

Title: Trauma and School-based Health Centers

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Background: Approximately 71% of children and adolescents in the US have experienced childhood trauma in the form of victimizing and non-victimizing events. Minority racial/ethnic populations and those living in poverty are at greater risk of exposure to trauma, development of mental health disorders, and school failure, yet are less likely to have access to mental health services. School-based health centers (SBHCs) staffed with mental health providers may be one strategy to decrease health care disparities. **Aims:** The aim of this study was to describe factors associated with SBHCs in the US that are staffed with mental health providers as compared to those that are not, to aid policy creation that promotes access to and funding of mental health services in SBHCs. **Methods:** Secondary analysis of cross-sectional School-based Health Alliance Census School Year 2010-2011 Report. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square analysis used to describe differences between SBHCs with and without on-site mental health services (MHS). **Results:** 70% of SBHCs offer MHS. SBHCs with more resources, larger student body, longer history, and state funding had significantly more MHS services. Mental health providers were more commonly found within SBHCs that served upper grade levels, 9-12. Nurse practitioners (NPs) were found in 79% of SBHCs, yet only 3% employed NPs specializing in mental health. The full time equivalent mean for nurse practitioner services was 0.77, followed by physicians (0.32 FTE) and physician assistants (0.78 FTE). Among SBHCs with a mental health provider, 85% employed a licensed social worker/counselor/therapist with a mean of 0.82 FTE. **Conclusion:** SBHCs are in a position to ameliorate the impacts of exposure to chronic childhood trauma since a large proportion provides primary preventive health and mental health care. Further evidence is needed to assess whether the mental health services currently available in SBHCs are adequate in number and properly trained to mitigate childhood exposure to trauma.

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