

School Health Access Collaborative

The School Health Access Collaborative (SHAC) brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to ensure access to quality school health services for Chicago's most vulnerable students. Co-convened by Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) and the Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC), SHAC brings together more than 40 critical stakeholders, working alongside Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), to create systemic change across the health and education sectors in Chicago.

Health and Education Connection

Research shows that access to school health services improves student health, attendance, and academic achievement. Yet in Chicago, the lack of high quality and accessible school health services is a persistent problem, especially for schools in historically under-invested communities and those serving Black and Latinx students. This leaves students vulnerable to both physical and mental health challenges, and makes it harder to focus and learn in school.

SHAC brings together leaders from the school district, public health department, advocacy organizations, health service providers, hospital systems, insurance providers, philanthropy and more for cross-sector collaboration, partnerships and problem solving around key issues related to the health and wellness of students attending Chicago Public Schools.

Meeting the Needs of Chicago's Students

CPS is the fourth largest school district in the country and currently serves more than 329,000 students across 635 schools, with 235,000 students enrolled in Medicaid. CPS partners closely with community-based and city-wide health service providers that deliver quality care to both CPS students and the community at large. However, the sometimes fractured nature of the current system can challenge the district's ability to support schools and service providers as they strive to provide high quality and coordinated school health services. These barriers can limit access to care for students and further increase health disparities.



System Level Change

Collaborative efforts for improving student health and wellness across sectors require thoughtful planning and coordination. Building new connections, having transparent discussions and working in partnership across diverse organizations are crucial steps for achieving systemic change that improves student health and ensures students get the high quality and coordinated health services they need. SHAC facilitates these connections and brings together a broad range of community partners to discuss challenges, share best practices and create both programmatic and systemic solutions.

SHAC has identified the following key priorities to affect systems level change:

- 1) Build and strengthen partnerships among school health advocates and providers:** Lead a learning collaborative to share effective school health service delivery models and best practices, identify and share lessons learned and explore ways to increase coordination for the benefit of students and schools.
- 2) Advance health and education data sharing:** Develop and implement a sustainable data sharing strategy to help make data accessible so that students are connected to appropriate and coordinated health care services.
- 3) Advance policy to support healthy schools and communities:** Leverage a broad range of stakeholders to support policy and advocacy initiatives that increase access to school health services, promote positive health and education outcomes and are responsive to community priorities.
- 4) Promote value of school health services:** Develop a shared understanding across sectors of the impact of and need for school health services, and advocate for policy, programs and systems that prioritize health equity and access to care.

To learn more, email
SHAC@chicagoschoolhealth.org

About Healthy Schools Campaign

Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working at the local, state and national levels to affect change at the intersection of health, education, equity and sustainability. HSC works to ensure that students have access to healthy school environments, including nutritious food, physical activity, comprehensive school health services, outdoor spaces and healthy built environments, including clean air, where they can learn and thrive. HSC advocates for practical policy recommendations, builds strong partnerships, and provides school stakeholders, including parents, teachers, health service providers and school staff, with a strong voice in shaping public policy.

About Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies and resources. PHIMC has a 30-year history of tackling critical community health challenges in partnership with public health departments and other government agencies, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, academic and grant-making institutions and health care providers and associations. PHIMC is committed to improving knowledge and practices which enhance the capacity of individuals and organizations to solve problems, work towards equity and adapt to change to advance health and racial equity.