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Study Shows School-Based Child and Adolescent Health Centers Provide Positive Benefits for Students

Centers promote environment for better learning and academic performance

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and the Michigan Department Education (MDE) are pleased to announce that the presence of Child and Adolescent Health Centers (CAHCs) in schools provide a long term positive impact on students ranging from better health to greater academic performance, according to the Michigan Evaluation of School-Based Health (MESH).

MESH, the first long-term statewide study of the impact of Child and Adolescent Health Centers (CAHCs) on the health and health behaviors of children and youth in Michigan, was conducted in partnership with Michigan State University, University Outreach and Engagement.

“We are extremely fortunate to have Child and Adolescent Health Centers in many of our schools,” said MDCH Director Janet Olszewski. “Students learn better and achieve more when they are in an environment that assures them a place to go to check on their physical and mental well-being.”

According to the National Association of School Based Health (NASBHC) 2010 Census survey, Michigan has the 4th largest school based health center program (CAHCs) in the United States. Sixty eight state-funded CAHCs operate throughout the state, providing a range of primary, preventative, and early intervention services to over 100,000 children at all grade levels.

“If children are hurting physically or emotionally, it’s difficult for them to focus on school,” said state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan. “School-based health centers fill the health care gap that many students need to address those barriers to learning.”

The findings from this study indicate that CAHCs are associated with a wide range of health benefits. The presence of CAHCs in schools was associated with **health benefits for the entire student population, such as:**

- less physical discomfort,
- less emotional discomfort,
- higher self-esteem,
- engaging in fewer individual risks,
- fewer threats to achievement, and
- fewer negative peer influences.

-More-

In addition, **the use of CAHC services was associated with health benefits such as:**

- greater satisfaction with health,
- greater self-esteem,
- less physical discomfort,
- engaging in more physical activity,
- eating healthier foods,
- greater family involvement, and
- more active social problem-solving skills.

These findings suggest that CAHCs are an essential component within the school environment that support student health, thereby promoting better learning and increasing academic performance. Positive impacts were seen in schools with health centers, whether students directly use CAHC services or not.

For more information about the CAHC program, contact Taggert Doll, CAHC Program Coordinator, at 517-335-9720.

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