



National School Health and Mental Health Organizations to Lead Quality Improvement and Sustainability Initiative

The School-Based Health Alliance (SBHA) and the Center for School Mental Health (CSMH) are pleased to announce that they have been jointly awarded a grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Division of Child, Adolescent and Family Health, Adolescent Health Branch to implement best practices, policies, and financing strategies that support access to and the expansion of high-quality and sustainable school-based health services.

The \$2.8 million 4-year cooperative agreement with MCHB will support the partnering organizations' efforts to improve the quality of care delivered by school-based health centers (SBHCs) and comprehensive school mental health programs (CSMHPs) nationwide. Specific project activities include:

- Building consensus on a set of measures that can document the quality of clinical and preventive services being delivered by SBHCs and CSMHPs
- Creating a web-based infrastructure for a national performance measurement system
- Implementing a quality improvement collaborative to test innovation in school health services
- Bringing to scale a national quality improvement agenda for school-based health services

A separate goal of the MCHB agreement is to build sustainable school-based health service business models that will result in a 30% increase in SBHCs and CSMHPs. Activities under this performance objective include:

- Identifying and testing sustainability metrics with a network of innovators
- Implementing a sustainability collaborative to test innovative business practices
- Developing resources on leveraging funding to support development and sustainability of SBHCs and CSMHPs
- Supporting strategies for local communities to increase numbers of SBHCs and CSMHPs
- Disseminating best practices to scale up a national agenda for sustainable school-based health services

"This is an ambitious but necessary set of objectives for the school-based health services field," said John Schlitt, President of SBHA. "A first-ever national performance framework provides a common focal point for measuring and publicly reporting outcomes." CSMH co-directors Nancy Lever and Sharon Stephan agree: "Our collective efforts will help to assure quality and drive system- and practice-level improvements and innovation in a diverse field of school health programs."

About the Partners

SBHA is a membership organization dedicated to improving the health status of children and youth by 1) building the capacity of school health professionals to deliver the highest quality of care and 2) advocating for national policies, programs, and funding to expand and strengthen comprehensive, interdisciplinary health services for children and adolescents in school settings.

The CSMH, 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).