


What is a School-based Health Center?

Don't let the name fool you (or your lawmakers). They sound old hat, but School-based Health Centers are not your typical school-nurse model of care where minor illnesses and injuries are treated.



SBHCs are intended to be the “medical home” for your child, including primary health care services, reproductive counseling, dental care, and mental health counseling, replacing what the child would typically receive from providers outside of the school.

Where did they come from?

School-based Health Centers (SBHCs) are expanding across the country, thanks to recent federal action, including:

- June 2022 passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in Congress
- \$25 Million in grants awarded to states in November 2022 by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for expansion of SBHCs

Main concerns

SBHCs are largely unregulated.

SBHCs often exclude the parent.

Children will suffer in the name of convenience.

Education is already suffering.

SBHCs provide inappropriate access to children while parents are away.

SBHCs are intended to replace the family doctor.

SBHC services are broad in scope and do not require parental knowledge.

There is no set standard for who employs the providers.

Some schools are only asking parents to sign a single form at the start of the school year for their child to be seen in the SBHC anytime (and for any reason) throughout the school year. Other schools in states with minor consent laws are not only bypassing parental consent, but also intentionally withholding information in the name of “the student’s privacy.”

What does the other side say?

Some proponents of SBHCs argue that these in-school clinics promote better access to health care for children and relieve busy parents of the burden of taking their children to the doctor.



The truth

Medical ethics do not allow physicians to treat minors without a parent or guardian present, which is why parents cannot simply drop their child off at the doctor's office and come back later to collect them. Are there limits to what the parent will allow the provider to talk to the child about?

What else do Americans need to know?

We're seeing a wave of states across the country filing bills to lower the age of consent to medical care from age 18 to as low as age 11. This means schools do not have to get parental consent to treat the child and, even worse, parental objection to treatment is meaningless.

One example of this playing out in real time can be seen in California. In 2011, California passed a minor consent law allowing children to consent to their own medical care beginning at age 12. In July 2022, Harvard's Center for Policy Law and Innovation and University of California, Davis jointly published their research showing that School-based Health Centers are even more effective at increasing HPV vaccination rates than state mandates. **Pairing SBHCs with minor consent laws almost entirely eliminates the biggest obstacle to HPV vaccines: parents.**

When you combine the push for health care expansion within schools (a place where children are away from their parents) with the push for minor consent laws (nullifying the need for parents), the anti-parent agenda becomes clear.



For more information, scan the QR code for our School-based Health Center resource page

STAND FOR
HEALTH FREEDOM

What can parents do?

1. Familiarize yourself with the Stand for Health Freedom toolkit for SBHCs, including reasons why you should be concerned.
2. Check your child's back-to-school paperwork carefully, looking for any form asking you to give consent for your child to be treated medically at school.
3. Ask your school nurse or an administrator if your child's school operates a School-based Health Center or if there are any licensed professionals treating children at school aside from the school nurse.
4. Tell your school you want to be notified before any non-school employee has access to your child in any capacity, making it clear that you do not consent for your child to be assessed or treated by anyone not employed by the school.
5. Tell your child to let you know if anyone attempts to assess them or provide treatment, and advise them to refuse to participate in any surveys, discussions with, or visits by anyone who is not their teacher or the school nurse.