

February 21, 2013

Testimony of Paula Hester, Executive Director, Oregon School-Based Health Care Network before the Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services, Oregon State Legislature

The Oregon School-Based Health Care Network is a nonprofit 501(c)3 that seeks to promote the health and academic success of Oregon's children and youth. This mission:

- drives the expansion of school-based health centers (SBHCs) in Oregon;
- leverages best business practices for sustainability, billing and reporting outcomes;
- improves the value of preventive, primary and mental health services in schools—47 centers offer on-site mental health care at least one day a week—and each medical visit includes prevention messages;
- and assists youth in finding their own voice to advocate for their personal health and the improved health in their schools and family homes—22 centers have Youth Advisory Councils actively participating in various elements of design and implementation of services.

SBHCs are one of the only entities that cross both health and education, and we are one of few organizations involved in both health care and education reform in Oregon. We know that 35% of school-aged children are Medicaid recipients and that there is a deep connection between a student's health status and educational achievement.

This bill is a starting place for discussion and a planning process that will begin to bring health and education reform efforts together for the ultimate benefit of kids in Oregon. It is intended to assure that kids' direct and preventive health services are not lost on the abatement of adult chronic care, and that early learning programs and schools are supported in removing health-related barriers to learning.

Quick Facts about SBHCs in Oregon

There are currently 63 state-certified sites

6 communities have planning grants to open new SBHCs **in 3 counties.**

Centers are always **located within the school or** on school grounds

52,429 students have access to SBHCs in their school

SBHCs served **23,502 clients** in **70,275 visits** in the 2011-2012 school year

SBHCs are located in elementary, middle, high, **and combined-grade** schools

SBHCs are deeply involved with community health providers and are working to participate in health care reform; currently 43% of SBHCs have Patient Centered-Primary Care Home status. They offer access to critical services and they simultaneously keep kids healthy and in school. Studies show SBHCs reduce absenteeism, tardiness and school discipline problems, providing support to kids, families and the school community. They prioritize prevention and early intervention services, such as immunizations, well-child exams and health assessments; early identification of health concerns along with prevention messaging helps reduce high costs associated with the treatment of chronic debilitating conditions.

Most importantly, SBHCs are located in the heart of the community—schools. Linking CCOs and community ensures that health care reform efforts are truly patient-centered and locally relevant, and therefore more likely to be successful. And successful health care reform that includes a focus on children ensures that we will have a healthier and thriving community now and in the future.

SBHCs support education by **keeping kids healthy and in class.**

Studies show SBHCs reduce absenteeism, tardiness and school discipline problems

68 percent of students reported they missed less than a full class when they received care at the SBHC.

74 percent of students report that without the center they would have missed at least one class to go to a traditional clinic. **Twenty-two percent said they would miss the entire day.**

Sincerely,

Paula Hester

