



## Community School-Based Health Services in West Virginia A Quick Reference Guide for Schools Implementing Health and Social Supports of a Community School

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**Introduction:** School administrators, certified school nurses and counselors often ask, “Where do I begin?” This document is intended as a quick guide for schools interested in partnering with their community providers to develop health and social supports which may include school-based health services (SBHS) for primary health care, dental and mental health services like doctors’ offices, dentists’ and behavioral health facilities. These services do not replace the daily services provided to support the education of each child by school nurses, school counselors, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, etc. as required for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Developing services to support the medical, dental and mental health needs of students requires successful collaboration, between schools and community partners, through a planning process. This will include stakeholders reviewing the needs, and developing a sustainability plan and blueprint for working together.

**What are Community School-Based Health Services (SBHS)?** In general, SBHS are primary health care, dental and social supports provided by the community which:

- Are located in or near a school;
- Are organized through school in partnership with community and health care providers;
- Are administered by a community lead/sponsoring agency;
- Provide billable services by licensed nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dental hygienists, counselors and other licensed, qualified health professionals with assistance by the sponsoring agency’s support staff;
- Provide services on a regular schedule to all students with parent consent, regardless of ability to pay;
- Adhere to the standards of practice in each discipline and to evidence-based care models to ensure quality and safe care.

**Essential steps for developing health and social support services are:**

- 1. Begin to review the needs of students and families based on existing community and school services.** In some cases, certain health and social supports may not be warranted based upon the location, needs or existing community services. So examining the existing community services in light of student and family needs is vital before moving forward with any planning. A community schools planning guide is located at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/section1/CommunitySchools.htm> .
- 2. Learn as much as you can about health and social support services and building effective partnerships.** The WV Department of Education [Office of Special Programs](#) is available to assist in identifying resources. The Marshall University (MU) School Health Technical Assistance Center provides resources at [www.wvshtac.org](http://www.wvshtac.org).

3. **Gain administrative and school leadership support.** In those schools that will benefit from SBHS, appoint a staff member to serve as the school system liaison, which will facilitate the process and make sure there is administrative support. Convene key school staff: the core leadership team, school nurse, school counselor and anyone who may champion SBHS at the county or RESA level. As need increases, a Community Schools Coordinator position should be created.
4. **Invite the community to assist in planning.** By involving the community you will increase support and sustainability. In addition to key school personnel, community stakeholders include medical, mental and oral health providers, businesses, parents, youth, potential funders and any others having an interest in promoting health and academics should be considered. Successful planning requires commitment to regular, standing meetings; follow-through; good communication methods and clarification of roles, tasks, and purpose. Once a service(s) has started, continuing to meet to evaluate, monitor and expand services will be vital to long term success. By maintaining strong communications through regularly scheduled monthly meetings or phone calls between key school and agency staff, both at the service level and at the administrative level, schools and community providers can build cooperative relationships to improve services continuously to students.
5. **Identify student and community needs and resources and determine feasibility for SBHS.** Often, schools have existing ZoomWV data that can help to guide decisions about priorities and needs. Consider school level, district level and community level data. Surveys of teachers, parents, students and community can also help to identify needs and concerns. Sources include School Nurse Needs Assessment, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, academic and attendance reports, and school climate data. Student, teacher and parent survey examples are available [here](#).
6. **Assess and determine community sponsorship for health and social support services.** In some communities, more than one medical, mental health or dental provider may be willing to collaborate. In other communities, it may be difficult to find any providers. It is best to keep community sponsorship local, when possible. Sponsorship may be provided by a variety of organizations. The planning committee may need to explore various options, and weigh the pros and cons of each. In order to explore all possibilities and allow the provider community an opportunity to participate, you may consider requesting letters of interest through advertisement. Remember that alignment of SBHS services must match the schools goals and values and need reviewed regularly in order to have a successful relationship. Regular review of needs and values is imperative to ensure positive outcomes for students and the appropriate SBHS community lead/sponsoring agency.
7. **Negotiate services to meet student needs.** When working with a sponsor discussion should include: hours of operation (recommendations for medical and behavioral health hours, based on school size, are available [here](#)); services to families and community members during or after school hours; roles and responsibilities and agreement of sponsor to strive toward meeting Standards and Guidelines (best practices). It is recommended that the hours of operation be determined jointly by the school and the sponsoring agency. This may require compromise from both parties in order to reach times that maximize student access to the service(s) and minimize loss of classroom time. It is important to review hours of operation periodically.
8. **Comply with statutes and regulations for student safety.**
  - a. Schools are reminded to obtain state criminal background checks for SBHS providers who will have direct, unaccompanied contact with students as required by W.Va. Code §18-5-15c(e).

- b. Schools should provide orientation on Policy 4373 Expected Behaviors in Safe and Supportive Schools as it applies to public guests (see 4.1, chapter 3 section 1, chapter 4 section 2 and chapter 5 section 1).
- c. Schools should also provide orientation on emergency preparedness, bi-directional sharing of information to assist students, school policies and district policies including medication administration and any other type of information needed.

- 9. Delegate school nursing services as appropriate.** School nursing services must be provided by a school nurse or may be delegated by the certified school nurse RN when appropriate (W.Va. Code §18-5-22). SBHS providers do not function as a certified school nurse RN to provide services such as insulin administration, G-Tube feedings, sterile urinary catheterization, mechanical ventilator, nebulizer and MDI administration, medications, etc. SBHS may provide school nursing services only through a Memorandum of Agreement that establishes circumstances and timeframes, under the delegation of the certified school nurse RN. Community partners may not bill for school nursing services under FAPE because these are required educational services under state and federal laws.
- 10. Develop an implementation plan.** Establish a shared vision, short and long term goals, objectives, time frames and a tentative budget. Clarify issues such as services to be provided; who will provide the services onsite (physician, nurse practitioner, RN, LPN, counselor, dentist, hygienist, etc.); hours and days of operation; billing, collections and policy on seeing all students regardless of their ability to pay; operational and decision making processes such as sharing information, referrals, roles of school and community providers; when students may utilize the services and average time of stay for each student; liability and continuous quality improvement. Each school is assigned a school nurse, the community partner and school nurse(s) should work together to determine roles and responsibilities in caring for students. A clear, well-constructed implementation plan will serve as the basis for quality services as well as for funding proposals from specific agencies, foundations, grantors or other funders with shared goals for the community.
- 11. Develop Memorandum(s) of Agreement (MOA).** A MOA is needed to memorialize the sponsor and local Board of Education agreement for SBHS. Regardless of who provides the services, a MOA with clearly defined partner roles and expectations should be enacted. This may be an agreement to simply plan or it may involve a commitment to provide services. Often, the school and community provider begin with a small commitment of a few hours per week which increases over time as the demand increases.
- 12. Secure financial resources.** Usually, SBHS rely on a mix of funding sources including local school funds, state and federal grants, foundations and reimbursement from insurances. Sometimes local businesses or hospitals will assist with funding.
- 13. Monitor and address challenges.** It is important to continue to work with the planning team and the collaborating partner(s). This is a long term effort. “Bumps in the road” – staff and administrative turnover, funding cuts, disagreements about policies, roles, responsibilities and procedures – can be expected. By maintaining strong communication through regularly scheduled monthly communications, meetings or phone calls between key school and agency staff, both at the service level and at the administrative level, schools and community providers can build cooperative relationships to continuously improve services to students.