Breakout session

Driving Impact through Policy and Practice: Strengthening Ohio's School-based Health Care Infrastructure

Speakers

Rachael Schilling, PhD, Program Manager, Ohio School-Based Health Alliance
Katherine Bissett, BSN, RN, Director of Initiatives, Ohio School-Based Health Alliance

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Driving impact through policy and practice:

Strengthening Ohio's school-based health care infrastructure

Thursday, October 9, 2025

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Ohio School-Based Health Alliance "Ohio Alliance"

The Ohio Alliance is the only nonprofit, independent, statewide organization created to advance and support the sustainability and expansion of school-based health care.

Our mission is to improve access to comprehensive, integrated health services through school-based health care to advance equity and improve health and education outcomes for students, their families, and communities.

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Ohio Alliance **areas of focus**

Capacity building through state and regional networks, learning communities, technical assistance, guidance, and resources

Policy transformation to support and accelerate opportunities that strengthen Ohio's school-based health care infrastructure

Data tracking and evaluation of school-based health care initiatives to inform policy and evaluate impact

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Presentation **objectives**

- Build understanding of the **school-based health center (SBHC) model**, including key components and impact

- Be aware of the **system-level challenges** to SBHC and the broader school-based health care infrastructure

- Be familiar with **policies and evidence-driven practices to support SBHCs** and strengthen Ohio's school-based health care infrastructure

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School-Based Health Centers

Key components and impact

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School-based health centers remove barriers to accessing care – **such as cost, transportation, and time** – demonstrating strong evidence for improving student health and education outcomes

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Key SBHC components

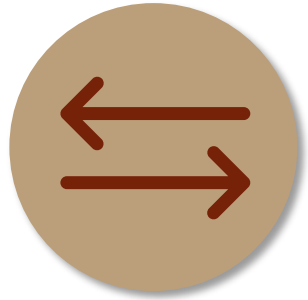
Onsite school presence

Continuity of care

Partnership

Comprehensive primary care

Compliance and consent



System alignment

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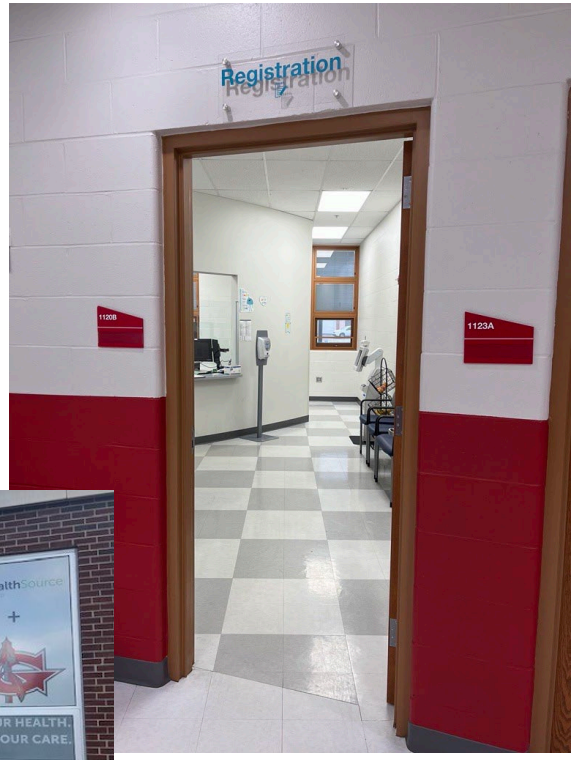
1. Onsite school presence

Located on a school campus, typically in a school building

Prioritize serving students

May also serve **school staff, students' families, and community members**



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2. Comprehensive primary care

Provides comprehensive primary care services, at a minimum

May also offer **behavioral health, vision, and oral health services**

Responsive to needs of the populations it serves

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Power of comprehensive primary care

- **Universal screening** enables connections to needed care, federal/state benefit programs, and community-based social services and supports

- **Robust case management** closes care gaps
  - 28% of SBHCs offer oral health services
  - 17% offer vision services
  - 59% offer behavioral health services

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3. Continuity of care

Operates during the academic day, and sometimes when school is closed (e.g., after the school day, school breaks)

Regular and predictable hours

Coordinates care, including systematic follow-up and referral

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Power of continuity of care

- Rapid and thorough response to **acute and chronic disease management needs** promotes health and academic outcomes

- Patient and family comfort with SBHC staff builds **self-efficacy and advocacy skills**

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4. Compliance and consent

Follow all applicable laws at the federal, state, and local levels

Students must have parental/guardian consent to receive services – the same as any other community-based practice

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5. Partnership

Created through a collaborative partnership between the community, the school, and the healthcare operator

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Power of partnership

- Co-locating healthcare in the natural **center of communities** promotes family comfort, ease of access, and sense of belonging

- Designing care delivery with input from community, school leaders and staff makes SBHCs **patient-centered and responsive**

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6. System alignment

SBHCs align healthcare and education systems to support a student's health and academic success

SBHCs complement and support but do not replace existing school health services

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Power of system alignment

- Flexibility to **design healthcare delivery to promote academic outcomes**

- **Continuum of care** between school and SBHC staff creates a powerful feedback loop that centers patient and family goals

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Other models

Mobile unit

Portable providers

Hub and spoke

Telehealth

School-linked

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SBHC impact

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School-Based Health Centers

Ohio landscape

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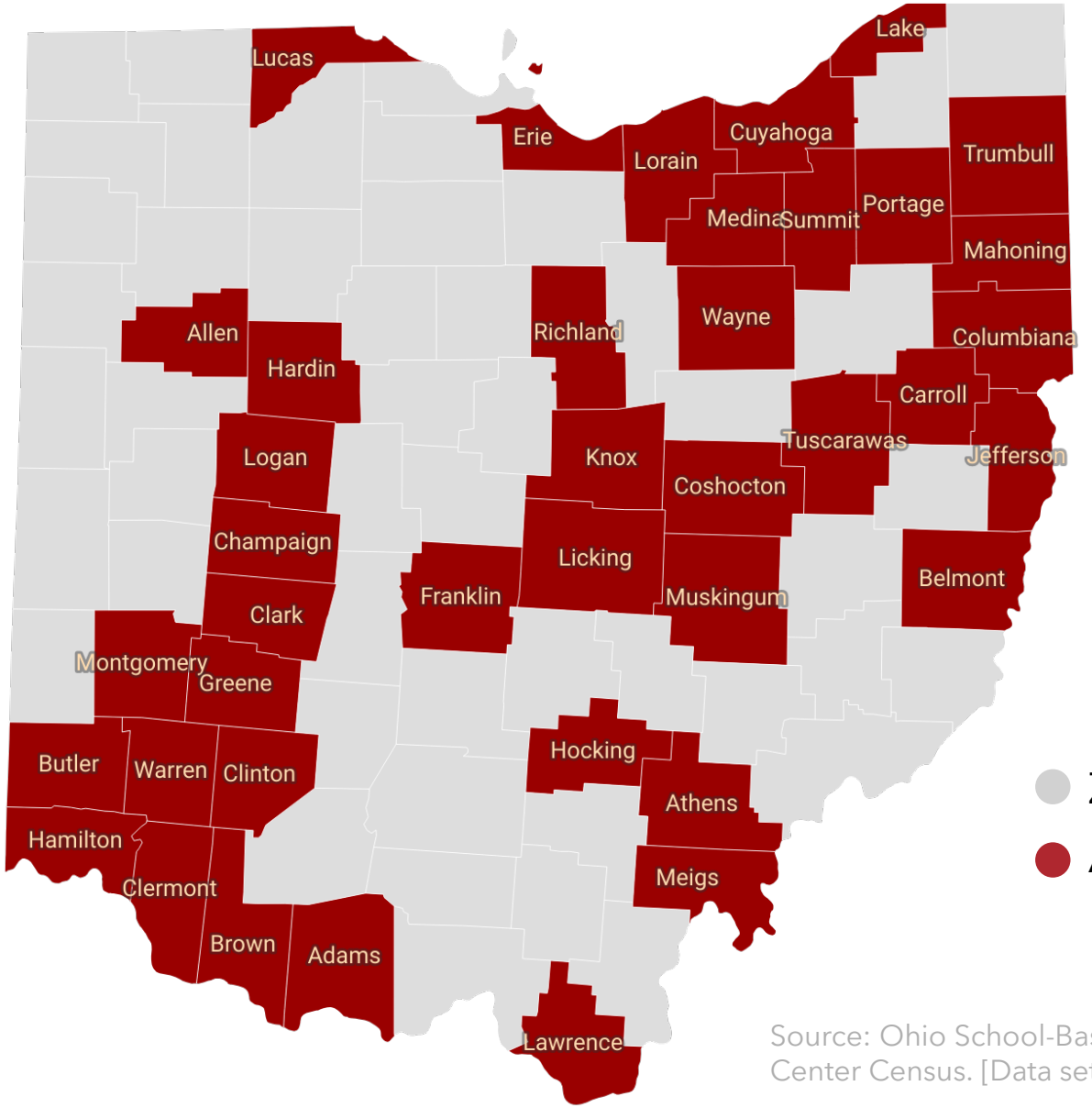
Ohio Counties with School-Based Health Centers



Ohio Counties with SBHCs

(N=138)

- Zero reported SBHCs
- At least one reported SBHC

Source: Ohio School-Based Health Alliance. (2025). Ohio School-Based Health Center Census. [Data set]. https://www.osbha.com/sbhc-census

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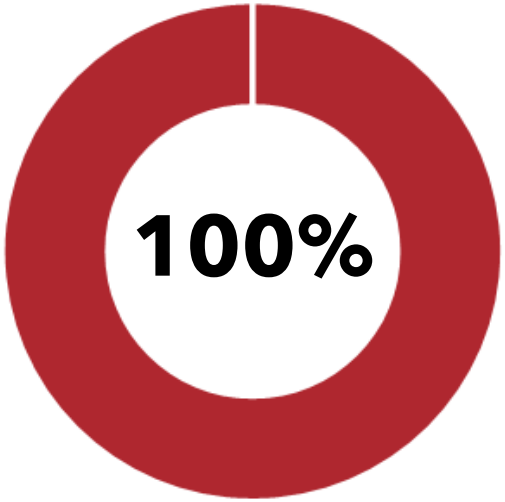
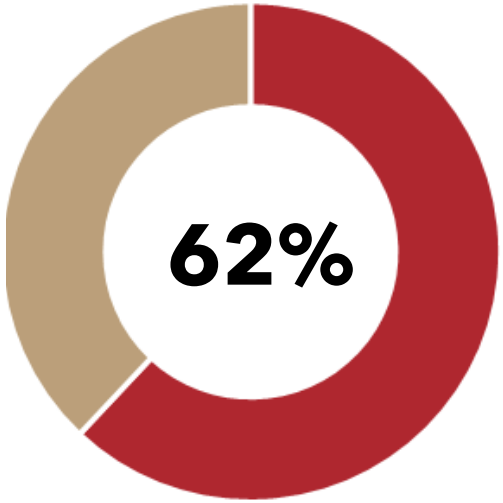
Populations served by SBHCs
(N=138)

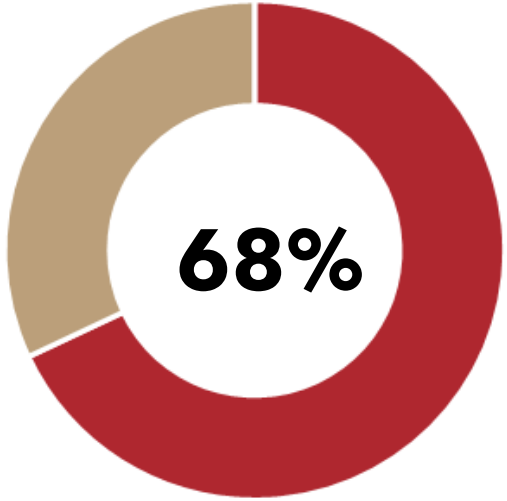
100% of SBHCs serve **students**



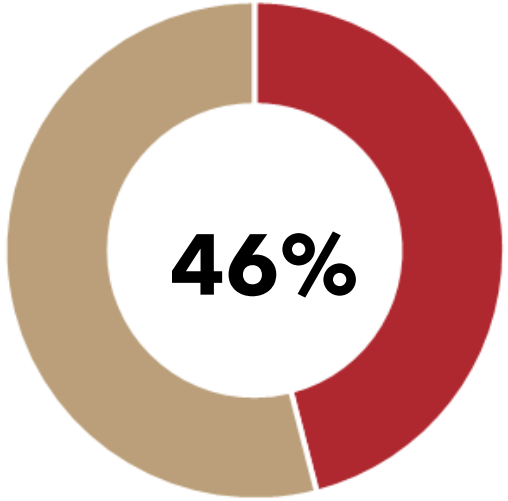
62% of SBHCs serve **school staff**



68% of SBHCs serve **students' families**



46% of SBHCs serve **community members**



Source: Ohio School-Based Health Alliance. (2025). Ohio School-Based Health Center Census. [Data set]. https://www.osbha.com/sbhc-census

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SBHC Metrics
2023-24 school year

124,933 consents on file
(N=73)

50,666 patients 0-18 years old served
(N=110)

159,281 SBHC visits
(N=109)

21,290 Depression screenings
(N=83)

20,270 well child visits
(N=98)

Source: Ohio School-Based Health Alliance. (2025). Ohio School-Based Health Center Census. [Data set]. https://www.osbha.com/sbhc-census

System-level challenges and policy solutions

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Launch and operations

Financial sustainability

Data accountability and infrastructure

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

High start-up capital and provider operating costs

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

High start-up capital and provider operating costs

Policy solution:

Interagency collaboration and public-private partnership to provide SBHC start-up funding

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

Weak healthcare operator-school partnerships

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

Weak healthcare operator-school partnerships

Policy solution:

Require joint planning between SBHC operators and schools

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

Limited best-practice knowledge

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Launch and operations

Challenge:

Limited best-practice knowledge

Policy solution:

Support robust technical assistance and capacity building for healthcare operators and school districts

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Financial sustainability

Challenge:

Lack of claims identification

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Financial sustainability

Challenge:

Lack of claims identification

Policy solution:

Require an identifier for SBHCs in claims data

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Financial sustainability

Challenge:

Varying reimbursement models and unreimbursed core services

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Financial sustainability

Challenge:

Unreimbursed core services and varying reimbursement models

Policy solution:

Expand reimbursement (for services like care coordination and transportation) and pilot enhanced payment models

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

Lack of a statewide SBHC EHR data hub

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

Lack of a statewide SBHC EHR data hub

Policy solution:

Fund development of a statewide SBHC EHR data hub

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

No integration of health and education data

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

No integration of health and education data

Policy solution:

Pilot bidirectional data sharing initiatives between schools and SBHCs

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

No standardized measures for quality of care

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Data and accountability infrastructure

Challenge:

No standardized measures for quality of care

Policy solution:

Explore SBHC certification to elevate standard of care

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Launch and operations

Financial sustainability

Data accountability and infrastructure

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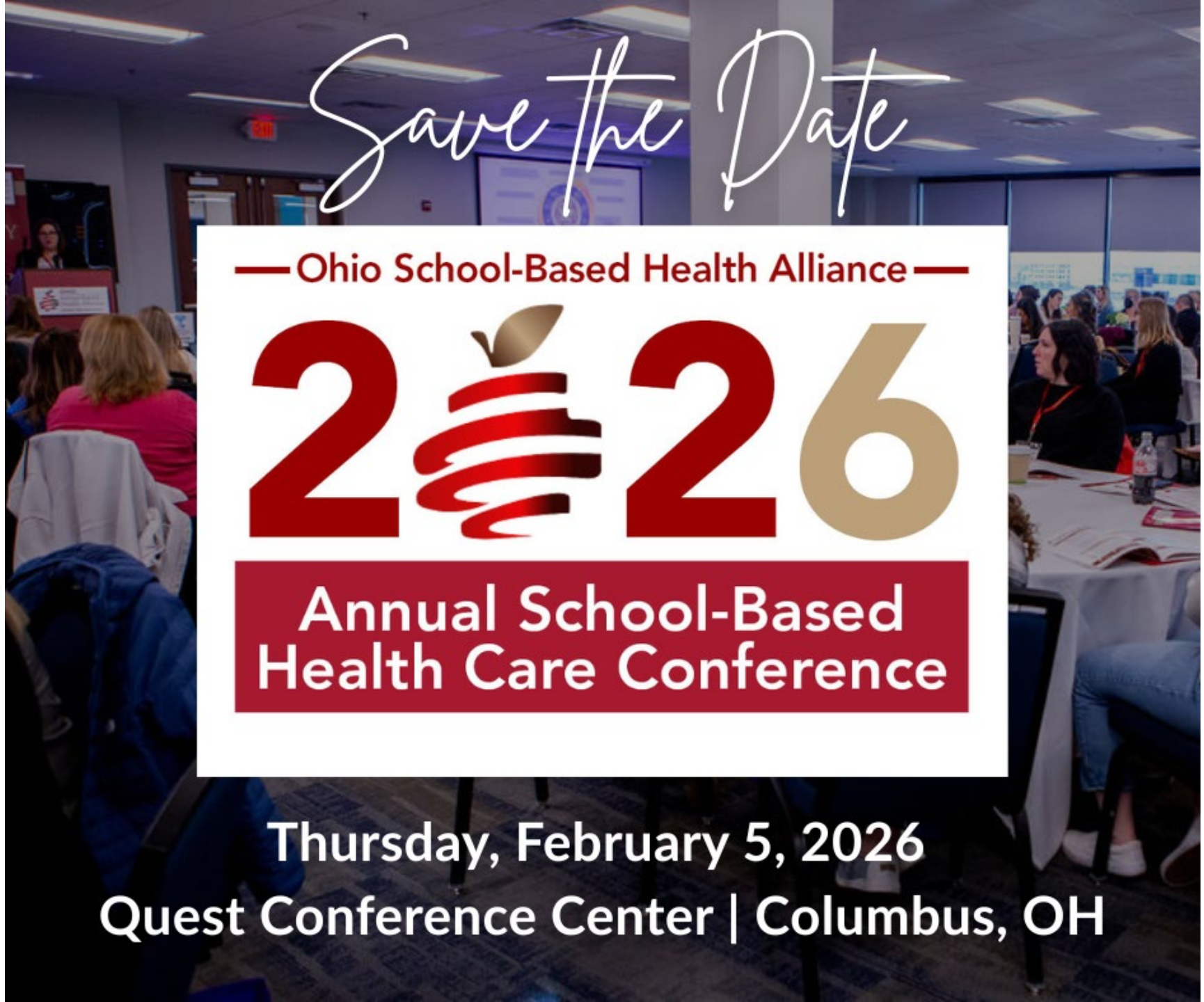
Save the Date
Ohio School-Based Health Alliance
2026
Annual School-Based Health Care Conference
Thursday, February 5, 2026
Quest Conference Center | Columbus, OH

SBHC 101 Toolkit

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SBHC 101 Toolkit

Module 1 Understanding school-based health centers (SBHCs)

What's inside Module 1
This module will guide you in understanding:
- Key components of an SBHC
- Other school-based health care delivery mechanisms
- Relationship between SBHC and school health services team

This Tookit also includes:
- Module 2: Planning for an SBHC
- Module 3: Setting up an SBHC

What is an SBHC?

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are an evidence-driven strategy that brings health care to where our youngest Ohioans spend most of their time – school. By placing children at the center of services, delivering care in a safe and nurturing environment, and removing barriers to accessing health care, SBHCs:
- Keep kids healthy and in school so their education is not interrupted
- Reduce high costs to the healthcare system and Medicaid by decreasing emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and improving care coordination and medication management
- Allow parents or guardians to stay at work so they are better able to support their families, and prevent work productivity loss for employers

An SBHC is created through a partnership between a school/school district and a healthcare provider to provide access to, at minimum, comprehensive primary care services to students on a school campus. The healthcare provider (also referred to as the **SBHC operator**) serves as the operator and administrator of the SBHC, working closely with the school to provide continuity of care and ensure student needs are met. This collaborative health and education partnership puts students and families at the heart of its services, and is transformational in reducing disparities and improving health and education outcomes.

In addition to providing comprehensive primary care services, SBHCs often provide:
- Behavioral health
- Oral health
- Vision
- Care coordination
- Social services and supports

Although SBHCs prioritize serving students, some centers also provide health care to school personnel and faculty, families of students, and community members. In some rural, Appalachian, and urban regions of Ohio that are underserved, SBHCs are the only available healthcare provider for students and the broader community. The Ohio School-Based Health Alliance **census** provides location and operational information on SBHCs.

Tools: Evidence and support for SBHCs
- **School-based health care in Ohio: A closer look at school-based health centers (SBHCs)** *Ohio School-Based Health Alliance.* This brief provides an overview of the state's SBHC landscape and key education and health impacts of SBHCs.
- **Social Determinants of Health: School-Based Health Centers** *Community Preventive Services Taskforce.* This resource provides a systematic review of the evidence supporting SBHCs.
- **School-Based Health Centers and Pediatric Practice** *The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Policy Statement from October 2021.* This policy statement outlines the benefits of SBHCs.
- **The Evidence on School-Based Health Centers: A Review** *Global Pediatric Health.* This resource discusses how SBHCs promote social mobility and impact health equity.

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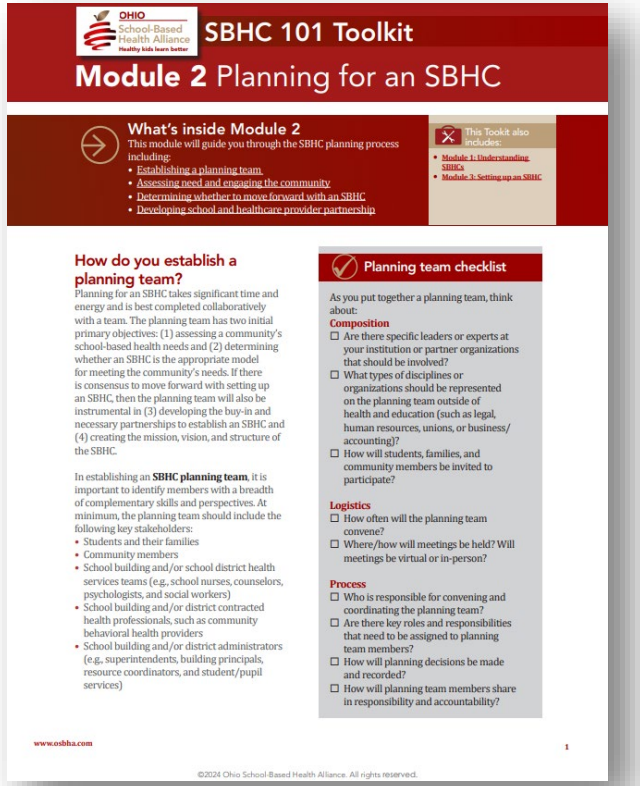

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SBHC 101 Toolkit

Module 2 Planning for an SBHC

What's inside Module 2
This module will guide you through the SBHC planning process including:
- Establishing a planning team
- Assessing need and engaging the community
- Determining whether to move forward with an SBHC
- Developing school and healthcare provider partnership

This Tookit also includes:
- Module 1: Understanding SBHCs
- Module 3: Setting up an SBHC

How do you establish a planning team?

Planning for an SBHC takes significant time and energy and is best completed collaboratively with a team. The planning team has two initial primary objectives: (1) assessing a community's school-based health needs and (2) determining whether an SBHC is the appropriate model for meeting the community's needs. If there is consensus to move forward with setting up an SBHC, then the planning team will also be instrumental in (3) developing the buy-in and necessary partnerships to establish an SBHC and (4) creating the mission, vision, and structure of the SBHC.

In establishing an **SBHC planning team**, it is important to identify members with a breadth of complementary skills and perspectives. At minimum, the planning team should include the following key stakeholders:
- Students and their families
- Community members
- School building and/or school district health services teams (e.g., school nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers)
- School building and/or district contracted health professionals, such as community behavioral health providers
- School building and/or district administrators (e.g., superintendents, building principals, resource coordinators, and student/pupil services)

Planning team checklist

As you put together a planning team, think about:

Composition
- ☐ Are there specific leaders or experts at your institution or partner organizations that should be involved?
- ☐ What types of disciplines or organizations should be represented on the planning team outside of health and education (such as legal, human resources, unions, or business/accounting)?
- ☐ How will students, families, and community members be invited to participate?

Logistics
- ☐ How often will the planning team convene?
- ☐ Where/how will meetings be held? Will meetings be virtual or in-person?

Process
- ☐ Who is responsible for convening and coordinating the planning team?
- ☐ Are there key roles and responsibilities that need to be assigned to planning team members?
- ☐ How will planning decisions be made and recorded?
- ☐ How will planning team members share in responsibility and accountability?

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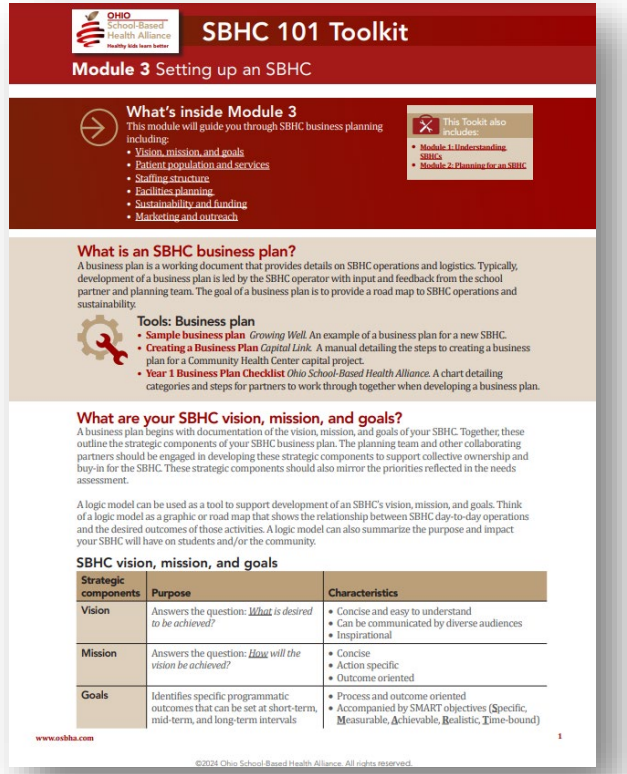

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SBHC 101 Toolkit

Module 3 Setting up an SBHC

What's inside Module 3
This module will guide you through SBHC business planning including:
- Vision, mission, and goals
- Patient population and services
- Staffing structure
- Facilities planning
- Sustainability and funding
- Marketing and outreach

This Tookit also includes:
- Module 1: Understanding SBHCs
- Module 2: Planning for an SBHC

What is an SBHC business plan?

A business plan is a working document that provides details on SBHC operations and logistics. Typically, development of a business plan is led by the SBHC operator with input and feedback from the school partner and planning team. The goal of a business plan is to provide a road map to SBHC operations and sustainability.

Tools: Business plan
- **Sample business plan** *Growing Well.* An example of a business plan for a new SBHC.
- **Creating a Business Plan** *Capital Link.* A manual detailing the steps to creating a business plan for a Community Health Center capital project.
- **Year 1 Business Plan Checklist** *Ohio School-Based Health Alliance.* A chart detailing categories and steps for partners to work through together when developing a business plan.

What are your SBHC vision, mission, and goals?

A business plan begins with documentation of the vision, mission, and goals of your SBHC. Together, these outline the strategic components of your SBHC business plan. The planning team and other collaborating partners should be engaged in developing these strategic components to support collective ownership and buy-in for the SBHC. These strategic components should also mirror the priorities reflected in the needs assessment.

A logic model can be used as a tool to support development of an SBHC's vision, mission, and goals. Think of a logic model as a graphic or road map that shows the relationship between SBHC day-to-day operations and the desired outcomes of those activities. A logic model can also summarize the purpose and impact your SBHC will have on students and/or the community.

SBHC vision, mission, and goals

Strategic components	Purpose	Characteristics
Vision	Answers the question: *What is desired to be achieved?*	• Concise and easy to understand • Can be communicated by diverse audiences • Inspirational
Mission	Answers the question: *How will the vision be achieved?*	• Concise • Action specific • Outcome oriented
Goals	Identifies specific programmatic outcomes that can be set at short-term, mid-term, and long-term intervals	• Process and outcome oriented • Accompanied by SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)

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Be sure to use the hashtags #OhioSBHC25, #SBHCimpact and #OhioSBHCs

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Ohio Alliance meetings

Register for the Ohio Alliance bimonthly learning community virtual meetings

Registration is limited to community school-based health care providers and education partners

Register for the Ohio Alliance Quarterly meetings

Open to all school-based health care partners

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Questions?

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