



*Committed to strengthening policies and programs in school mental health
to improve learning and promote success for America's youth*

Legislation Update: School-Based Health Clinic Act of 2007

This summary is intended to educate diverse stakeholders invested in school mental health about a potentially exciting bill, School-Based Health Clinic Act of 2007 which has been introduced in the United States Senate. While it is still early in the deliberation process, the Center for School Mental Health Analysis and Action is pleased that such a bill is being considered and is hopeful that it will receive full and positive consideration. Such legislation could be pivotal in reducing barriers to learning and in promoting success for America's youth.

School-Based Health Clinic Act of 2007

The School-Based Health Clinic Act was introduced on February 14, 2007, sponsored by Sen. Chris Dodd and Sen. Gordon Smith. The purpose of this act is to provide children and adolescents with school based comprehensive primary care medical and mental health services which are necessary for good health and academic success. The act is intended to amend the Public Health Service Act by authorizing grant funds for the operation and development of school-based health clinics to provide comprehensive health care services to medically underserved youth and families and work in unison with schools to integrate health into the overall school context.

The provisions for mental health services are strongly supported and integrated within the bill. Specifically, comprehensive primary health services includes mental health assessments, crisis intervention, counseling, treatment, and referral to a community services such as emergency psychiatric care, community support programs, inpatient care, and outpatient care. This could be the *first-ever* federally authorized school-based health clinic program. The bill is in the initial stages and is being considered in committee. Consequently, *it may be revised significantly*. The bill has been referred to the committee on *Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions*.

Implications for School Mental Health

As the bill is written now, it would be very supportive of the school mental health field. Most importantly, it would translate into more funding for quality and comprehensive services for children, adolescents, and families within schools as well as the integration of health promotion into the overall school environment.

Potential benefits for school mental health:

- Increased support for early prevention and intervention services
- Increased access to mental health services to more students and families
- Reduced gaps in mental health services for children and adolescents
- Increased visibility and funding on a federal level

Sources:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-600>

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:s600:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:s600)

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