

**School-Based Health Care Week**  
***Healthy and Learning: Back to School 2009***

**SBHC VIRTUAL TOURS FOR CONGRESS**

**PURPOSE:** *To educate your Members of Congress about your school based health center (SBHC) in a new, different, informative, and effective way. It's also an opportunity to advocate for current legislation that would benefit and increase the number of SBHCs.*

The phone calls, emails, and any meetings conducted thus far in support of our active pieces of SBHC legislation have played a key role in support gained. However, we must do more to ensure passage of legislation to support SBHCs! Through an organized, national "**Healthy and Learning: Back to School 2009**" campaign utilizing the technology of a "virtual tour," we can gain the attention of legislators and educate them about the importance of all SBHC legislation.

This is an unprecedented time for SBHCs. Three SBHC bills have been introduced in this Congress AND SBHCs are included in both the Senate's Health Care Reform Bill written by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House's Health Care Reform Bill written by the Tri-Committee (composed of the House Ways and Means, Education and Labor, and Energy and Labor Committees). Now is the time to mobilize our field to raise awareness and educate all Members of Congress and their staffs on the importance of SBHCs as a vital health care safety net for children and adolescents.

Health care reform is the current big ticket item on Congress' agenda. You do not have to be in Washington, DC to make a difference! As you know, seeing an actual SBHC can turn someone from a supporter to a champion, or take indifference or ignorance about the model and change that to passion and commitment for it! Through the videos you will be making, you will showcase the importance of your SBHC and its role in the community, while your Member of Congress' staff takes a "tour" on their computer screen. This is your chance to bring your SBHC to Washington and thus have each Congressional Member experience the value of the model for himself or herself.

We don't want anything to inhibit your involvement in this campaign, so we will be working with you over the coming weeks to make sure you have everything you need. If you can't find a camera, a sample video from a DC SBHC will be available for use. In addition, we are asking our Congressional champions to send a letter to their colleagues informing them of our SBHC week and encouraging them to participate in the phone meetings with you. We are working with our champions on the Hill to have the week of September 14, 2009, declared National School Based Health Center Week.

Most importantly, remember that we are in an unprecedented time for federal recognition of SBHCs, so do not let perfection be the enemy of progress – keep your videos simple and have fun taking a tour of your great center with your Congressional Members and their staff!

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