



# The Charleston Wellness Center



**School Based Health Clinic  
Your Questions Answered**

## **Our Vision**

*Students and staff of Charleston Public Schools will have quality, integrated school health services that improve health status, optimize academic achievement, and enhance well-being.*

## **Our Mission**

*To collaborate with other school health partners to promote, facilitate, and advocate for comprehensive, culturally competent health care in schools.*

## **Our Core Values**

***We believe** in universal access to affordable, high quality health care provided in schools and communities because good health is essential for student success, and health care, like public education, should be a right.*

***We believe** in advocating for the health of children and youth and for the provision of high quality, accessible, confidential, comprehensive, culturally competent health care in schools.*

***We believe** that, as a valuable component of the health care delivery system, SBHCs should be appropriately funded and reimbursed.*

***We believe** that preventive and primary health care should be available where children are, in school.*

***We believe** that children will not care what we know until they know that we care.*

**Jeff Stubblefield, Superintendent, Charleston Public Schools**  
**Genia Hamby, Wellness Clinic Coordinator**  
**Dusty Smith, RN**

## **What is The Charleston Wellness Center?**

The Charleston Wellness Center is a school based health clinic (SBHC) that is located in the center of the campus behind the football stadium. The clinic serves the students and staff of the Charleston Public School District. Business hours will be the same as the regular school calendar.

## **What services does The Charleston Wellness Center Provide?**

- Primary care for illness and injury
- Comprehensive annual exams
- Sports physicals
- Laboratory tests
- Prescription Medications with delivery service available from MediSav
- Referrals for services not provided by The Charleston Wellness Center
- Mental Health Services in partnership with **Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance Center**
- Health Promotion and Prevention Programs
- Dental Care coming soon
- Vision care coming soon

## **Do I have to pay for services?**

Most insurance plans are accepted including Medicaid and ARKids 1<sup>st</sup>. A co-pay may be required; however, no child will be turned away because of inability to pay for services.

## **What is the history behind SBHC's?**

Nationally, the school-based health care movement started in the early 1980s with a handful of projects. Today, more than 1,700 school-based health centers serve nearly two million young people across the U.S. every year. Approximately 40 percent of these students have no other medical home, largely because they live in communities with limited access to health care. The national movement is led by the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care.

## **Do parents favor SBHCs?**

Yes. Parents appreciate SBHCs because:

- SBHC services help their child to stay healthy and in school. Services can include those for physical, behavioral (mental health and substance abuse), and dental health.
- Parents miss less work. Without a SBHC, when a child is sick, the parent must miss work to take the child out of school and be seen at the nearest health care facility. For families that rely on an hourly wage, this day of missed work can mean not getting a meal on the table that night.
- SBHCs make schools more prepared for emergencies. Parents feel more secure knowing that if a national or other emergency occurred during school hours, trained medical practitioners are already be on hand at the school.
- SBHCs can partner with schools in developing and implementing the schools' crisis response plan, often making those plans stronger.
- SBHC staff can enhance the school's health education program.

**Do SBHCs interfere with parental authority?**

No. Statewide, parents retain the authority to sign consent forms regarding whether their child can be seen at the SBHC for *standard* services (such as treatment for colds, sports injuries, or asthma). If medication is prescribed, the child's parent and primary care doctor are typically notified. Because SBHCs take the approach that parents and children should work together to resolve health problems, the staff promotes strong family communication.

**Shouldn't schools just focus on education?**

Schools cannot do their job of educating students if they are not in school. Research shows that students who use SBHCs are less likely to be absent and more likely to be promoted or graduate than their peers who do not. Furthermore, students without SBHCs are less likely to get medical care, so they often come to school sick, spread illnesses to their teachers and peers, and thus distract others from learning.

**Do SBHCs eliminate the need for school nurses and school counselors?**

No. SBHCs do not and will not replace school nurses or counselors. Rather, they complement services already being provided by placing additional resources in the schools. In some cases, school nurses and counselors work independently of the SBHC. Other schools choose to incorporate them into their new SBHC. Either way, school nurses and counselors are vitally important to comprehensive health services for students.

**Do health centers take money away from schools?**

SBHCs get their funding from many different sources, including the state, private grants, and insurance billing. Schools provide in-kind support to their health centers, such as space, utilities, and custodial services. In addition, some school districts pitch in modest funding, recognizing that students are more successful when they are physically and mentally healthy.

**Do SBHCs take patients away from local providers?**

No. SBHCs collaborate with and make referrals to community medical, behavioral, and oral health providers. SBHCs are another entry point for children who may not otherwise be able or willing to seek help outside the school. While primary care providers generally see children under the age of 13 relatively often, they see adolescents less frequently. This group, at risk for a variety of health-related problems, typically does not access available health care resources. For these adolescents, SBHCs serve as an important entry point into the health care system.

**Are practitioners at SBHCs qualified?**

Yes. All medical providers at SBHCs must be licensed, and the services they provide are limited to their type of licensure. Often, SBHC providers have additional skills and training in providing services to adolescents. Dr. James Schmitz, MD, and Christina Metcalf, APN, from Charleston are the providers for The Charleston Wellness Center.

**What about prescriptions?**

No child will leave the Charleston Wellness Center with a written prescription unless requested by the parent. All student prescriptions will be called to the parent's pharmacy of choice. MediSav Pharmacy in Charleston has offered to deliver prescriptions directly to the Wellness Center.



### **What do I need to do for my child to receive services?**

Students needing services from the Charleston Wellness Center must have parental consent forms on file in order to access services. All students needing services must visit the school nurse prior to receiving clinic services during school hours. Any child that is in need of services will be scheduled for a visit based on the acuity of the need (a child with a fever of 104 takes priority over a rash that has been present for a week). If it is determined by the school nurse that a student needs services of the Charleston Wellness Center, the parent must be notified prior to the delivery of services. Student and staff services will be scheduled as soon as possible in the best way to avoid interruption to the core classes.