



School-Based Health Initiative



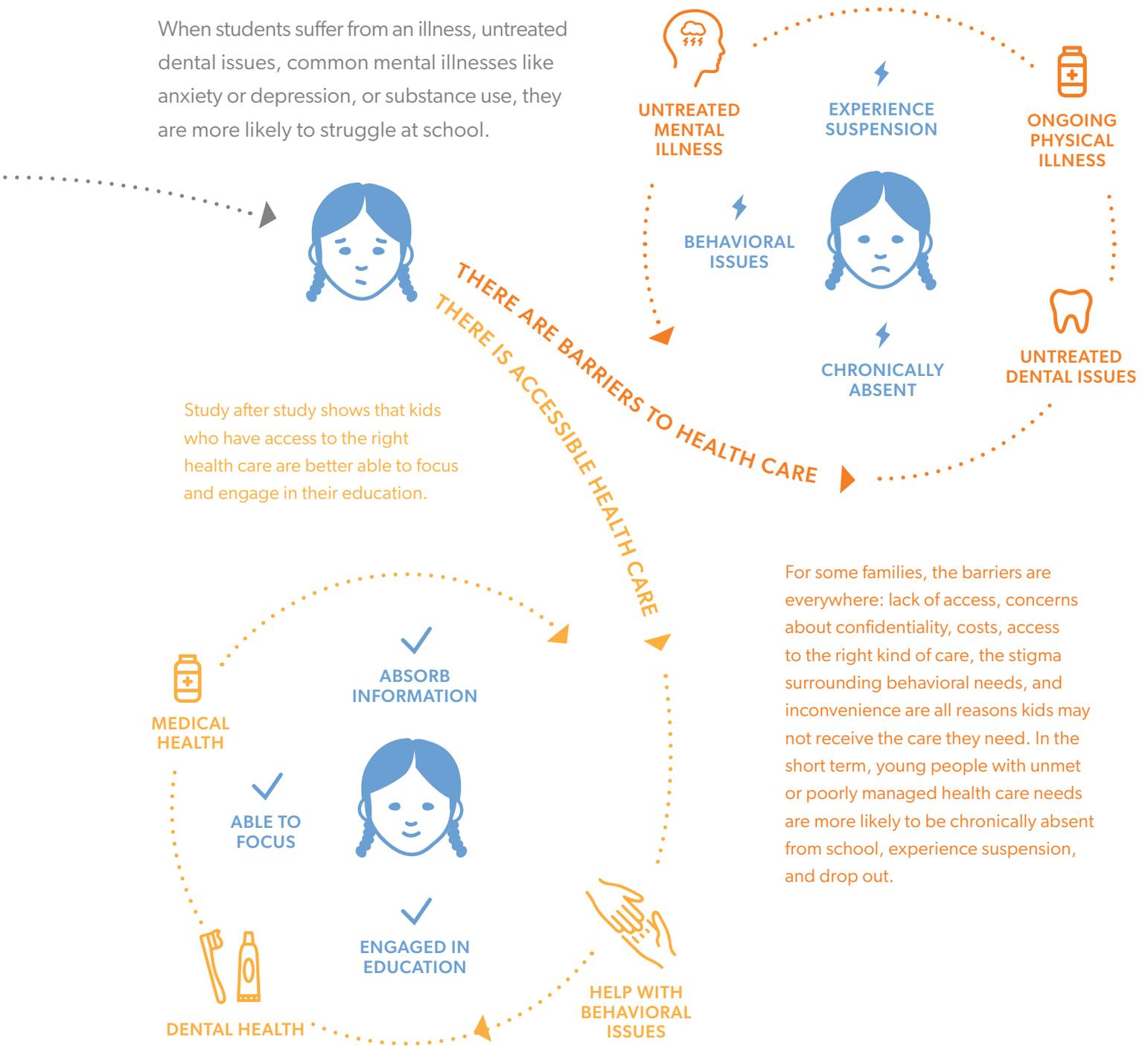
The School-Based Health Initiative



Untreated health issues create challenges for students in all areas of their lives, including the classroom. Untreated mental illness, dental infections, and medical illnesses such as asthma commonly cause excessive absences, classroom behavioral challenges, and poor academic performance. The ripple effect of these issues can extend into critical school metrics such as attendance and graduation rates. Addressing these health issues can help students reach their full academic potential and achieve greater personal success.

The Montana Healthcare Foundation created the School-Based Health Initiative to support consistent, high-quality, and convenient health care to students and their families in a safe, familiar place. The School-Based Health Initiative provides grants to plan for and implement health centers in schools across Montana, offering a powerful way to address the health and behavioral challenges that keep children from succeeding in school. These services may be provided in the school building, through telehealth, or in a nearby mobile unit.

When students suffer from an illness, untreated dental issues, common mental illnesses like anxiety or depression, or substance use, they are more likely to struggle at school.



Study after study shows that kids who have access to the right health care are better able to focus and engage in their education.

For some families, the barriers are everywhere: lack of access, concerns about confidentiality, costs, access to the right kind of care, the stigma surrounding behavioral needs, and inconvenience are all reasons kids may not receive the care they need. In the short term, young people with unmet or poorly managed health care needs are more likely to be chronically absent from school, experience suspension, and drop out.

Thriving Schools



There's a way to meet the health care needs of students without stretching already thin school resources. The School-Based Health Initiative works with health care providers, schools, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, and other partners to plan and create fully functional school-based health centers to help schools address their students' unique needs. Using this proven framework, students get a chance to focus and excel, ultimately improving school performance and academic metrics.

The School-Based Health Initiative is based on successful pilot projects around Montana and came about through conversations and consultations with schools, health care providers, and Tribal communities throughout the state.

SBHI helps **form a partnership** between a school that can provide space for a clinic and a trusted local health care organization that can provide the right care.





SBHI then works with this partnership and other key stakeholders (*school boards, Tribal authorities, etc.*) to **plan and create a health center that uses our proven framework** but is completely individual to each school and community's needs.

SBHI helps the partnership create a health center that is sustained by billing to Medicaid and other insurance instead of ongoing grant funding. **SBHI provides technical assistance and an initial targeted grant** to the health partner, as well as training and ongoing support for the school, to create this long-term, sustainable partnership.



Students get the **right kind of intervention at the right time** to address underlying health issues.



Students begin to **learn better** and tracked metrics for students and schools improve.



Staff and families also get quality and convenient health care all in one place. **So the whole community gets healthier.**

The School-Based Health Initiative benefits everyone.



Students

A class full of healthy, engaged learners fosters a positive school climate. Better performance in school often leads to the pursuit of advanced education that opens the door to higher-wage jobs. The ripple effect extends well beyond a single individual. These students go on to become healthy, capable adults who contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

Staff

In addition to directly benefiting students, the School-Based Health Initiative will be a great source of support for staff and administrators. Staff members will have a place to turn when a student needs health care that impacts their performance in class. Often, school staff will also have access to the same care at great convenience. The School-Based Health Initiative and health partners provide much of the support for the new health clinic, minimizing the burden on school staff or administrators.

Families

Many on-site health centers will also be able to provide care for the entire school community, including students' families. Services may include both acute care and wellness visits, and the health center staff can often help connect parents to services that allow them to apply for health insurance if they don't have it.

By working with schools to find and create sustainable partnerships between schools and health care providers, everyone gains. Teachers get the support they need to help students engage positively and learn well during school. Students get high-quality, easy-to-access health care. Schools get improved academic performance. Communities get healthy kids who are able to contribute in positive ways. Staff and families get access to services. And schools and their boards get positive community stories with tracked outcomes that can be shared with peers and the press.





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