

## **Letters to the Editor – Samples to Get You Started**

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are a simple way to raise visibility in the press. The more newspapers receive letters on a given topic, the more likely they are to select one of these to be published. Even if your letter is not published, you are making an important contribution by submitting a letter!

You do not need to spend a lot of time creating a perfect letter. Just share any positive ideas or thoughts you have about school-based health centers. Keep it short and simple, about 150 words. Personal stories are great but not mandatory.

### **School-based Health Centers Just Seem So Logical**

Dear Editor,

Wash your hands. Sneeze into your elbow. Stay home when you're sick. We hear these messages daily as flu season rapidly approaches. These are the same tactics that will slow the spread of the H1N1 virus.

Government health officials are working around the clock to launch one of the largest vaccination efforts in decades. One question that remains: Where will the vaccination be administered?

One obvious place: schools. Children, considered one of the highest risk groups to get and spread H1N1, are already in school; schools are more easily accessible than many medical facilities for many students; and if vaccinations are provided at the school, it's one less extra trip parents have to make during the day.

For some fortunate schools, they school health services that include a school nurse and a school-based health center. Inoculating kids at a school health center – seems like a no-brainer.

Sincerely,

[insert name, organization, city, state]

### **The Successes of a School Health Center**

Dear Editor,

Our school-based health center helped overweight 11<sup>th</sup> grader get his diabetes diagnosed and treated at the school health center located right on his campus. A teacher had noticed that he was extremely fatigued and falling asleep in class. She referred him to the school health center, where staff discovered that he was waking up several times a night to use the bathroom – a common symptom of diabetes – and therefore tired during the day.

Once the school-based health center's staff helped him get his diabetes and weight under control, teachers say he was transformed. He stayed awake in class, he was talkative, jovial and engaged in his education. And he graduated on time.

Thanks to the school-based health center, his education was saved, as were emergency room costs and costs to our already overburdened social services.

Sincerely,

[insert name, organization, city, state]

### **Benefits of a School-based Health Center**

Dear Editor,

Remember when you were a kid and your parents asked you, "What did you learn in school today?" These days, there's a lot to learn. And it's not just about the 3R's. Schools are central to our children learning about healthy eating habits, exercising right, how to say no to drugs and tobacco, and good personal hygiene to slow the spread of germs (think H1N1).

The students at our school are fortunate to have a school-based health center where they not only get those messages of healthy living, but they also receive health care services to that offer prevention and intervention. Our school-based health center provides immunizations, sports physicals, oral health assessments and helps students manage their chronic illnesses like diabetes and asthma.

We're focusing on teaching our kids healthy habits today so they have a brighter tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
[insert name, organization, city, state]

### **Wish We Had One**

Dear Editor,

The skyrocketing costs of health care have forced many families to cancel health insurance, leaving their health care coverage to emergency rooms and luck, as in, they're lucky if they don't get sick.

I've read about schools that have health centers on their campuses. That just makes sense. School is where kids go anyway, so why not offer medical, mental and dental services there, too? It would make it easier for kids to access, easier for parents because they don't have to make an extra trip or take time off work, and kids would be healthier so they wouldn't miss as much school.

I know there are school-based health centers in some schools. We don't have any in our district. My question is why aren't there school-based health centers in all schools?

Sincerely,  
[insert name, organization, city, state]

### **Healthy Kids Make for Better Students**

Dear Editor,

If we want our children to be better students, the answer is not simply more time with their nose buried in books or drill and kill so they can get mark the right answer on a test. There has to be more serious attention paid to the mental and physical health of our children.

No one can learn if they are sick, hungry, or depressed. We know that healthy kids make better students. Some schools are fortunate to have a school-based health center right on campus because they realize that a healthy student is less likely to drop out, have fewer disciplinary problems, have fewer absences, and more likely to be engaged in their education.

Every student deserves the same chance at being successful in school. We can take another step closer to that reality with a school-based health center on every campus because school-based health centers help keep our children healthy, fit, and ready to learn.

Sincerely,  
[insert name, organization, city, state]