

School-based health center (SBHC) common definition



Ohio School-Based Health Alliance “Ohio Alliance”

The Ohio Alliance is the only nonpartisan, 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.



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



SBHC common definition

Background

- Under contract with the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Alliance convened a statewide School-Based Health Center (SBHC) Definition Advisory Group to inform development of a common SBHC definition for Ohio.
- The Advisory Group included representatives from 35 organizations across all regions of the state, including community healthcare providers, school districts, health plans, advocacy organizations, state agencies, and other statewide partners.
- The Advisory Group also identified defining characteristics of other ways to deliver school-based health care services.



SBHC common definition

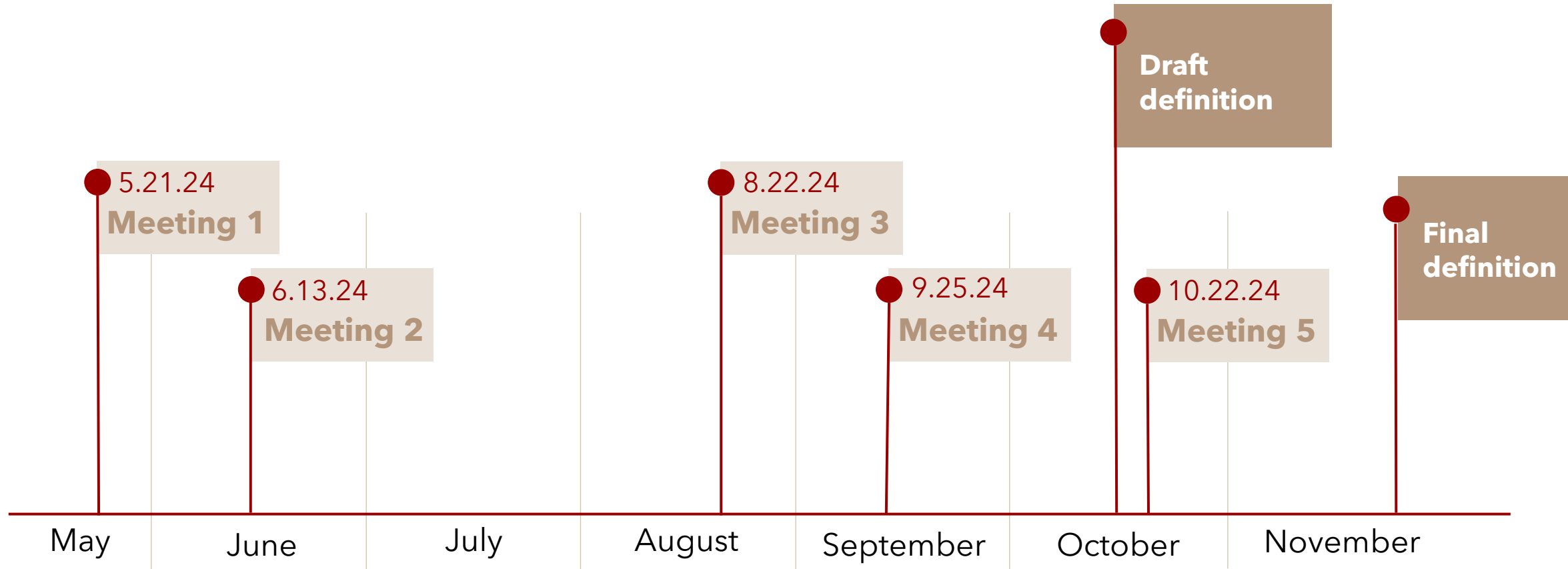
Purpose

The SBHC common definition can serve a variety of purposes, including:

- Promote best practices and guidelines for the development of high-quality, sustainable SBHCs
 - Advance policy conversations around SBHC operations and sustainability
 - Clarify ambiguity around the role of SBHCs
 - Create a stronger infrastructure for the provision of high quality, sustainable SBHCs



Advisory group timeline



CY 2024

The Ohio Alliance contracted with the Health Policy Institute of Ohio to provide research, writing, and facilitation support for this initiative.

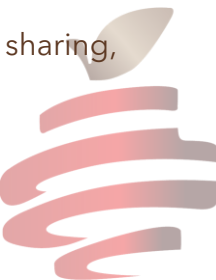


SBHC common definition March 2025

1. A school-based health center (SBHC) is an evidence-based model of health care delivery where a center is established and operated in a school or on a school campus. SBHCs prioritize serving students in the school or district in which the SBHC is located and may also extend services to other populations including but not limited to students' families, school personnel, and community members.
2. An SBHC provides comprehensive primary care services¹ to students and may deliver additional services or work with other providers to deliver additional services based on assessed community need, including but not limited to behavioral, vision, and oral health services. Care provided by an SBHC should be responsive to the community and meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the populations served.
3. An SBHC has a focus on increasing access to high-quality healthcare services to improve health and education outcomes and reduce disparities. SBHCs align healthcare and education systems to support a student's success both inside and outside of school. Care provided by an SBHC complements and supports but does not replace or duplicate existing health services² provided by the school.
4. SBHCs are created through a collaborative partnership between the community, the school, and an entity that operates and administers the SBHC ("operator"), with students and families being central to this partnership. The SBHC operator is a: (A) federally qualified health center or federally qualified health center look-alike (B) hospital; (C) public health department; (D) nonprofit health or human services agency; or (E) other entity that can operate/administer healthcare operations. The SBHC operator and the partnering school district enter into a legally binding agreement regarding the administration and operation of the SBHC.
5. An SBHC provides on-site services and:
 - Operates, at a minimum, during the academic day when school is in session
 - Operates with regular frequency to ensure the provision of continuous and appropriate care
 - Coordinates care, including a systematic follow-up and referral process for patients
 - Establishes a method for the exchange of health information between the SBHC and, if applicable, a patient's primary care provider and other existing care provider(s)
 - Communicates with appropriate school personnel to ensure the provision of integrated care
 - Establishes a system to connect patients to care outside of SBHC operating hours
6. An SBHC operates in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including those relating to licensure and certification, information sharing, and consent for treatment.

¹ **Primary care services** include, but are not limited to, comprehensive health assessments/well child exams, primary care mental health, diagnosis and treatment of minor, acute, and chronic medical conditions, and referrals to and follow-up for specialty care.

² **Health services provided in schools** include, but are not limited to, services provided by school nurses, psychologists, counselors, social workers, health aides, etc.



SBHC common definition

Onsite school presence

1. A school-based health center (SBHC) is an **evidence-based model of health care delivery** where a center is established and **operated in a school or on a school campus**. SBHCs **prioritize serving students in the school or district in which the SBHC is located** and **may** also **extend services to other populations**, such as students' families, school personnel, and community members.



SBHC common definition

Comprehensive primary care and community need

2. An SBHC **provides comprehensive primary care services**¹ to students and **may deliver additional services** or work with other providers to deliver services based on assessed community need, such as **behavioral, vision, and oral health services**. Care provided by an SBHC should be **responsive to the community and the needs of the populations it serves**.

¹. **Primary care services** include, but are not limited to, comprehensive health assessments/well child exams, primary care mental health, diagnosis and treatment of minor, acute, and chronic medical conditions, and referrals to and follow-up for specialty care.



SBHC common definition

System alignment

3. An SBHC has a focus on increasing access to high-quality healthcare services to **improve health and education outcomes and reduce disparities**. SBHCs **align healthcare and education systems** to support a student's success both inside and outside of school. Care provided by an SBHC **complements and supports but does not replace or duplicate existing health services² provided by the school**.

2. **Health services provided in schools** include, but are not limited to, services provided by school nurses, psychologists, counselors, social workers, health aides, etc.



SBHC common definition

Partnership

4. SBHCs are created through a **collaborative partnership between the community, the school, and an entity that operates and administers the SBHC** (“operator”), with students and families being central to this partnership. The SBHC operator is a: (A) federally qualified health center or federally qualified health center look-alike (B) hospital; (C) public health department; (D) nonprofit health or human services agency; or (E) other entity that can operate/administer healthcare operations. The **SBHC operator and the partnering school district enter into a legally binding agreement** regarding the administration and operation of the SBHC.



SBHC common definition

Continuity of care

5. An SBHC provides on-site services and:
 - **Operates**, at a minimum, **during the academic day** when school is in session
 - Operates with **regular frequency** to ensure the provision of **continuous and appropriate care**
 - **Coordinates care**, including a **systematic follow-up and referral process** for patients
 - Establishes a method for the **exchange of health information** between the SBHC and, if applicable, a patient's primary care provider and other existing care provider(s)
 - **Communicates with appropriate school personnel** to ensure the **provision of integrated care**
 - Establishes a system to **connect patients to care outside of SBHC** operating hours



SBHC common definition

Compliance and consent

6. An SBHC **operates in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations**, including those relating to **licensure and certification, information sharing, and consent for treatment.**



SBHC common definition **opportunities**

- Promotes a high-quality, sustainable SBHC model
- Increases awareness of SBHCs and resolves misconceptions about the model
- Supports standardized claims and data collection for utilization and quality reporting and the establishment of SBHC benchmarks
- Paves the path for quality improvement and value-based payment/shared savings opportunities
- Provides a foundation for demonstrating return on investment for partners, payers, funders, and policymakers



SBHC 101 Toolkit

The **SBHC 101 Toolkit** is for school districts, healthcare providers, and other partners interested in exploring the SBHC model. The Toolkit is divided into three Modules with best practice guidance, resources, and tools to support efforts to learn about, plan for, and set up a high quality, sustainable SBHC model in a school community that aligns with the SBHC common definition.



The Toolkit was developed by the Ohio School-Based Health Alliance with funding from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and in partnership with the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.



<https://www.osbha.com/sbhctoolkit101>



Other ways to deliver school-based health care



Other ways to deliver school-based health care

- This Advisory Group focused on developing a common definition of an **SBHC**, which **is an evidence-based and sustainable model of school-based health care delivery**.
- The Ohio Alliance and Advisory Group members also acknowledge that there are other innovative ways to deliver school-based health care services being implemented across Ohio. **These school-based health care delivery mechanisms vary in their evidence base, purpose, goals, outcomes, and structure.**
- Key distinguishing characteristics of these mechanisms are described in the following slides. These characteristics are not intended to serve as comprehensive definitions, but rather as a guide for understanding Ohio's school-based health care landscape.





Mobile unit

- Mobile unit (i.e., bus, trailer, van) parked on a school campus
- Staffed and fully fitted with the equipment and medical supplies needed to provide clinical services to students
- Can be equipped to deliver primary care services or other specific health services, such as dental care, vision or specialty services
- Often scheduled on a school building rotation, providing notice to families when the mobile unit will be on site or pre-scheduling visits





Telehealth

- Healthcare services are provided via telehealth to a student on a school campus
- Model utilizes an adult “telepresenter” who accompanies and supports the patient during the visit with the receiving telehealth provider
- Telepresenter can be an employee of the school system **or** an employee of a healthcare provider who travels to or is based at the school
- Visit takes place in a private space at the site where the student is located
- Used to connect students to:
 - Health care if there is no SBHC or healthcare provider on the school campus that is available to the student
 - Specialists at a traditional healthcare facility located outside of the school building campus
 - An SBHC site in another school building within the school district





Portable providers

- Clinical provider or team travels from one school building to another, operating in spaces as designated or available
- Provider carries healthcare supplies or equipment with them
- Services may be provided on a regular or intermittent schedule





School-linked

- Refers to a relationship between a school and a community healthcare provider that is located near a school building or campus but is not on-site
- Community provider may set aside appointments for students and/or the school may refer students to the provider for services
- Services delivered to students can vary depending on the provider's capacity and the students' needs
- School, healthcare provider, or family can arrange for transportation of the student to and from services





Hub and spoke

(via transportation or telehealth)

- Typically implemented as an extension of an SBHC
- SBHC is co-located in a school building or on a school campus, and students from other buildings within the district are transported to and from the SBHC site or connected via telehealth
- Provides students in other school buildings with access to the SBHC, often without relying on family members to provide transportation



Advisory group members

Adena Health System

Akron Children's Hospital

Appalachian Children Coalition

Aultman Health Foundation

CareSource

Centerpoint Health

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

Cincinnati Public Health

Cleveland Clinic

Dayton Children's Hospital

Growing Well

Health Partners of Western Ohio

HealthSource of Ohio

Hopewell Health Centers

Nationwide Children's Hospital

Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Ohio Association of Community Health Centers

Ohio Association of Health Plans

Ohio Association of School Nurses

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

Ohio Department of Health

Ohio Department of Medicaid

Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Ohio Hills Health Center

Ohio Optometric Foundation/Association

OhioRISE

Oral Health Ohio

Primary Health Solutions

Springfield City School District

The Health Care Connection

The MetroHealth System

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers

Third Street Family Health Services

Wickliffe City School District



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



Get connected!

Join the Ohio Alliance's mailing list to receive news and updates

http://eepurl.com/h_D7HX



Become a member of the Ohio Alliance



Gain access to membership benefits including:

- Policy, advocacy, and funding
- Professional development and capacity building
- Priority communications and visibility

To learn more about Ohio Alliance
membership visit

www.surveymonkey.com/r/OhioAllianceMembership

or scan the QR code to the right



Follow us on social media

Amplify school-based health care by using the hashtags #OhioSBHC25, #SBHCimpact and #OhioSBHCs



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