



Student Health Advocacy Coalition

Increase Funding for CDC's School Health Activities

The members of the Student Health Advocacy Coalition (SHAC) respectfully urge you to increase funding for activities that promote student health and wellness. SHAC requests additional investments for school health programs administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health (DPH), School Health Branch; and the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH).

SHAC is a coalition of national organizations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all preK-12 children and youth through collective advocacy and policy change at the federal level.

Twenty percent of the US population is between the ages of 5 and 19 and spends a significant amount of time in schools. Schools have direct contact with 55 million young people for at least six hours per day and up to 13 crucial years of social, physical, emotional and intellectual development. To a great extent, their health and academic success determine their future contributions to productivity and to health care costs. Society as a whole benefits when young people are healthy and academically successful, and evidence shows school health programs have a positive effect on academic performance. Schools can play an important role in educating about, modeling, and reinforcing healthy behaviors, and supporting school-based health services.

CDC helps states leverage the efforts of their health and education agencies to enhance schools' ability to boost learning through health impact programs. CDC's school health priorities include:

- 1) Implementing evidence-based policy, environmental, and systems change with the greatest impact on health, the broadest reach, and maximum sustainability;
- 2) Encouraging state health and education agency coordination whether through preventive education, crisis management, and/or gathering data on student health and behavior.

Increased Funding for the School Health Branch

The DPH School Health Branch supports efforts nationwide to reduce the risk factors associated with childhood and adult obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke (all

contributors to lost productivity and increased health care costs). Through federal grants made available from the *State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health* program, all 50 states and the District of Columbia receive funds to help prevent these chronic diseases. Funding for school health activities through the School Health Branch within DPH comprises the smallest allocation among the four foci of this program.

Since FY2012, federal allocations for CDC's school health activities to prevent chronic diseases have essentially been level funded at \$14.9 million. DPH provides a basic level of funding for school health activities in all 50 states (about \$75,000 per state). This small amount of funding allows states to conduct a minimum of school-based health activities. DPH also provides an enhanced level of funding on a competitive basis to a smaller number of states.

School health activities supported through DPH include:

- 1) Supporting healthier nutrition environments in schools;
- 2) Providing comprehensive school physical activity programs and multi-component physical education policies; and
- 3) Improving capacity to manage chronic conditions.

SHAC supports increased resources for DPH for a total of \$25 million in FY 2015 to enable all 50 states and DC to engage in enhanced school health activities that improve the school nutrition environment and increase the quality and quantity of physical education and physical activity opportunities. States would also be strongly encouraged to fund a school health position at the state education agency to coordinate efforts with the state health department.

Increased Funding for the Division of Adolescent and School Health

Supplementing these school health and broader adolescent health promotion efforts, DASH provides unique assistance to education agencies in their efforts to implement exemplary sexual health education and provide adolescents with linkages to health services and care. DASH aims to build the capacity of school districts and individual schools and reduce health disparities in HIV infection and other STDs experienced by certain adolescent populations.

Since FY 2012, federal allocations for CDC's school health activities for DASH within the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention have also been essentially level funded at \$31.1 million. Historically, DASH was funded at levels that supported activities in all 50 states. However, the recent cut in DASH resources has reduced its reach to just 23 states.

DASH priorities include:

- 1) Supporting districts and schools in delivering high quality sexual health education emphasizing HIV and other STD prevention, and teen pregnancy prevention;
- 2) Increasing adolescent access to sexual health services; and
- 3) Establishing safe and supportive environments for students and staff.

To expand the state reach, support school capacity to increase quality adolescent sexual health promotion, and evaluate effectiveness, we also support increased funding for DASH for a total of \$47 million, as well as \$3 million in authorized evaluation transfer authority in FY 2015.

Investing in these school-based health promotion programs is vital to ensuring the health of our nation's young people and in their future well-being. SHAC urges you to support these critical investments and looks forward to working with you as federal FY 2015 funding decisions progress.