

Oregon School Health Services

School Nurses and School-Based Health Centers are partners in providing comprehensive health services at school and work together to build a health safety net for Oregon students.

School Nurses

The Oregon School Nurses Association defines school nursing as a “specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, life-long achievement and health of students.” School nurses serve the entire school population through health promotion and disease prevention, providing case management for chronic and acute student health conditions; providing health education and teaching; coordinating mandated screening including vision and hearing; teacher and staff training and communication; delegation of specific nursing tasks that are performed in the school setting; promoting safety and providing mental health services; advocacy for inclusion of all students according to their ability to participate; and coordination with other local and state agencies regarding communicable disease and immunization mandates. School nurses link educators, families, and health care providers to improve health and promote academic success.

School-Based Health Centers

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are public health primary care clinics that are located in a school building or on school campus. They diagnose and treat acute and chronic illnesses and injuries. Other services include prescriptions, immunizations, well-child checks and sports physicals, as well as health screenings, age appropriate reproductive health services and promotion of healthy behaviors. SBHCs are staffed by nurse practitioners, physician assistants, physicians, nurses, mental health professionals and health assistants. SBHCs collaborate with parents, youth advisory councils, local providers and community partners to provide health services that benefit students and the school community. Students and their parents appreciate missing less class time for health care needs. SBHCs bring youth-centered medical care to the school so school nurses and staff can refer students quickly for the care they need, regardless of their ability to pay.

Many students have physical and mental health issues, as shown in responses to the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey. These health issues can interfere with young people’s ability to attend school and learn. School-Based Health Centers and school nurses can play an essential role in meeting the health care needs of students so that they can thrive in all activities.

Oregon Student Health Status (2013 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey)

| Health Care Issue | 8th grade | 11th grade |
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| Unmet physical health care need in past year | 27% | 29% |
| Unmet mental health care need in past year | 14% | 15% |
| Self-reported overweight or obese | 29% | 31% |
| Seriously considered suicide in past year | 16% | 14% |
| Felt harassed at school in past 30 days | 35% | 23% |
| Used alcohol in the past 30 days | 14% | 31% |
| Used cigarettes in the past 30 days | 4% | 9% |
| Used marijuana in the past 30 days | 10% | 21% |
| Video, computer or screen time 5 hours or more a day for anything other than school work | 16% | 14% |



| | School Nurses | School-Based Health Centers |
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| What do these health services do for students? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for student care based on the nursing process, which includes assessment, interventions, and identification of outcomes and evaluation of care; • Case management of students with chronic and/or severe health needs such as diabetes, seizures, asthma, allergies, mental health disorders, feeding tube and ventilator dependent children in the school setting; • Manage school immunization programs; • Conduct population based health screenings; • Provide health instruction and promotion with individual students and classrooms; • Provide health and safety trainings required by law for school staff; • Collaborate with partners to bring health insurance, dental care and mental health care to students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform routine physical exams, sports physicals, age appropriate reproductive health services and well child care; • Diagnose and treat acute and chronic illness; • Treat minor injuries; • Provide screenings for vision, dental, hearing, blood pressure and body mass index as appropriate; • Prescribe medications and administer immunizations; • Coordinate referrals to additional providers; • Conduct age appropriate assessments and provide health education, wellness promotion and anticipatory guidance; • Provide mental health assessments and services; • Present to classroom on relevant student health topics; • Coordinate with other primary and specialty care providers to ensure student centered care. |
| What types of providers furnish these services? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered nurses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians, nurse practitioners, physicians assistants, nurses, and qualified mental health professionals. |
| Who manages these services and employs staff? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically school districts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually a community health care agency such as a county health department or local clinic. |
| How much does it cost the school? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually local school districts or educational service districts pay for school nursing services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs are typically borne by several sources (state, county health department, medical sponsor) that may or may not include the school. |
| How much do services cost for students? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free to all students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services are available to students regardless of their insurance coverage or ability to pay. SBHCs often seek reimbursement from a variety of insurance providers including Medicaid. |
| What are the relevant Oregon laws? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ORS 336.201 includes standards for the ratio of school nurses to students based on health needs of students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBHCs are defined in ORS 413.225. Certified School-Based Health Centers meet standards for evidence-based best practices. |