCA can best partner to meet their needs.

Need to identify SBHCs in your state?

CHECK OUT

The SBHC Mapping Tool to locate and view critical characteristics of SBHCs in your state and identify and characterize medically underserved areas.



SBHA maintains connections with many individual SBHCs and sponsoring organizations nationwide, and we will do our best to connect you.

To learn more, please email us at:

 states@sbh4all.org

CONTACT

 info@sbh4all.org

for additional resources and technical assistance opportunities to develop meaningful and effective partnerships with SBHCs.

REFERENCES

1. School-Based Health Alliance. Mental Health & Wellbeing. School-Based Health Alliance. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://www.sbh4all.org/what-we-do/school-based-health-care/mental-health/>
2. Panchal N, Cox C, Rudowitz R. The Landscape of School-Based Mental Health Services. KFF. Published September 6, 2022. <https://www.kff.org/other/is-sue-brief/the-landscape-of-school-based-mental-health-services/>
3. Love H, Soleimanpour S, Panchal N, Schlitt J, Behr C, Even M. 2016-17 National School-Based Health Care Census Report. School-Based Health Alliance; 208AD. Published 2018. <https://www.sbh4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2016-17-Census-Report-Final.pdf>
4. School-Based Health Alliance. Core Competencies. School-Based Health Alliance. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://www.sbh4all.org/resources/core-competencies/>
5. Arenson M, Hudson PJ, Lee N, Lai B. The Evidence on School-Based Health Centers: A Review. Global Pediatric Health. 2019; 6:2333794X19828745. Published February 19, 2019, F doi:10.1177/2333794X19828745. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6381423/>

Topics about SBHCs to explore:



STRUCTURES
(e.g., funding, staffing, services, technology)



STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS



PARTNERSHIPS



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OFFERED

Working in Every State

A GROWING NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The School-Based Health Alliance works on policy, standards, data, and training issues with state affiliates and national organization partners, advocates, healthcare providers, and SBHCs in every state.



 **2,500**
SBHCs NATIONWIDE

DELIVERY MODELS



MOBILE



SCHOOL-LINKED



ON SITE



TELEHEALTH EXCLUSIVE

This resource is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$500,000. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).