
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2597 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY KHAN, ISAACSON, SCHLOSSBERG, KOSIEROWSKI, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, WAXMAN, GIRAL, HILL-EVANS, DONAHUE, BURGOS, PROBST, FREEMAN, PIELLI, MAYES, SANCHEZ, GUENST, WEBSTER, RABB, KENYATTA, BOYD, ROZZI, GREEN, DALEY, PASHINSKI, KAZEEM, SHUSTERMAN AND PARKER, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in school health services, providing
6 for school-based health centers.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
11 section to read:

12 Section 1402.1. School-Based Health Centers.--(a) A school-
13 based health center shall comply with the following standards:

14 (1) Upon availability of funding by the General Assembly, a
15 school-based health center:

16 (i) Shall be open and staffed during the regular hours of
17 the school district facility in which the school-based health
18 center is located or which is near the school-based health

1 center.

2 (ii) Shall not turn away a student due to an inability to
3 pay.

4 (iii) May not decline care to a student due to insurance
5 status, health status or existence of a current primary health
6 care provider of a student. The following apply:

7 (A) If a student has a primary health care provider, the
8 school-based health center shall make every effort to coordinate
9 services with the student's primary health care provider to
10 avoid any duplication of services.

11 (B) If a student is covered under an insurance policy, the
12 school district may seek reimbursement under the student's
13 insurance.

14 (2) A school-based health center shall make a complete range
15 of services available to any student who enrolls if the student
16 obtained parental consent, is eighteen (18) years of age or is
17 otherwise able to provide consent based on existing State law.

18 (3) When providing services by referral, health care
19 providers shall minimize financial, geographical and other
20 barriers to the greatest extent possible.

21 (4) A school-based health center shall make consent forms
22 available to each enrolling student to obtain informed written
23 consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student as
24 required under the laws of this Commonwealth. Consent forms
25 shall include a complete list of the specific services provided
26 at the school-based health center.

27 (b) A health care provider, through cooperation with a
28 participating school district, shall make written information
29 about school-based health center services available to parents
30 and legal guardians of students, including:

1 (1) The scope of services offered.

2 (2) Opt-in instructions.

3 (3) The ability of the school-based health center to serve
4 as the designated primary health care provider or services
5 provided in collaboration with the student's primary health care
6 provider.

7 (4) Staffing patterns.

8 (c) Services provided by a school-based health center shall
9 be determined by the school board of the district, in the case
10 of public schools, or the private governing body, in the case of
11 private schools or parochial schools, which shall consider an
12 initial and ongoing assessment of a participating school
13 district's student population needs and shall be sensitive to
14 the following:

15 (1) The age of students served.

16 (2) The racial demographics and ethnic backgrounds of
17 students.

18 (3) The availability, use and access to other school and
19 community resources.

20 (4) The size of the enrolled population of the school-based
21 health center.

22 (d) If a school district establishes a school-based health
23 center, the school-based health center shall be integrated into
24 the school district environment and plans and shall coordinate
25 health services with school district administration, teachers,
26 nurses, support or other school district personnel and other
27 community providers at the school district.

28 (e) A school-based health center, in partnership with a
29 participating school district and other service providers at the
30 school district, shall develop policies and systems to ensure

1 confidentiality in the sharing of medical information in
2 accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and
3 Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191, 110 Stat. 1936).

4 (f) The following apply:

5 (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), upon availability
6 of funding from the Commonwealth, the department may promulgate
7 regulations regarding school-based health centers to meet the
8 requirements of this section. The department shall solicit input
9 from the advisory council established under subsection (h) and
10 stakeholders in developing regulations under this section.

11 (2) The department may not require a school district,
12 private school or parochial school to offer services in a
13 school-based health center which the school district or
14 governing body of the private school or parochial school has not
15 itself approved.

16 (g) The department shall establish a school-based health
17 center liaison position within the department who shall
18 facilitate communication with school-based health centers. The
19 liaison shall serve on the advisory council established under
20 subsection (h).

21 (h) The department shall establish a Statewide school-based
22 health advisory council, which shall consist of two department
23 representatives, the school-based health center liaison
24 established under subsection (g), three field experts, student
25 representatives, parents, school district administration,
26 community members and two health care providers who work in a
27 school-based health center. The advisory council shall:

28 (1) Provide input on program operation and community
29 integrations.

30 (2) Encourage school-based health centers to convene

1 advisory groups at the district level to gain nuanced insight on
2 each school district.

3 (3) Participate in program planning and development,
4 identification of emerging health issues and appropriate
5 interventions and provide advocacy for the program.

6 (i) Upon availability of funding by the General Assembly,
7 the department may collect demographic and utilization data on
8 school-based health centers to share with the General Assembly,
9 which may include:

10 (1) The total number of school-based health centers.

11 (2) The total number of students accessing services
12 Statewide and school district totals.

13 (3) Racial and ethnic demographics of students accessing
14 services.

15 (4) The amount of funding available.

16 (5) Expansion of health insurance coverage.

17 (6) Efforts to raise public and health care provider
18 awareness of racial and ethnic disparities in health care.

19 (7) The capacity and number of health care providers in
20 school-based health centers.

21 (8) Causes and interventions to reduce health disparities.

22 (9) The number of CHIP, Medicaid and private payors
23 participating in the program.

24 (10) Health outcomes of students.

25 (j) Upon availability of funding by the General Assembly,
26 the department may research the appropriateness of developing a
27 certification program for school-based health centers. If the
28 department develops a certification program under this
29 subsection, a school-based health center may not implement an
30 enrolled student cost-sharing program if the school-based health

1 center participates in the certification program.

2 (k) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
3 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless
4 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

5 "Advisory council." The school-based health advisory council
6 established under subsection (h).

7 "Complete range of services." Services permissible under law
8 and specifically approved by a school board of the district, in
9 the case of public schools, or a private governing body, in the
10 case of private schools and parochial schools.

11 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

12 "Health care provider." A person, corporation, facility,
13 institution or other entity licensed, certified or approved by
14 the Commonwealth to provide health care or professional medical
15 services. The term includes a physician, podiatrist,
16 optometrist, psychologist, psychiatrist, physical therapist,
17 certified nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, physicians
18 assistant, chiropractor, dentist, pharmacist or an individual
19 accredited or certified to provide behavioral health services.

20 "School-based health center." A health clinic that:

21 (1) Is located in or near a school district facility.

22 (2) Is organized through school district and health care
23 provider relationships.

24 (3) Provides, through licensed professionals, primary health
25 services to students, which may include:

26 (i) Social services.

27 (ii) Health education.

28 (iii) Comprehensive health assessments, including diagnosis
29 and treatment of minor, acute and chronic medical conditions,
30 immunizations and physical exams.

1 (iv) Referrals to and follow-up for specialty care and oral
2 and vision health services, mental health and substance use
3 disorder assessments.

4 (v) Crisis intervention, counseling, treatment and referral
5 to a continuum of mental health and substance use disorder
6 services, including emergency psychiatric care, risk behavior
7 services, community support programs, inpatient care and
8 outpatient programs.

9 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.