School-Based Health Centers: Proven Solutions to Pressing Problems

The Problem: Access to Care

According to the 2009 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 10% of currently insured children age 5-18 had no usual place to go for medical care. Additionally in 2009, HEDIS data reveal that 23.8% of children age 3-6 did not have at least one well-child visit with a PCP and that 54.9% of adolescents age 12-21 did not have at least one comprehensive well-care visit with a PCP or OB/GYN.

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) Increase Access to Care

- SBHCs increase access to health care.[1,2,3,4,5]
- SBHC users are likely to use primary care—both medical and behavioral health—more consistently.[6,7,8,9]
- SBHC users are more likely to have yearly dental and medical check-ups.[10,11]
- SBHC users are less likely to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized.[12]

The Problem: Obesity and Diabetes

Among California public school students in 2008, 38% were overweight, 19.8% were obese and 3.6% were severely obese.[13] In the 2009 measurement year, HEDIS data show that 43.2% of children and adolescents did not have an outpatient visit with a PCP or OB/GYN that included evidence of BMI documentation, counseling for nutrition, and counseling for physical activity.

SBHCs Help Kids Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

- Adolescent SBHC users engage in more physical activity and consume more healthy foods.[14]
- SBHC staff can effectively screen students for important diabetes risk factors.[15]

The Problem: Childhood Asthma

Sixteen percent of California children, age 5-18, have at some point in their lives been diagnosed with asthma. Among children who currently have asthma, 9% had an asthma-related emergency room or urgent care visit in the past year.[16]

SBHCs Can Help Manage Asthma

- SBHC users are less likely to have asthma-related restricted activity days.[17]
- SBHC users are less likely to go to the Emergency Room or be hospitalized for asthma.[18]

The Problem: Teen Pregnancy and Chlamydia

Sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies are major public health issues. Chlamydia rates have been steadily increasing in the state for the past 15 years. In 2010, the rate of Chlamydia for adolescent females age15-19 was 2,247 per 100,000, with rates among African-Americans more than twice that level.[19] And while teen birth rates have improved in recent years, 32 of every 1,000 California teenagers still have babies each year.[20]

SBHCs Promote Preventive Reproductive Health

- Adolescent girls who have access to an SBHC are more likely to get reproductive preventive care.[21]
- SBHCs can reduce the unplanned pregnancy rate among adolescents.[22]

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