



October 2, 2020

Dear Senators Blunt and Hawley,

We are writing on behalf of Missouri's school-based health centers (SBHCs) to let you know that the School-Based Health Centers Reauthorization Act (H.R. 2075) passed in the House on Tuesday, September 29th. This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes the School-Based Health Centers program through 2024, laying the foundation for a federal investment in SBHCs, our nation's only health care safety-net dedicated exclusively to at-risk children and youth. [Additional information on the bill can be found here.](#)

As constituents and on behalf of the Show-Me School-Based Health Alliance of Missouri, we are asking for your support to help advance this effort on the Senate side. The Senate companion bill to H.R. 2075 is S.1013, led by Senators Stabenow and Capito and several other bipartisan cosponsors. We strongly urge you to sponsor this bill to support the continued operations as well as development of new school-based health centers. Without this continued financial support, we fear many will be forced to close, which will leave thousands of youth without critical healthcare access.

School-based health centers provide comprehensive health care including primary care and behavioral and oral health services, as well as prevention and early intervention services, to predominately low-income children, adolescents, and their families in a setting that is trusted, familiar, and immediately accessible--their school. SBHCs provide this care through partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers, community health providers, such as local health departments, and hospitals that view schools as a common-sense and effective place to improve the health of the community. Currently, SBHCs operate in rural, urban, and suburban communities, serving the healthcare needs of 59,000 students, many of their families, and the school staff. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, SBH centers have done their best to continue to meet the healthcare needs of students through virtual or in-person care, despite the closure of school buildings.

School-based health centers are a time-tested model for improving health and education outcomes. Decades of research exists to support their role in reducing health care costs and removing barriers to access, as well as improving educational outcomes such as attendance and school connectedness. The Community Preventive Services Task Force (an independent panel of public health and prevention experts) recommends SBHCs as an "effective intervention for improving health equity and influencing health and educational outcomes." School-based health centers lead to improved health and educational outcomes, short and long-term community benefits, a reduction in health inequities, and a decrease in unnecessary emergency room visits, which saves money & resources.

Many Missouri children and adolescents have not attended school in-person since March. For many who rely on SBHCs for care, this will mean months of untreated chronic illness, missed preventive care visits and required vaccinations, and compounded unmet mental health needs. We know that SBHCs have a critical role to play as frontline responders in the schools. Now more than ever, no school or community can afford to lose their SBH center. We urge you to act now to prevent this by sponsoring the School-Based Health Reauthorization Bill.

Show-Me School-Based Health Alliance

Phone: 800-807-8494

E-mail: info@moschoolhealth.org

The MOSBHA staff would be honored to meet with you and provide additional information and support. We look forward to continuing to work with you to address these challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Molly Ticknor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Molly Ticknor, MA, ATR, LPC
Executive Director, Show-Me School-Based Health Alliance of MO
mticknor@moschoolhealth.org
(800) 807-8494, ext. 700

Show-Me School-Based Health Alliance

Phone: 800-807-8494

E-mail: info@moschoolhealth.org