

# CHILD HEALTH: EXPANDING SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS



Children today face serious and complex health issues which may interfere with their ability to engage and learn in school. School-based health centers are an effective means of providing comprehensive health care services to America's school children, helping them to grow up healthy and succeed in school and life.

School-based health centers began to develop sporadically during the early 1970s, and were initially funded by federal grants or private foundations. By the mid-1980s, state governments, such as New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, and Missouri, began their own initiatives, which greatly increased available funding. By the 2004-2005 school year, the number of school-based health centers in the country had grown to 1,709 operating in elementary, middle, and high schools. A recent 2009 count of school-based health centers indicates that there are now more than 2,000 across the nation.

These centers, which are located either inside the school or on school grounds, provide primary and preventive services designed to specifically meet children's unique health needs. Using a multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, social workers, and counselors, the centers provide a variety of services in an environment that is familiar and comfortable to kids. Staff work cooperatively with school officials, parents, and community representatives to coordinate kids' care and minimize the amount of school missed due to health concerns.

## PROMOTING HEALTH

School-based health centers provide: well-child exams, immunizations, diagnosis, treatment of acute illness and injury, basic laboratory services, health education, mental health services, substance abuse counseling, reproductive health services, and preventive and primary dental care. Parental consent is required in order for students to receive the full complement of services. Seventy-two percent of school-based health centers bill Medicaid for services rendered, while 50% bill private insurance, 45% bill CHIP, and 20% bill students directly.

In addition to primary and preventive care for children, school-based health centers yield a variety of positive behavioral health outcomes, such as reduced cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use among children and nutrition and obesity prevention counseling.



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## CALL TO ACTION

### SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS MUST BE A PART OF HEALTH REFORM

School-based health centers provide essential services and are a critical safety net for the children they serve. Despite their model for success, school-based health centers only reach a small percentage of our nation's students. Increased federal support and funding for these centers would result in greater access to care for many underserved children.

As Congress deliberates on proposals to reform the nation's health care systems, this is a critical time to recognize the important role that school-based health centers play as essential safety net providers for children. First Focus is grateful for the inclusion of key provisions in the health reform legislation that is currently moving through Congress. Specifically, First Focus offers our full support for section 312 in the **Affordable Health Choices Act**, the legislation approved by the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee on July 15, 2009. In addition, we support section 2511 in **H.R. 3200**, the "tri-committee" health reform legislation approved in the House of Representatives by the Ways and Means Committee, the Education and Labor Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee. We urge Congress to include these critical provisions in whatever final bill is moved to a vote later this fall.

First Focus continues to support the underlying legislation, introduced earlier this year in the Senate and the House to authorize a federal grant program for school-based health centers and to secure reimbursement for school-based health services under Medicaid and CHIP. Specifically, we continue to support:

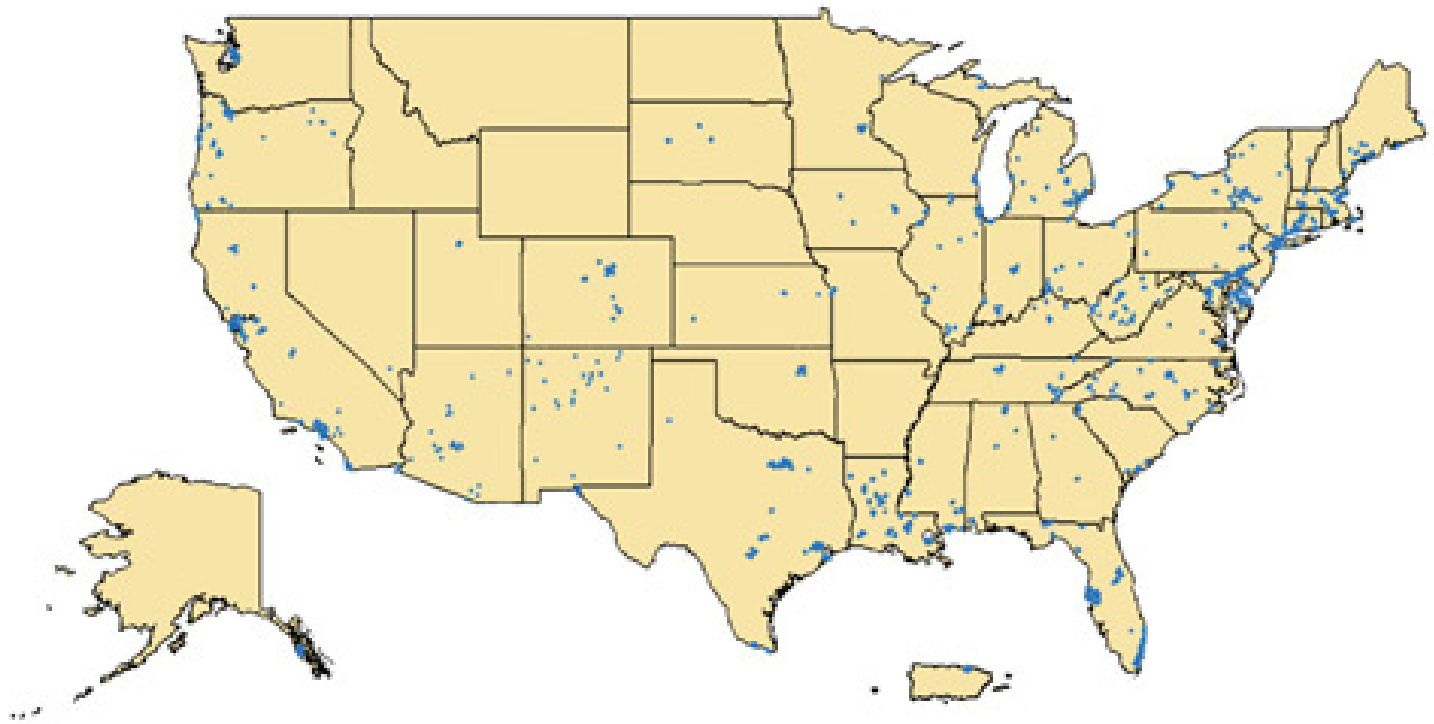
**The Healthy Schools Act of 2009 (S.1034)**, bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), which would mandate reimbursement for school-based health centers that provide Medicaid and CHIP-covered services to students.

**The School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2009 (H.R.3003)**, introduced by Representative Lois Capps (D-CA), which would create a federal school-based health center program similar to the community health center authorization.

**The Healthy Schools Act of 2009 (H.R.2840)**, introduced by Representative John Sarbanes (D-MD), which would mandate reimbursement for school-based health centers that provide Medicaid and CHIP-covered services to students.

# SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

SCHOOL YEAR 2004-2005



Alabama	9	Iowa	15	New Hampshire	1	South Dakota	4
Alaska	2	Kansas	3	New Jersey	82	Tennessee	19
Arizona	91	Kentucky	15	New Mexico	42	Texas	72
California	140	Louisiana	56	New York	195	Utah	4
Colorado	36	Maine	27	North Carolina	51	Vermont	5
Connecticut	73	Maryland	64	Ohio	26	Virginia	18
Delaware	26	Massachusetts	57	Oklahoma	8	Washington	18
District of Columbia	5	Michigan	69	Oregon	45	West Virginia	41
Florida	123	Minnesota	21	Pennsylvania	23	Wisconsin	16
Georgia	3	Mississippi	36	Puerto Rico	2		
Illinois	53	Missouri	3	Rhode Island	7	<b>Total</b>	<b>1708</b>
Indiana	88	Nevada	3	South Carolina	11		

**Source:** National Assembly on School-Based Health Care ([www.nasbhc.org](http://www.nasbhc.org))



**First Focus** is a bipartisan advocacy organization that is committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions.

**For more information** on First Focus's child health agenda, please contact:  
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