Navigating the Policy & Funding Landscape of SBHCs

Meet Our Presenters

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Icebreaker: Two Truths & A Lie

Objectives

Participants will:

Understand the policy process.

See how federal, state, and local decisions shape what SBHCs offer.

Connect funding to operations.

Analyze how reimbursement, grants, and partnerships influence services.

Practice effective advocacy.

Build confidence making a clear ask for SBHC support.

How many school-based health centers operate across the United States?

A. 500

C. 2,900

B. 1,900

D. 3,900

Research shows SBHCs are disproportionately located in which communities?

A. High-income suburbs

C. Low-income and underserved communities

B. Rural, hard-to-reach areas

D. Retirement communities

What does Medicaid primarily provide to SBHCs?

A. Reimbursement for services

C. Money for advanced technology

B. Construction permits

D. Transportation funds for mobile Vans

What does 'prior authorization' require before certain SBHC services are covered?

A. Parent-teacher approval

C. School-board voting

B. A physician referral only

D. Insurance approval in advance

What is one of the most cited reasons families trust and use their SBHC?

A. Convenient access at school

B. Free health care

C. Greater scope of services

D. The staff are better trained than at hospitals

The ACA (2010) had a direct impact on SBHCs. What did it create specifically for them?

A. A capital funding program

B. A new tax funding SBHCs

C. A national ranking program for grant sources to know which SBHCs to fund

D. A staff wage grant program to increase the compensation of SBHC workers

What does 'scope of services' mean for an SBHC in practice?

A. The number of students served

C. The size of the building

B. The range of healthcare services offered

D. The number of school districts involved

How does state law shape SBHC services? Which is the best well-documented example?

A. It determines cafeteria menus

B. It can govern consent and confidentiality rules

C. It sets rules for the wages of SBHC staff

D. It determines which SBHC services can be offered in the first place

What is the primary purpose of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for SBHCs?

A. To establish roles and responsibilities among partners

C. To hire teachers

B. To bill insurance companies

D. To accredit hospitals

Why is confidentiality especially important for adolescent SBHC patients?

A. It encourages students to seek needed care

B. It increases attendance records

C. It makes them happier

D. It reduces costs

Let's Talk Lobbying and Advocacy!

How does lobbying affect SBHAs?

Have you ever participated in lobbying/advocacy activities? What did that look like? Did you face any challenges?

In your mind, what do you consider to be "successful" lobbying?

01

Policy, Funding, & Why They Matter

How SBHC Policy Works

SBHCs operate at the intersection of health care, education, and government on all 3 levels

Federal	Sets Medicaid and public-health rules, HRSA, grant opportunities, and guidance.
State	Controls licensing, **reimbursement policy**, and often whether dedicated SBHC funding exists.
Local	School districts, boards, and community partners shape implementation on the ground.

A billing rule, grant cut, or district decision can affect who is hired, which services are covered, and whether students can access care consistently.

How SBHCs Are Funded

Most centers rely on multiple income streams that together support care delivery.

Clinical reimbursement

- Medicaid
- CHIP / insurance billing
- Managed care payment

Government support

- Federal grants
- State appropriations
- Local / district support

Community partnerships

- Hospitals / FQHCs
- Foundations
- In-kind staffing or services

Why Medicaid Policy is Important

$8.1 Billion
School-based Medicaid Spending

45%
of community health center revenue came from Medicaid

$325
Medicaid spending per student in DC

Medicaid's Upsides

- **Accounts for recurring clinical services**
- **Waives unnecessary authorizations**
- ***Some complex billing rules**

Community Partnerships

- Grant funding from the **NBA Foundation** for Project REACH
- Advancing **health equity** through SBHCs
- Career and workforce **experiential opportunities**

NBA FOUNDATION

How Funding Decisions Shape Operations

Total Funding

- Staffing
- Service
- Hours & access
- Data & reporting

02

Youth Advocacy in Action

Lobbying 101

Advocacy vs. lobbying

Advocacy

Broad efforts to build awareness, support, and momentum around a cause.

Lobbying

Directly asking a decision-maker to support a specific bill, budget item, or change.

Youth voices powerfully transform policy into lived experience.

A strong meeting usually includes:

1. **Define the ask**
2. **Back it with a story and local need**
3. **Expect questions and pushback**
4. **Follow up after the meeting**

Most effective advocacy is clear, specific, and easy for a policymaker to repeat to someone else.

Lobbying Strategies

1. State vs Federal

- State staff meetings are more accessible
- Track bill calendars

2. Committees

- Prioritize relevant legislators
- Track committee hearings

3. Staff

- Build rapport with a staffer
- Seek out allies

Youth Lobbying Examples

University of Rochester

Lobbied the university for **private unionization elections** (led to stipend concessions)

Madison West High School

The civics club passed a resolution **lowering** the school board election **voting age to 16**

Forsyth County High Schools

Successfully pushed for **Naloxone access** and distribution of **drug disposal**

Do

- Build relationships with legislators
- Prepare materials
- Prepare for the meeting
- Connect the issue to their district

Don’t

- Don't ignore the opposition
- Don't limit lobbying to your own rep
- Don't forget the staff
- Don't forget your goal

Interactive Session: Mock Lobbying Challenge

Goal : Create increased school-based mental health funding.

Each student group represents a different constituency:

- Parents - advocating against they are uncomfortable with unknown healthcare workers
- Students - advocating in favor of implementation as mental health in school has been down
- Educators - advocating in favor of implementation as they spend the most time with students, seeing the difficulties they are facing with mental health.
- Community Leaders - advocating against as they believe that the funding could be better allocated elsewhere

Each individual group must create a lobbying plan representing their specific view point to board members Joey and Rikhil, as politicians that haven't decided whether or not to support the increase in funding. Feel free to include your own story aspects or statistics if you know them

Interactive Session: Mock Lobbying Challenge

Goal : Expand school-based mental health services

We are prominent state legislators. We have have $100 million dollars to fund initiatives across the state related to SBHC mental health services. Our role is to ask hard questions, push back, and decide whether to "support" each proposal.

The groups play a public advocacy lobbying team. They must pitch their round's topic convincingly, using evidence, stories, and the lobbying strategies from your presentation. Lobbying teams are allowed any props and can convince the legislators through any style or means they think is most effective. We favor creative representations like skits, unique storytelling, or a mixture. Feel free to use your phones or computers to look up data.

ROUND

01

The Mental Health Services Gap

Background

Groups lobby for a dedicated funding line item or grant to expand mental health services at school-based health centers. They must argue why the money is needed, how much, and exactly where it goes.

Questions

- What gap in services currently exists?
- What types of specific services would the money support?
- How much funding are they requesting and for what?
- What kind of criticism might your proposal face, and for what?

ROUND

02

The Staffing Bill

Background

Groups lobby for legislation requiring or incentivizing SBHCs to hire licensed mental health professionals. They need to make the workforce case.

Questions

- What kind of professionals should be hired (counselors, social workers)?
- How would you select professionals that should be considered for hiring?

Debrief:

Explain your lobbying strategy? Why did you think it would be successful?

What was the most difficult part?

How did your group change your argument to better align with the politician?

How does this relate to school-based health funding?

03

Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- Policy and funding decisions shape what SBHCs can realistically offer students.
- Sustainable centers usually depend on braided funding rather than a single source.
- Medicaid policy can expand or restrict access depending on billing and reimbursement rules.
- Youth advocacy is most effective when the ask is specific, grounded, and student-centered.

Questions?

Thanks for your time!