



School Health Services

NATIONAL QUALITY INITIATIVE

Accountability • Excellence • Sustainability

an initiative of School-Based Health Alliance and Center for School Mental Health

School Health and Mental Health Organizations Receive 5-Year Federal Award to Lead School-Based Health Services Quality Improvement and Sustainability Initiative

WASHINGTON, DC—The School-Based Health Alliance (“The Alliance”) and the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) were jointly awarded a cooperative agreement from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) at the Health Resources and Services Administration to lead innovation and improvement in quality of care through school-based health services. The two organizations are eager to build on the momentum of the previous four years leading the School Health Services National Quality Initiative (NQI), and work collaboratively with their partners, including the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools at George Washington University, project advisors, and school health providers from across the nation to ensure the highest quality of care for children and adolescents receiving services in schools.

The 5-year agreement will support the partnering organizations’ efforts to improve the quality of care delivered by school-based health centers (SBHCs) and comprehensive school mental health systems (CSMHSs) nationwide. The Alliance and its partners will:

- Review and refine current national performance measures;
- Conduct three quality improvement collaboratives of cohorts comprising SBHCs and CSMHSs (be on the lookout for partnership opportunities Spring 2019);
- Facilitate a Community of Practice for state agencies and state-level organizations to accelerate and spread innovation and improvement in quality care, best business practices, and policies to support school health services sustainability and growth;
- Provide technical assistance to SBHCs, CSMHSs, and schools not participating in CoIIN cohorts, encouraging adoption of CoIIN-generated strategies and innovations;
- Integrate contemporary and emerging child and adolescent behavioral health topics, issues and conditions (e.g., adverse childhood experiences, opioid use) and emerging practices (e.g., telehealth, trauma-informed practices, restorative justice, social/emotional learning) in performance measure refinement, screening tools, implementation guidance, webinar series, and resources; and
- Support states to effectively assess and address social determinants of health in school-based health services.

“The inequitable distribution of health and education resources across our communities has created profound and unjust disparities in outcomes for young people,” said John Schlitt, president of the Alliance. “School-based health services represent the intersection of our nation’s health and education systems. And, when organized in partnership with community systems of care, the provision of health and mental health services in schools can level the playing field for all children and adolescents by eliminating the health disparities that plague our nation’s most vulnerable students.” Dr. Sharon Hoover, NCSMH Co-Director, adds “Schools are the de facto mental health system for our youth, and this effort will continue to drive forward the quality and sustainability of services and supports that address the mental health of all students.”

Opportunity for Collaboration:

In Spring 2019, the Alliance and NCSMH will invite the school-based health services field to participate in the *National Quality Initiative Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (NQI CoIIN)* learning collaborative. School-based health services teams, sponsors, and community and state-level organizations will have the chance to learn from one another as well as experts in the field to collectively make improvements in SBHS.

About the Partners:

The **School-Based Health Alliance** is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that was founded in 1995 to serve as the national voice for school-based health care. The Alliance supports the school-based health care field by providing technical assistance, resources, and trainings so they can provide the best-quality health care to their patients. In addition, the Alliance advocates for policies on the local, state, and federal level that strengthen school health, and supports its technical assistance and advocacy work—and the entire school-based health care field—through quality research and evaluation.

The **National Center for School Mental Health**, in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, is committed to enhancing understanding and supporting implementation of comprehensive school mental health policies and programs that are innovative, effective, and culturally and linguistically competent, across the development spectrum (from preschool through post-secondary), across three tiers of mental health programming (promotion, prevention, intervention).