

Legislation Text

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Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to allocate full funding for School-Based Health Centers and to give the Commonwealth's most vulnerable children an opportunity to thrive by providing complete mental and physical health in their schools.

WHEREAS, School-Based Health Center ("SBHCs") are considered nationally to be one of the most effective strategies for delivering preventive care to under-served youth, particularly adolescents. In-school medical providers can provide acute and preventive care, render diagnoses, and write prescriptions where children spend the majority of their time - at school; and

WHEREAS, SBHCs services range from health screenings, delivering sick and injury care, preventive well-child care and sports physicals, administering flu shots and vaccines, conducting mental health and substance screenings and mental health treatment, and providing confidential reproductive health care for teens. The collaborative efforts of SBHC providers make continuity of care, a key goal of the medical home, achievable for many children and teens living in poverty; and

WHEREAS, SBHCs collaboration with school districts, school principals, teachers, school staff, families, and students address the whole child. This collaboration, care coordination, and youth engagement contributes to positive educational outcomes including reduced absenteeism, decreased disciplinary actions and suspensions, and improved graduation rates; and

WHEREAS, Children from low-income and historically excluded racial and ethnic populations often experience worse health, miss more school days, and are less likely to access health care. They are also more likely to have problems with vision, oral health, or hearing. Increasing access to comprehensive health services, where the youth are, improves educational and health outcomes in schools; and

WHEREAS, SBHCs sit at the intersection of health and education and are a crucial vehicle for achieving health equity. Lack of health equity places millions of youth at risk for significant health disparities, keeping them from achieving their optimum life outcomes. Many low-income communities do not have enough healthcare professionals to serve them, and school-based health centers employ trained, licensed and certified staff; and

WHEREAS, Investing in comprehensive SBHCs for asthma care management, primary wellness checks and mental health services is a critical way to invest in schools, the economy and Pennsylvania's future. Making an investment in each SBHC in Pennsylvania to strengthen, expand, and sustain their work in these areas can have a reverberating impact on our youth and communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to allocate full funding for School-Based Health Centers and to give the Commonwealth's most vulnerable children an opportunity to thrive by providing complete mental and physical health in their schools.

