



This letter will be sent by NASBHC to Senator Harkin and Representative Kingston, as well as to other members of Congress, in April 2013. School administrators from other states will be included as signatories.

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate, SD-131
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Kingston:

We, the undersigned school administrators, are united in our support for school-based health centers (SBHCs). We are writing to ask for inclusion of \$50 million for the operations of SBHCs in the fiscal year 2014 budget.

SBHCs serve as a vital access point for primary and mental health care for students who otherwise would go without. Studies demonstrate that adolescents are far more likely to come to SBHCs for mental health services than to other community providers.

- School-based health centers offer high quality mental health care by using an integrated strategy for addressing health and mental health issues. Several studies have shown that the barriers experienced in traditional mental health settings – stigma, non-compliance, inadequate access – are overcome in school-based settings.
- In studies of SBHC service utilization, mental health counseling is repeatedly identified as the leading reason for visits by students.

Moreover, poor health severely limits a child's motivation and ability to learn. Research confirms what we have seen with our own eyes: health disparities affect educational achievement. Improving students' health is integral to education success.

- High school SBHC users in one 2000 study had a 50 percent decrease in absenteeism and 25 percent decrease in tardiness two months after receiving school-based mental health and counseling.
- A study of SBHC users found that those who use the clinic for medical purposes had a significant increase in attendance over nonusers.

Students cannot learn if they are sick, and SBHCs are proven to decrease absenteeism and tardiness. In our schools, we have seen SBHCs keep students healthy and at their desks.



As Congress looks to strengthen our education and health care sectors, your committees can make a difference by supporting appropriations for the operations of school-based health centers.

Sincerely,

Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, California

Dr. Trudy Arriaga, Superintendent, Ventura Unified School District
Dorma Baker, Superintendent, Pajaro Valley Unified School District
Dr. Daryl Camp, Superintendent, Riverbank Unified School District
Richard Carranza, Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District
Dr. John Deasy, Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District
Robert Frausto, Superintendent, Kerman Unified School District
Jon Gundry, Superintendent, Pasadena Unified School District
Dr. Bruce Harter, Superintendent, West Contra Costa Unified School District
Bill Kowba, Superintendent, San Diego Unified School District
Dr. Debra Lindo, Superintendent, Emery Unified School District
Richard Martinez, Superintendent, Pomona Unified School District
Kari McVeigh, Superintendent, New Haven Unified School District
Marco Petruzzi, Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent, Green Dot Public Schools
Jonathan Raymond, Superintendent, Sacramento City Unified School District
Neil Smith, Co-Superintendent, Berkeley Unified School District
Dr. Tony Smith, Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District
Edward Velasquez, Superintendent, Lynwood Unified School District
Kirsten Vital, Superintendent, Alameda Unified School District