

Health Care Reform School-Based Health Care Talking Points August 2009

Given:

- We don't know the final language in any of the bills, as of this writing.
- The process is very fluid and so the level of detail we can include in talking points will increase as we know more.

General tips for talking to Members of Congress about SBHCs:

- If you can identify the aspect of SBHCs that appeal the most to your particular Member of Congress (e.g., cost savings, access, obesity, mental health), use the messages developed for those particular issues (for example, if your Member was a school nurse, messages about the collaborative relationship between SBHCs and school nurses might resonate best with him/her; if your Member is especially concerned about budgetary issues, emphasize the cost-savings aspects of SBHCs). Find talking points on specific aspects of SBHCs at www.nasbhc.org.
- Include anecdotes and data that describe the direct impact of SBHCs in the Member's specific state and/or district. This may include the number of SBHC within the specific district, as well as stories about how a SBHC helped a particular student.

Health Care Reform:

- There are two priorities for SBHCs in health care reform:
 - **Federal Authorization**
 - Federal authorization of SBHCs would enable them to receive critical federal support. This is necessary, as the recession and state budget constraints have led to consistent decreases in funding for SBHCs over the past three years. State-based support for SBHCs has diminished, as foundations, city and county government, and corporations are all feeling the effects of the economic crisis. To keep SBHCs viable, federal policy must recognize and support them as part of the health care safety net by authorizing a program that will fund SBHCs.
 - **Reimbursement under public insurance programs**
 - SBHCs provide vital health services to students enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). However, SBHCs are often not reimbursed by these programs because there is no federal mechanism to ensure that SBHCs are eligible to receive reimbursement. This oversight must be corrected. Congress should ensure the fair, comprehensive reimbursement of SBHCs for the health services they provide to children through Medicaid or CHIP

- Status (as of this writing)
 - **House of Representatives**
 - Language calling for federal authorization and reimbursement of SBHCs is included in the bill. The Education and Labor, Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce Committees are finished discussing the bill and have passed the legislation out of each respective committee. When Congress reconvenes in September, there will likely be additional work (including additional amendments) at the committee level before the bill is taken to the floor for a vote.
 - **Senate**
 - Authorization language was included in the Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee draft and survived the amendment process.
 - We are waiting to hear about the Finance Committee bill.
- **Ask**
 - Retain provisions supporting SBHCs in the final health care reform legislation.
 - Support the final health care reform legislation if it includes these critical improvements to SBHCs.
 - Encourage your colleagues in Congress to support SBHCs in health care reform.

NOTE: If you or your organization has any concerns or questions about the legality of lobbying, be sure to consult your legal counsel or contact NASBHC.

Let us know if we can provide any additional information or support, including national and state-specific data and talking points.