Key Steps in Planning a School-Based Health Center

1. Get our toolkit *From Vision to Reality: How to Build a School Health Center From the Ground Up*. This resource is available on our website and is free to our members. Visit www.schoolhealthcenters.org or call (510) 268-1260 to order.

2. Form a planning committee including:
   - Students
   - Parents/ PTA
   - Teacher(s)
   - Principal
   - School board member(s)
   - School health services staff (school nurse)
   - Community health services providers
   - Elected officials
   - Community champions
   - Other interested partners

3. Introduce planning committee participants’ interests in/potential contributions to the SBHC.

4. Outline committee’s key tasks/goals, meeting schedule, and facilitator.

5. Discuss why the SBHC is needed, potential benefits to students and families. Consider the following questions about your school health services:
   - What is your school/district currently doing well?
   - What do your students need that your school/district doesn’t currently offer?
   - How can you build on existing programs, staff expertise, and established partnerships to get more health services for your students?

6. Conduct a health gap analysis:
   - Review existing school/community health data (Healthy Kids Survey, Fitnessgram, attendance, drop-outs, referrals, suspensions, etc.)
   - Develop and conduct a youth and/or adult health needs/assets survey

7. Discuss/determine what services are needed. This may include:
   - Health (risk) assessments
   - Health education, disease/risk prevention on which topics
   - Mental health and/or drug/alcohol treatment
   - Medical care (e.g., physicals, immunizations, sick care)
   - Case management and referral/coordination of care
   - Other youth services:
     - Career development, employment, college support
     - Services for homeless/at risk youth
     - Youth development/leadership programs (e.g., peer health educators, youth advisory board)
     - Youth social center

8. Determine best model for the SBHC (*Contact us to visit a current SBHC!*):
   - School-based (on school grounds)
   - School-linked (off school grounds)
   - Multi-service teen center
   - Mobile van
   - Telehealth
Key Steps in Planning a School-Based Health Center

9. **Determine who the SBHC will serve:**
   - Only enrolled students
   - Other children/teens in community/district
   - Adult family members of students
   - All community members (like community clinic) = family practice model

10. **Engage potential provider agencies and lead agency:**
    - School district
    - Medical/dental providers
    - Local mental health providers
    - Public health department
    - Community-based organizations

11. **Develop staffing model,** potentially including:
    - Coordinator
    - Medical provider/assistant
    - Mental health clinicians
    - Insurance enrollment and outreach
    - Receptionist/registration
    - Parent support/outreach
    - Health educators
    - Youth leaders/peer educators
    - School nurse/school health partner

12. **Develop funding plan** (start-up and sustainability):
    - Projected revenues from billing for services (Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, CHDP, Family PACT, and Medi-Cal Minor Consent – teens only)
    - Grants – both those secured and those need to apply for
    - In-kind (e.g., space/utilities/other from school district/provider agencies)
    - Allocations from lead/partner agencies

13. **Map feasible hours of each service and staffing time.**

14. **Identify potential site and facility.**

15. **Build local support for your effort by reaching out to the community and news media.** This is most effective if you cultivate spokespersons (aka “an experts list”) that include students, parents, school officials, and staff members from provider agencies.

16. **Seek approval from decision-making bodies** (e.g., board of education, lead agency board of directors, school site and district administrators).

17. **Establish a mechanism for coordinating services between agencies,** including MOUs.

18. **Start/expand services incrementally over time.** ... It’s not all or nothing!

**NOTE:** These steps do not have to be taken in this order. This is just a suggested progression.

Updated November 2013