



# SCHOOL HEALTH ADVOCACY DAY

**Preparing for Advocacy Day  
Legislative Prep Guide  
February 25, 2020 at the Capitol**



**OREGON**

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**SCHOOL-BASED  
HEALTH ALLIANCE**

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## Schedule Legislative Meetings

- 🌱 Call the office of your local legislator to schedule a meeting about a month in advance. Once your appointment is scheduled, confirm your meeting times by emailing [Jessica@osbha.org](mailto:Jessica@osbha.org)
- 🌱 Schedule meetings with your senators and representatives – the best time would be between 12:30 pm and 3:30pm.
- 🌱 Ask for a 15 minute meeting. Legislators enjoy meeting with their constituents! If the legislator is unavailable, ask for a meeting with a legislative aide.
- 🌱 To find out who your legislators are and their contact information, please visit: [www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html)
- 🌱 Please try to schedule your meetings **AFTER 12:30 pm** so you can take advantage of our interactive morning training. However, the goal is to meet with as many Legislators as possible, so schedule the meetings for any time they can meet with your group while you are in Salem. It may be necessary for a small group of your students to leave the School Health Advocacy Day meeting room to meet with a Legislator. Legislators usually start meeting with folks by about 8:00 am, so meetings before our program starts could also be an option.
- 🌱 Check to see if any other SBHC programs within your area share your legislators and discuss the possibility of visiting the Legislator together. If so, schedule the meeting accordingly.
- 🌱 Let the Legislator's scheduler know how many people will be coming and what school and legislative districts they represent. Take note of the Legislator's scheduler and time/date you spoke with them. Keep record of all written and verbal communication with the Legislator's office. You can schedule with your Legislator's scheduler via phone or email. It is also a good idea to send a meeting confirmation via email to their office.
- 🌱 Call or email again to confirm the appointment a week before School Health Advocacy Day. Confirm all meeting times with OSBHA by emailing [Jessica@osbha.org](mailto:Jessica@osbha.org)

## Conduct Legislative Meetings

-  When you visit the Legislators' offices, be sure to introduce yourself and identify the SBHC program you represent. Ask for the person who scheduled the appointment to thank them personally.
-  If the Legislator is not available, ask if you may speak with the legislative staff person who is responsible for health issues.
-  Go over the main points about SBHCs and hand in the packet of SBHC information you have prepared.
-  If it is a large group, designate one to five people to speak about specific SBHC issues and about why SBHCs are important to them. Be sure they have the details they need.
-  Invite the Legislator and his/her staff to visit your SBHC—having pre-set open houses is a great way to encourage attendance. Contact Jessica Chambers at [jessica@osbha.org](mailto:jessica@osbha.org) if you are able to schedule a site visit.
-  Refer to the Tips sheet provided by OSBHA on speaking with legislators.



## How to Prepare for and Conduct a Meeting with Elected Officials about School-Based Health Care

### 1. **Know a bit of history:**

The Oregon Legislature has been tremendously supportive of SBHCs and other school health services in recent years. One of the main things you will do at School Health Advocacy Day is to THANK your legislators for their support of SBHCs and school health services, and to make sure that they know how important these services are in your community.

### 2. **Know WHY we are having School Health Advocacy Day**

- a. We are ADVOCATING for the existence and importance of SBHCs.
- b. We are THANKING legislators for their support.
- c. We are building SUPPORT for SBHCs and school health services.
- d. We are giving youth a chance to SHARE and to LEARN from others.
- e. We are giving people the opportunity to ADVOCATE for their health care.

### 3. **Know your Legislator.** What district do they represent? Are there significant children's health problems there, such as high rates of asthma? Do youth have access to other primary care, or is the SBHC the only source of such care? Know their position on issues related to the ones you plan to discuss. Have they supported or opposed SBHC and school health funding?

### 4. **Develop a strategy for the meeting.** If you are accompanied by others, decide who will speak, and on what issues. Don't feel intimidated. You "hire" your Legislators with your vote and "pay" them with your taxes. They want to represent their constituents' interests and hear from you.

#### **Here are some ideas for talking points:**

- a. What problems do youth face when they don't have access to health care?
- b. What do you like best about having access to health services at your school?
- c. What data do you have that make the case for school-based health centers?
- d. What impact does your school based health center have (or will it have) on your school?
- e. What makes school-based health care different?

### 5. **Focus on what you want.** For example, when urging their support for funding, ask them to talk to leadership (Speaker of the House or Senate Majority Leader) to request their support as well.

### 6. **Do your research; bring local data to support your position.** Examples include: the number of uninsured youth served; cuts in clinic funding and impact; asthma cases treated; complications prevented; hospitalizations averted. Ask OSBHA if you need advice on how to access this data.

### 7. **Give real case examples, without real names,** of kids with complex problems who were served by the SBHC, to show the important and unique role your clinics play in the communities the Legislator represents.

8. **Listen carefully.** Politicians tend to speak generally. Try politely to draw out specific answers to your specific questions about SBHC funding and legislation. If you are confused by the answer, ask for further clarification.
9. **Don't be afraid to admit ignorance.** If you don't know the answer to a question, say you will find out and report back later. (Let OSBHA know if a specific question came up that you didn't know how to answer—we can help follow up with the legislator.)
10. **Thank them for the visit.** Invite them to see your clinics in their district. (Be sure to follow up when you get back home with a specific date for them to visit the clinic.)
11. **Send a thank you letter that summarizes your understanding of what the Legislator agreed to do.** Let them know you are available to provide them with further information if needed. During the year, send relevant clippings or articles with a brief note to keep the issues on their radar.
12. **Schedule an appointment AFTER 12:30 pm.** Call your legislators and ask them for 15 minutes of their time on February 25th, anytime after 12:30. We will be training in the morning and out of respect for the youth who are preparing those trainings, **we ask you to try to avoid scheduling a morning meeting.** The main switchboard number is 1-800-332-2313. You can find your legislators at: [www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html)

**Make your appointments ASAP!**

## Now you are ready!

### During the Meeting:

-  **Be polite!** You are representing your community.
-  **Be confident**—shake their hands and look them in the eye.
-  **Don't be disappointed** if you meet with staff: meeting with legislative staff is as important as meeting with a legislator.
-  **Be flexible:** Legislators have extremely busy and unpredictable schedules, which means you may not always have as much time as you thought you would. A 15-minute appointment could turn into a 5-minute session, so you need to know what your key points are and be able to condense your message on short notice. Practice ahead of time and be ready to summarize!

## Suggested Meeting Guide:

-  The main points you may want to emphasize (*see Messages and Facts*):
- SBHCs are a great place for youth to access health care and will see you regardless of your insurance status.
  - SBHCs get students the care they need, when they need it, so they can get back to class and learn.
  - SBHCs reduce absenteeism and tardiness.
  - SBHCs are important to you—their constituent!
  - Mental health providers in schools are critical to the success of students.
-  **Make sure everyone that wants one has a role in the meeting, within reason** (make sure that you stay within your allotted time). You might consider assigning the following “roles” for your group:
- a. **The Opener:** This person will introduce the group (have the youth say who they are) and tell a little bit about your school and why you are there. Explain that today is School Health Advocacy Day and they are there with the Oregon School-Based Health Alliance. The opener can present your customized one pager, and then hand off to the data guru.
  - b. **The Data Guru:** This can be a great role for your SBHC Coordinator. This person will present 2 or 3 data points (such as the number of students who visited your health center last year, the number uninsured children in your county, the percent of kids with asthma, etc) that make the case for SBHCs. If you did not bring data with you, look in the data resources found in your packet.
  - c. **The Story Teller:** This person will tell a brief story about how their SBHC helped them, or, if your school doesn’t have an SBHC, the story teller will talk about a story where they could have used an SBHC. Please do not tell stories that are private or that someone would not want you to tell. Depending on the size of your group and length of your stories, you might have a few story tellers. Stories from students are very important, and very effective.
  - d. **The Closer/ Inviter** This person will close the meeting with a thank you to the legislator for supporting SBHCs and for meeting with you. **Invite the legislator to come to visit their SBHC or to visit your school to talk about health care.** This person will provide contact information for the person they should call. This person will follow up on the invitation after the event. Have this person give the legislator packet to the Legislator.

## Messages and Facts

1. We are here to **kick off School Health Advocacy Day** and let you know the benefits of providing quality health care in school. We are in our 34<sup>th</sup> year of SBHCs in Oregon.
2. An SBHC is like having a doctor's office in school. The location makes it easy to access health care and to follow up when necessary. SBHCs reduce barriers to accessing health care, like lack of insurance, transportation challenges, distance to provider, and availability of providers. SBHCs provide care regardless of insurance status or the family's ability to pay.
3. All SBHCs provide mental health services. SBHCs that have received mental health funding report reaching or exceeding capacity immediately, tell stories of preventing suicide, preventing school drop-out, and providing access to those that otherwise would never receive mental health care.
4. SBHCs are prevention focused, helping to stop or to catch conditions early, before they get costly or do more damage.
  - 🌱 Provide primary health care like child wellness exams, sports physicals
  - 🌱 Talk to kids about things like preventing tobacco use
  - 🌱 Help kids deal with grief, peer pressure, bullying and suicidal thoughts
5. SBHCs support education by **keeping kids healthy and in class**.
  - 🌱 Studies show SBHCs reduce absenteeism, tardiness and school discipline problems
  - 🌱 68 percent of students reported they missed less than a full class when they received care at the SBHC.
  - 🌱 74 percent of students report that without the center they would have missed at least one class to go to a traditional clinic. Twenty-two percent said they would miss the entire day.
  - 🌱 One in four youth identify SBHCs as their usual source of care for physical and mental health.

### Quick Facts about SBHCs in Oregon

- 🌱 SBHCs are in 79 elementary, middle and high schools across 26 Oregon counties.
- 🌱 Oregon SBHCs served 38,057 clients in 130,586 visits in the 2018-2019 school year.
- 🌱 Centers are always located within the school or on school grounds.
- 🌱 82% of surveyed students were unlikely to have received care that day if there was not an SBHC available to them.
- 🌱 In the 2018-2019 school year, 100% of SBHCs had a behavioral health provider onsite.



## Legislator Thank You Letter Sample

**WE WILL HAVE THESE AVAILABLE TO DO AT SCHOOL HEALTH ADVOCACY DAY 2019**

Month XX, Year

Senator / Assembly member  
ADDRESS

Dear Senator/ Assembly member,

On behalf of the <<**School-based Health Program**>> we would like to thank your office for meeting with us on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to discuss the future of School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). It was a great pleasure to meet with your staff, and we want to express our personal thanks for the continued support we receive from you and your staff.

As you know, the SBHC health care model effectively delivers comprehensive physical and mental health services to children and adolescents directly on school grounds. This location is instrumental in the early detection of physical, behavioral, and emotional health issues. SBHCs are in a position within the schools to properly address health issues affecting the local communities, such as asthma and smoking, through asthma monitoring and smoking cessation programs. In addition, SBHCs benefits the community by preventing unnecessary hospitalization of students, reducing emergency room visits, improving school attendance, and helping parents avoid lost workdays.

We would like to thank your office again for taking the time to meet with us about the importance of School-Based Health Centers. We appreciated the opportunity you provided to share stories about our experiences with our School-Based Health Centers.

We would like to invite you and your staff to visit the SBHCs in your district to see for yourselves the positive impact they are having on the student's lives. We look forward to hearing from you about a visit and about your support for these vital comprehensive health services.

Sincerely,