



Bringing Health Care To Schools For Student Success

How Much Do SBHCs Cost?

NASBHC's Cost Survey©

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Objectives

- Describe the rationale for the development of the NASBHC's Cost Survey©.
- Navigate through a guest survey online version of the NASBHC Cost Survey©.
- List three benefits of completing the NASBHC Cost Survey©.
- Prepared to complete the NASBHC Cost Survey© for their SBHC(s).

Why apply economic evaluation methods in SBHC settings?

- Is the SBHC model the least costly way of providing effective primary care, mental health, dental, and other health services to youth?
- Recently, several good CEA studies of school-based interventions have been published
 - Demonstrate that school-based programs designed to prevent substance use, contraction of STDs, and obesity are cost-effective
- However, comprehensive program cost information on SBHCs does not exist
 - Limits efficient allocation of resources in the health sector
 - Diminishes long-term sustainability of SBHCs

What do we know about the costs of SBHCs?

- From our prior work in this area, we know that collection of cost data from SBHCs is challenging
 - Because of limited resources and complex funding arrangements, school-based programs may not keep even basic, standard accounting records
 - May not keep track of shared and donated costs or overhead costs
 - May only have budgets and no records of expenditures
 - May not record depreciation
 - See Chatterji & Cafray's prior work published in Chatterji et al. (2000, 2001, 2004) for details
- To collect program cost data, a standardized cost instrument, that targets the specific needs of SBHCs, is needed

What is economic evaluation?

“ ...the real cost of any program is not the number of dollars appearing on the program budget, but rather the health outcomes achievable in some other program which have been foregone by committing the resources in question to the first program. It is this “opportunity cost” which economic evaluation seeks to estimate and to compare with program benefits.” (Drummond et al. 1987, page 8)

What does cost mean?

- Intervention costs include: **program costs**; costs to participants; costs associated with intervention side effects
- From an economics perspective, the program cost of a school-based program would include all foregone benefits made when a given resource is used to implement a program
- Cannot confine attention to expenditures only

Which costs should be considered?

- Program
- Shared and Overhead
- Societal

Why focus on program costs?

- Relevant to all forms of economic evaluation
- Very little attention paid to this area
- Not clear-cut to estimate program costs when dealing with school-based programs, particularly outside of research settings

Types of program costs

- Personnel costs
- Supplies and materials
- Laboratory costs
- Drug costs
- Facilities
- Maintenance of facilities and equipment
- Equipment

Types of program costs

- Transportation costs and travel expenses
- Educational materials
- Media expenses
- Training costs
- Outside consultant services
- Other direct costs (e.g. courier services, uniforms, additional insurance)
- Participant time and expenses

Shared and Overhead Costs

- Resources that serve many different departments and programs, such as general administrative services (payroll, billing), cleaning services
- Shared and overhead costs need to be allocated to interventions
- No “right” method – we have allocated these costs based on a measure that is logically related to usage of the item (e.g. square footage of program space used to allocate custodial services)

Societal Costs

- Donated labor – value volunteer labor according to what these workers would have been paid had they been paid
- Donated space – value space based on what the space would have cost the program had the program paid for it
- Donated supplies/materials – value of supplies/materials based on what they would have cost the program had the program paid for it
- Capital Equipment – two cost components
 - Depreciation
 - Opportunity cost of funds tied up in capital

Development of national tool

- Objective:
 - **Phase I (2005 - 2006):**
 - To develop an on-line cost survey that collects data on the economic costs of school-based health centers
 - To conduct a detailed pre-test of the survey on a small scale
 - **Phase II (current work):** To train relevant groups on the survey and test the survey on a larger scale
 - **Phase III (future work):** National implementation

Pre-Test

- Conducted in 2005-2006 school year
- 8 SBHCs participated voluntarily
 - Participants had access to some limited technical and substantive support but they received no training
 - From New York, Oregon, and Washington
 - Mix of grade levels, sponsoring organizations, sizes and services offered

Pre Test

- Participants were requested to do the following:
 - Complete the survey in three weeks
 - Provide back-up documentation so we can see how they completed the survey
 - Participate in a structured phone interview to discuss process and how we can improve the survey

Experiences of pilot testers

- Overall, testers had positive experience
- Positive feedback:
 - Survey was comprehensive, easy to navigate and the directions were useful
 - Level of accounting expertise was appropriate
 - Most sites felt three week time frame was reasonable, but time of year is important to consider
 - Took about 5 hours to a full day, including some calling around or waiting for others to locate certain pieces of data
 - Survey results useful for planning purposes

Areas for improvement

- Testers offered numerous detailed suggestions that we then incorporated into the revised survey
 - Examples: add more printing functions, add more options for fringe benefits, add more room in some sections for comments, clarify definitions of some terms, make it clear that you can add line items
- Some parts of the survey went virtually un-used
 - Depreciation
- Lack of understanding about indirect costs
 - Survey may not be capturing these costs well

Guest Survey

http://ww2.nasbhc.org/guestsurvey/cost_login.asp