

TITLE: School-Based Health Centers and Reproductive Health Services: A Qualitative Analysis of SBHC Coordinators and their Educator Partners

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Topic: SBHCs providing reproductive health services / Audience: Public health researchers/evaluators and policymakers

ABSTRACT: Background & Purpose. Access to condoms and other methods of contraception help reduce sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancies among adolescents. School-based health centers (SBHCs) are unique and essential options for increasing youth access to reproductive health services, including providing safe, comfortable, and comprehensive sites for sexual health information and resources. Yet, SBHCs face many challenges in offering these services. While the benefits of offering reproductive health services at SBHCs are well documented, less is known about the motivations and barriers for schools and SBHCs in offering these services. Methods. This study uses data collected from 34 interviews with SBHC coordinators and educator partners (e.g., school principals). Findings. Results indicate several barriers to offering reproductive health services to students, including stigma from parents, students, and the broader community; restrictive school policy; and lack of resources to provide contraceptives on site. Additionally, respondents described supporting the whole child as a key motivation for offering these services. Implications. This study has broad implications for public health researchers and policymakers who seek to support SBHCs and their educational partners in overcoming barriers to providing reproductive health services to students.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe barriers and motivations for SBHCs and educator partners offering sexual and reproductive health services.
