

# Office of School Health



## School-Based Health Center Enrollment Toolkit

*This toolkit was developed by Dr. Marcelo De Stefano and Bibi Parmar, NYCDOE Office of School Health*

## **SBHC Enrollment Toolkit**

Improving School-Based Health Center (SBHC) enrollment is one of the top priorities for the 2009-10 school year. The State Department of Health requires that all SBHCs enroll at least 75% of all registered students. This target is likely to increase in the future. The Office of School Health (OSH) will be scheduling visits to SBHCs to advise SBHC staff on how to improve their enrollment numbers.

In a recent SBHC workshop, providers shared many tips and successful experiences to boost SBHC enrollment. Based on these suggestions and our own experience from working with all SBHCs, OSH has developed a resource toolkit that if applied consistently should help you improve enrollment in your SBHC sites. Each point addressed includes only one sample activity; however, feel free to implement as many additional activities as necessary.

We suggest that you discuss your proposed student enrollment activities, in advance, with the principal. Keeping your principals informed is essential to assure their support for SBHC activities.

We hope you find this toolkit useful.

If you have any questions or would like to share further suggestions with other SBHCs please feel free to contact:

**Bibi Khan-Parmar, MPA**

Principal Administrative Associate, SBHC

Phone: 212-374-7850

Fax: 212-374-9435

Email: [fkhan8@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:fkhan8@schools.nyc.gov)

or

**Marcelo De Stefano, Ed.D., M.Arch.**

Manager, SBHC and Health Insurance Liaison

Phone: 212-374-2318

Fax: 212-374-9435

Email: [mdestefano4@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:mdestefano4@schools.nyc.gov)

## I. BUILD A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOL STAFF

Establishing a positive and effective relationship with the principal is recognized by all as an essential element in any plan to increase enrollment. Building a relationship with the principal and school staff takes time and consistent effort; therefore, maintaining a professional, friendly, and open attitude is important in all stages of relationship building.

### A. *Establish a positive relationship with the principal/s and school staff:*

- Introduce all SBHC staff members including contact information, SBHC hours of operation, and staff schedules at the beginning of each school year.
- Volunteer to be part of key school committees, for example, school safety, health, and wellness, among others.
- Ask for suggestions for improvement from principal and school staff.

### B. *Establish a SBHC enrollment support committee:*

- Reach out to guidance counselors, parent coordinators, school administrative staff, secretaries, gym teachers, and coaches to participate in a SBHC enrollment support committee.
- Provide a certificate of recognition for teachers and school staff that offer their time and support to SBHC enrollment efforts.

### C. *Establish a clear protocol for communication:*

- Identify a day-to-day liaison between the SBHC and school administration.
- Schedule regular meetings with the principal/s.
- Ensure that the school has the SBHC parental consent forms readily available for school staff.

### D. *Be patient but persistent in building relationships:*

- Create opportunities for strengthening your network with the school.

#### **ACTIVITY**

Objective: Engage the principal in helping the SBHC improve student enrollment.

Activity: Write a SBHC introductory cover letter co-signed with the principal and distribute to parents along with the SBHC enrollment packet. The principal's signature is the key to gain parents' trust (See Appendix A for a sample letter).

Remember: Write a draft letter and submit it to the principal asking for his/her to review/edit. This could be the first collaborative venture to break the ice for further enrollment efforts so it will be helpful to be as accommodating as possible.

## II. PROJECT A POSITIVE SBHC IMAGE

Projecting a positive SBHC image will help to gain the support of the principal and school staff, raise student interest, increase participation in SBHC events and improve the return rate of consent forms from parents. Specifically, SBHCs should:

A. *Promote the SBHC as a “safe haven” for students to access health care:*

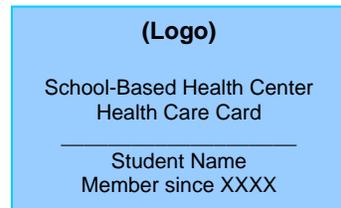
- Interact with students, teachers, and parents throughout the school year.
- Display signs and posters that are age appropriate with language and images that students can identify with.
- Provide outreach to students about services available at the SBHC
- Create an attractive clinic environment.
- Ensure that the facility is organized, clean, and well maintained.

B. *Provide information in all the predominant languages at the school/s:*

- If possible, consider hiring bi-lingual staff who can communicate with parents in their native language.

C. *Provide student ID to those who return a signed parental consent form:*

- Print enrollment cards to give to enrolled students a sense of empowerment.



### ACTIVITY

**Objective:** To advertise SBHC services, events, and accomplishments.

**Activity:** Publish a SBHC quarterly newsletter (See Appendix B for a sample template)

**Remember:** The content of the newsletter is a projection of the commitment and dedication of the SBHC. Be sure to include staff names, hours of operation, audience appropriate articles, announcements (e.g. number of students that obtain jobs after getting a physical), incorporate humor, and keep the language always simple and positive. If possible, involve student art, writings, or quotes to the newsletter.  
Always inform the principal of student involvement in this activity and share a draft by the principal before mass producing.

**Resources:** [Click here](#) to access a sample SBHC quarterly newsletter in Microsoft Word. Feel free to adapt the newsletter to the needs of your SBHC.

### III. PLAN EFFECTIVE SBHC ACTIVITIES

When planning SBHC activities, remember to inform the principal of any student related events. By informing principals of your activities and their goals and including them from the beginning, they will be able to provide assistance and valuable suggestions to help you organize a successful event.

#### A. *Plan activities for special school events:*

- Organize health fairs to project a positive message about the SBHCs commitment to student health, wellness, and involvement in the school community.
- Plan to attend new student orientation events, open school events, and parent association meetings, among other events.
- Utilize in-classroom health workshops as a way to promote SBHC enrollment.
- Contests are a fun way of increasing SBHC enrollment. It gives the student an incentive to return a completed parental consent form.

#### B. *Provide rewards:*

- Provide the class that has the greatest percentage of returned enrollment forms with a special luncheon; provide a small reward for individual students bringing back an enrollment form (e.g., pen/pencil/notepad, etc.); Enter all students who return a signed consent form into a contest to win a special prize (e.g., digital music player, gift card, etc.).

#### C. *Limited budget?*

- Apply for grants: <http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/Grant-Alerts.aspx>

## ACTIVITY

**Objective:** To promote the SBHC's commitment to student health, wellness, and involvement in the school community.

**Activity:** Organize a school-wide health fair.

**Planning:** (1) Negotiate a time, date and location with the principal (often times the health fair can coincide with a related school event), (2) with help from the parent coordinator and PTA, consider inviting parents, (3) invite the public health insurance enroller that is paired with the school to have an informational booth (contact Bibi Parmar at [fkhan8@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:fkhan8@schools.nyc.gov) for information on the enroller paired with the school), (4) if within your budget, consider light and healthy snacks with bottled water and fruit juice and SBHC promotional items such as T-shirts, pens, pins, key chains, etc.

**Remember:** Consult with the principal or his/her designee to assist in the planning of this event. You will need the support of teachers, coaches, parent coordinator, security staff, and all principals for a well-run event.

**Resources:** Tap into possible resources from your parent organization for materials, staff, health educators, nutritionist and community sponsorship. NYC DOHMH has free publications available on their website: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/home/home.shtml). Also contact the State ([www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us)) DOH, CDC ([www2a.cdc.gov/nchstp\\_od/piweb/stdorderform.asp](http://www2a.cdc.gov/nchstp_od/piweb/stdorderform.asp)) and SEICUS ([www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)) for other free publications.

#### **IV. IDENTIFY ENROLLMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Use current concerns, such as those of parents and principals' concerns about H1N1 flu and other health outbreaks as opportunities to educate parents about the importance of enrolling their children in the SBHC. Parents see an immediate benefit to SBHC enrollment when they learn that their children's medical needs can be taken care of onsite at the school.

*A. Utilize immunization requirements, sports physicals, and working paper physicals as a way to promote the benefits of enrolling at the SBHC:*

- Advertise events and services to students using flyers, posters, or announcements.
- Provide SBHC enrollment forms to students seeking vaccinations, physical examination for working papers, or physical examination to participate in team sports so that they are encouraged to return signed consent forms.

*B. For high school SBHCs, reach out to the health resource room for support and referrals:*

- Ask the principal or the main administrative office for information about the school's health resource contacts and request their collaboration.

*C. Seek out school resources:*

- Ask the school administration if they can include an automated phone message to be sent to parents requesting that they enroll their children in the SBHC.
- Provide a list of students not enrolled in the SBHC to principals so they are aware of the number of students not utilizing services.

#### **ACTIVITY**

**Objective:** To use required student immunizations and physical examinations as opportunities to boost enrollment.

**Activity:** Design a catchy flyer (See Appendix C for a sample).

**Remember:** Before posting any flyer consult with the principal for approval. Have enrollment forms ready for distribution.

## V. NETWORK

As part of a meet and greet event, providing a healthy snack is an easy way to attract people. Once you have their attention, this is a great opportunity to distribute information about SBHC services. Meeting school staff and parents face-to-face is an effective method to gain their trust and support.

### A. *Host a breakfast or luncheon for school staff:*

- Find out if the school has any partnerships with local food vendors to cut down on some costs.
- Provide information about the SBHC services and benefits of enrolling students.
- Seek their support for enrolling purposes.
- Clarify SBHC policies, for example, protocols for bringing students to the SBHC, reporting to parents, etc.

### B. *Healthy snacks at open school events:*

- Provide candy/granola bar at the SBHC information table during school events to attract parents over to the SBHC information table.
- Distribute flyers including a description of the SBHC services and benefits and an enrollment form.

### **ACTIVITY**

Objective: To attract school staff and parents.

Activity: Host a beginning of the year “kickoff” breakfast for school staff.

Planning: (1) Inform new teachers of the services of the SBHC, (2) remind returning teachers of the services of the SBHC, (3) gain school support for enrollment (distribute parental consent forms), and (4) answer any questions staff may have.

Remember: Schedule the event at a convenient time for school staff and give several weeks of advance notice and a reminder a few days before the event.

## VI. INCREASE PARENTAL CONSENT RETURN

Mailing SBHC enrollment packets with other school forms has been cited as an effective way of completed parental consent forms being returned.

A. *Request that the SBHC enrollment packet be part of the new student orientation package and other mailings sent out to parents:*

- Make copies of the enrollment packet ahead of time and bring them to the school's main office so that they can be easily inserted into the school's mailing.
- Find out if there is any specific color paper that you should not use for the enrollment packet. Sometimes the school likes to have their new student forms color coded for easy filing.
- Offer assistance in stuffing the mailing envelopes.

### **ACTIVITY**

Objective: To enroll new incoming students.

Activity: Collaborative mailing efforts with school administration.

Planning: An enrollment packet is sent home to each new student, including a SBHC brochure with the list of services and consent form. This is an effective way to increase return rate. A new student orientation (held by many schools) is a great opportunity to present the benefits and convenience of SBHC services to parents.

Materials: Check with the principal if you could use bright colored paper for the enrollment forms so that it is distinct from the other school forms.

Remember: Follow-up will be necessary. Ask teachers to make announcements in classrooms to remind students about the importance of returning consent forms.

## VII. IMPLEMENT STUDENT / PARENT AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

Word-of-mouth is an excellent resource for referrals to the SBHC. Students are likely to tell their friends of the services available and can serve as advocates for the SBHC. The principal and guidance counselors can help in identifying students that may be interested in becoming ambassadors.

A. *Recruit students who can serve as enrollment ambassadors (see activity below for more details):*

- Spread the word about the opportunity of becoming an ambassador through a poster or flyer (always seek the principal's pre-approval for any flyers and posters that are displayed throughout the school building).
- Develop training sessions to prepare students.
- Provide an incentive to the student for becoming an ambassador.

B. *Recruit active parents in the parent association that can serve as ambassadors for the SBHC:*

- Attend a PTA meeting to advocate for the importance of SBHC enrollment.
- Identify parents that are interested in becoming enrollment ambassadors at other school events.
- Provide these parents with enrollment packets.

### ACTIVITY

Objective: To promote SBHC enrollment through peer referrals.

Activity: Develop SBHC Ambassadors' program.

Planning: (1) Consult principal or guidance counselors to identify outgoing and well spoken students and parents that could serve as SBHC ambassadors, (2) these students and parents should be trained to communicate the services, benefits, and special programs available at the SBHC, and (3) provide rewards or recognition of their support at school events.

Remember: Students will need an incentive to take on the extra duties as ambassador. Identify if the principal would allow participation in the ambassador program to be counted towards extra credit, service, leadership, or merit awards for students' academic record. Other incentives could be gift certificates, or special luncheon etc. Please inform the principal of the reward system to avoid any possible conflicts.

## VIII. BE PERSISTENT

Some of the most common reasons students do not return parental consent forms include (a) the student forgets to give the form to his/her parent, (b) the parent may not have the time to review the forms, and (c) the form could have gotten lost in transit. Following up with parents is a good way to verbally explain to them the SBHC services and benefits of enrolling their children. It is also a good opportunity to answer any questions they may have.

### A. *Follow-up with parents who have not returned a parental consent form:*

- After sending enrollment form with students or mailing them, follow up with students and/or their parents (parent coordinators, school health aide, and guidance counselors may be able to help with this).
- It is not always possible to follow-up with each parent that did not return a parental consent form, however work with the school to come up with a strategy that is doable. The school may have the capability of sending an automated message out to all parents alerting them about the importance of returning a parental consent form.

### ACTIVITY

Objective: To follow-up with parents who have not returned a parental consent form.

Activity: Phone parents within a week of sending home a parental consent form with their child.

Planning: When distributing parental consent forms to students, (1) request the best phone number to reach their parents, (2) keep a log of distributed parental consent forms, and (3) schedule a daily time to follow up with phone calls.

Remember: Persistence will significantly improve enrollment in the long run. Following up within the same week of sending home the parental consent form is most effective in reducing the incident of students losing the form and students forgetting to give their parents the form.

## IX. BE CREATIVE

SBHCs may not always have a budget for discretionary spending on activities, however a bit of creative thinking can yield positive results. Think about the people and resources that are available through the school, for example, art teachers, computer teachers, writing teachers, and physical education teachers. Teachers may be able to work in collaboration with the SBHC to come up with activities to promote health and well-being. Additionally, seek free resource materials through the CDC, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the NYS Department of Health.

### A. *Budgets are tight, so creativity helps in planning low-cost activities:*

- Check if a local restaurant or community organization can sponsor an event.
- Consult with the principal to see if there are any DOE partners that provide free or low-cost materials to schools.

### B. *Apply to federal/state/local grants for special activities:*

- Use the internet as a tool to search for possible grants
- New York State DOH grants can be found at :  
<http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/Grant-Alerts.aspx>
- Grant resources from the National Association of School-Based Health Care (NASBHC):  
<http://www.nasbhc.org/site/c.jsJPKWPFJrH/b.2564543/apps/s/content.asp?ct=3875935>
- Federal government grants: <http://www.grants.gov/>

### ACTIVITY

Objective: Seek school collaboration to develop budget conscious student activities.

Activity: Student poster contest for the best health related message.

Planning: (1) In collaboration with the school principal, sponsor a poster contest; (2) coordinate with the art teacher on the goals of the poster contest; (3) this event could be an in-class activity; (4) recognize the winner/s during a school-wide event and displayed their art; and (5) provide the winning student/s with a certificate and small prize.

Remember: Negotiate a space with principal where the student submissions can be displayed. Additionally, the winners can be acknowledged school-wide through the loud speaker or at a specific event.

## APPENDIX A

# RYAN CENTER

*William F. Ryan Community Health Center*

**It's fast and easy for your child to receive health care services through the School-Based Health Center!!**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The William F. Ryan Community Health Center operates a School Based Health Center at Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School. We would like to encourage you to register your child as a Ryan patient so that he/she can benefit from the spectrum of services we provide. If you registered your child last year with The Ryan Center at West Side High School, please complete this registration packet so that we can update our records. Even if your child already has a primary care doctor, he/she can still benefit from our acute care services if a problem should arise in school. Our services include:

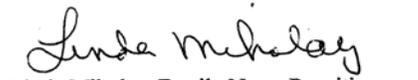
- Medical care—treatment for acute and chronic illness
- Immunizations
- Screening for vision, hearing, asthma, obesity
- Complete physical exam
- Medication and prescriptions
- Laboratory testing
- Health education and counseling
- Mental Health Services
- Screening and referral for health insurance
- Access to care 24 hour/day, 7 days/week

There will be no out-of-the-pocket charges for services provided at The School Based Health Center. The school-based practitioner may need to refer your child back to his/her primary care provider or to the William F. Ryan Community Health Center, located at 110 West 97<sup>th</sup> Street or another provider for specialty or other services. The Ryan Center accepts Medicaid, Child Health Plus and many other health insurance plans. If you do not have any medical coverage, The Ryan Center offers an affordable sliding fee scale based on your income and family size as well as a very low-cost pharmacy plan for patients who have no prescription coverage. Our social worker is available to help you to apply for Medicaid and Child Health Plus.

In order for your child to receive health services, a parent or legal guardian must read, complete, sign and return the enclosed forms, which consist of a consent form and a basic health history. Signing this consent **does not** change your insurance plan. Please complete these forms and have your child return them to the Medical Suite in Room B8 or to their Family group teacher. We look forward to meeting you and providing health services for your child. Feel free to visit us at the School Based Health Center any Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm or call us a 212- 678-7379 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Jean McTavish  
Principal

  
Linda Mikolay, Family Nurse Practitioner  
Supervisor of School Based Health Program

110 West 97th Street • New York, NY 10025 • (212) 749-1820

**Letter sample is courtesy of the Ryan Center**

## APPENDIX B

Sample SBHC Newsletter for the Wingate Educational Campus

# HEALTH NEWSLETTER

**School-Based Health Center, Research Foundation of SUNY  
George Wingate Educational Campus (K351, K533, K544, K546)**

### Introduction

#### **About School-Based Health Centers (SBHC):**

The SBHC is a full service doctor's office that is located in your child's school building. The Research Foundation of SUNY (Downstate Medical Center) is the partnering health care service organization that provides services to the George Wingate Campus. It is the SBHC's commitment to assure that all students receive high quality, comprehensive health care with the added convenience of being in the school, where students spend most of their day. Certainly, a healthy child is best equipped to learn and excel in the classroom.

#### **How to Enroll Your Child at the SBHC?**

For students to receive the full range of services available at the SBHC, parents/guardians must sign a parental consent form. A single parental consent form allows the student to receive services at the SBHC for all the years s/he is enrolled in the school. **Parental consent forms are available at the SBHC.**

#### **Hours of Operation**

School-Based Health Center:

Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Dental Services Available:

Thursdays  
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### What's New?

**SBHC Tour:** Students have the opportunity to meet the SBHC staff during their lunch period from May 12<sup>th</sup> through May 16<sup>th</sup>. Stop by to ask any questions and pick up an enrollment package.

**Spring Health Fair:** In collaboration with the campus administration we are organizing a health fair on Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup> 2008 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be valuable information, health seminars, and a presentation of services of the SBHC. There will be free giveaways!!!

#### **SBHC Services**

- ❖ Acute Care
- ❖ First Aid
- ❖ Emergency Care
- ❖ Immunizations
- ❖ Comprehensive Physical Examinations
- ❖ Reproductive Health Services
- ❖ Testing/Screening
- ❖ Health Education
- ❖ Dental
- ❖ Medication
- ❖ Management of Chronic Conditions (i.e. asthma and diabetic treatments)
- ❖ Mental Health Services
- ❖ Nutritional Counseling

***\* Please note that some services are provided by referral to our community center.***

## Health Programs and Activities

Health Education:

Nutritional Counseling:

Smoking Cessation:

Reproductive Health:

Mental/Emotional Health:

## Meet the Staff

- ❖ Windsome Wildman – Nurse Practitioner, SBHC Administrator
- ❖ Hildred Castle – Nurse Practitioner
- ❖ Aviva Parnes – Physician’s Assistant, is in on Monday and Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- ❖ Camiel Irving – Medical Assistant
- ❖ Aliza Adams – Receptionist
- ❖ Dr. Kevin Custis – Medical Director

**Dental services** – Dental services are provided on Thursdays from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

- ❖ Dr. Valcour – Dentist
- ❖ Ms. Marsh – Dental Assistant

## Health Article

**A Healthy Body Starts With a Healthy Diet**

Written by **Name, Last Name**

**(THIS ARTICLE IS FOR SAMPLE ONLY, PLEASE USE YOUR OWN ARTICLE)**

It is certainly stressful to be a teenager with school work, exams, SATs, college preparation, and extra-curricular activities. Parents are also faced with a demanding schedule that can leave you wiped out by the end of the day. With this busy schedule it is easy to rely on “junk” snacks for a quick boost of energy. The truth of the matter is, sugary snacks will calm hunger and provide a little energy, but in the long run, these snacks tend to provide only brief periods of energy followed by fatigue and very little or no nutritional value. When looking for that 2 p.m. pick-me-up, why not reach for a healthy granola bar, low-fat yogurt, box of raisins, or crispy baby carrots with peanut butter dip. These snacks will not only calm your hunger and give a boost of energy, but it will deliver you with added nutrients that contribute to a healthy diet. A second source of empty calories during the school day is from soda and other sugar laced beverages. The next time you head over to the vending machine; consider getting bottled water or fruit juice rather than a can of soda that may contain up to 12 spoons of sugar. Small adjustments can make a big difference!

**George Wingate Educational Campus School-Based Health Center**  
**300 Kingston Avenue, Room H107**  
**Brooklyn, NY 11203**  
**Phone #: (718) 756-3028**

**Hours of operation: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**  
**WALK-INS AND APPOINTMENTS are available**

**If you need assistance after-hours, weekends, and holidays call Research Foundation of SUNY (Downstate Medical Center): 718-270-1000**

*\*Research Foundation of SUNY @ George Wingate Campus - School Based Health Center is partially funded by the State Department of Health, and is under the professional guidance and direction of Research Foundation of SUNY (Downstate Medical Center), 450 Clarkson Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203.*

APPENDIX C

---

**DO YOU WANT TO WORK THIS  
SUMMER?**



**IF YOU DO, THEN YOU NEED A  
PHYSICAL**



**COME TO YOUR HEALTH  
CENTER IN ROOM 159 AND GET  
YOU'RE PHYSICAL BEFORE YOU  
MISS OUT!!!!**

**If you are not enrolled, you can come get an  
enrollment form, get it filled out then get an  
appointment for your physical**

**\*\*Flyer sample is courtesy of Montefiore Medical Center**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank all the NYC SBHCs staff who collaborated in providing information for this toolkit.

### List of NYC SBHC Providers

Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center  
Bellevue Hospital  
Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center  
Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health  
Children's Aid Society  
East Harlem Council for Human Services  
East New York Diagnostic & Treatment Center  
Elmhurst Hospital Center  
Heritage Health Care Center  
Hunts Point Multi-Service Centers  
Institute of Urban Family Health  
Jamaica Hospital Medical Center  
Long Island College Hospital  
Long Island Jewish Medical Center/Schneider Children's Hospital  
Lutheran Medical Center  
Montefiore Medical Center  
Morris Heights Health Center  
Morrisania NFCC  
Mount Sinai Hospital  
New York Presbyterian Hospital  
North General Hospital  
Queens Hospital Center  
Renaissance Health Care Network  
Research Foundation of SUNY—Downstate  
Ryan-NENA Community Health Center  
St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center  
Staten Island University Hospital  
Urban Health Plan  
William F. Ryan Community Health Center  
Woodhull Med. & Mental Health Center