



The Illinois School-Based Health Alliance
COVID-19 Reopening Guidance
for School-Based Health Centers

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background

EverThrive Illinois works to improve the health of women, children, and families over the lifespan. One way we accomplish our mission is by staffing the Illinois School-Based Health Alliance (ISBHA), which works to ensure that children and adolescents are healthy, safe, and ready to learn by advocating for and supporting school-based health centers (SBHCs) as school and community assets. EverThrive IL supports SBHCs by meeting with SBHC leaders throughout the state to identify what resources are needed to make the quality of care provided in SBHCs exceptional and efficient. Furthermore, we meet with relevant stakeholders, including school district leaders and lawmakers, to advocate for increased and equitable funding for the health centers. We envision that the information in this document will help inform SBHCs on their reopening plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SBHCs in Illinois offer a wide range of services to the school community such as behavioral health services, physical exams, immunizations, and dental services. The health centers want to continue bringing care to the communities in which they are located, so they will be taking more precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the school community feels comfortable accessing services.

about this resource

This reopening outline was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that Illinois SBHCs are able to:

- Implement protocols and procedures for reopening safely and efficiently.
- Adjust their care models to ensure continued care of patients and the sustainability of the SBHC.
- Bring attention to and address health equity issues that are present in the pandemic.
- Create community partnerships to make sure that SBHCs are providing care based on the communities' wants and needs.

Much of the information being shared in this outline is adopted from the Missouri and Washington School-Based Health Alliance reopening plans for their states. We want to thank them for allowing us to build off of their work. This document will be constantly updated with new information, so if there is additional information that you feel should be included, please contact EverThrive IL.

EverThrive IL would also like to thank Cristian Ramos, EverThrive IL Health Systems intern, for researching and compiling this document.

contact information

If there is additional information that should be included in this document, please contact Kristen Nuyen at knuyen@everthriveil.org or 312-281-7244.

planning considerations for SBHCs

We've broken the planning considerations that SBHCs should consider when reopening into five main categories: 1. Operations and Physical Space, 2. Infection Control, 3. Addressing Equity, 4. Collaboration with Community, and 5. Collaboration with the School District.

Operations & Physical Space

Develop protocols for COVID-19 screenings before clinic appointments.

- Set up COVID screening protocols before the patient comes in for an appointment (do they have a fever, cough, etc.), including temperature checks.
 - Decide whether or not the SBHC wants to test for COVID-19. If the SBHC will not be testing for COVID-19, have a list of sites where individuals receive testing for COVID-19. To locate a FQHC with COVID-19 testing available, refer to the [FQHC Finder](#).
 - If the SBHC does decide to test for COVID-19, ensure the ability to contact trace using the [CDC's Guidelines for Contact Tracing](#) including:
 - Rapidly notify close contacts (any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or longer) of laboratory-confirmed or probable COVID-19 patients
 - Prioritize remote communication, including phone calls, text messages or emails in the primary language of the contact
 - Recommend that all close contacts of confirmed or probable COVID-19 patients get tested
 - Provide appropriate quarantine/isolation instructions
 - Refer contacts to social support services if needed
 - Continue to monitor contacts daily for 14 days
 - Notify contacts who remain asymptomatic for 14 days after last exposure of their release from monitoring
- Consider using telemedicine to determine whether a patient has [symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Develop protocols for screening staff before shifts and for ensuring sick staff remain at home.

- Anticipate staff absences during the pandemic and plan accordingly.
- Support all staff members in practicing self-care. Many staff members may be feeling anxious or may have own family members that have become sick.

Establish social distancing protocols for patients and staff.

- Ensure that there are signs that tell patients and staff to remain six feet apart from each other.
 - Use indicators on the floor like X's with tape that are six feet apart.
 - Consider installing plexiglass or shields in front of the reception desk.
 - Have these signs included inside and around the health center.
- Ensure that staff are aware of social distancing rules.
 - Discuss the social distancing rules during staff meetings, keeping staff accountable for one another.

- Limit the number of individuals in the waiting room.
 - Consider using empty classrooms as isolation or waiting rooms.
 - Ask individuals to wait in their vehicles until their appointment time.
 - Limit the number of individuals that can attend an appointment.
 - Establish protocols with the school for walk-ins.
 - Consider adjusting the clinic's hours to provide appointments before or after normal school hours.
 - Consider how to schedule appointments if students are on campus, at home, or hybrid.
- Consider separating sick and well visits to prevent potential spread while still providing preventive and routine care. For example, provide sick visits in the morning and well visits in the afternoon.

If SBHCs are co-located with the school nurse, consider adding barriers or clearly separating when students are coming to the nurse or the SBHC.

If the SBHC decides to do COVID testing, [you cannot charge the individual for the service](#), but you are eligible to receive a payment from the state to cover these services.

- If a patient informs you that they have had to pay for a previous test, inform them that the health center should reimburse them for that cost.

Evaluate the role of telemedicine in SBHCs.

- Consider using telemedicine if the patient states that they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Consider using telemedicine to understand why the patient wants to make an appointment.
- Ensure the SBHC's ability to receive electronic consents for care.
- Consider cross-coverage with other community sites, or whether the SBHC has the capacity to serve additional schools in the District to increase patient volume.

For certain services, use new equipment to prevent COVID-19 spread.

- For asthma care, ask patients or parents to bring a [Metered Dose Inhaler \(MDI\)](#) and spacer during appointment phone calls.
 - If the patient does not have this equipment, then follow a [common canister protocol](#). The following is taken from Heartland Health Center's common canister protocol:
 - The spacer is for individual use only and is dispensed to the patient after use.
 - The MDI is thoroughly cleaned before and after each use.
 - Remove the canister from the plastic mouthpiece.
 - Clean both plastic mouthpiece and canister (including nozzle) with SaniWipe for two minutes, let it dry.
 - Seal cleaned mouthpiece and canister in plastic bag, with date of use/cleaning.
 - If possible, wait 72 hours before reuse.
 - Clean mouthpiece and canister again just prior to reuse, using the same procedure.

- For dental care, ensure dental operation is closed-off including closing doors and possibly adding another layer such as a plastic covering as a wipeable curtain. Consider the use of the following devices:
 - The Ivory ReLeaf: high volume dental suction device that connects to existing dental vacuum systems and provides easy, efficient, hands-free dental suction. Ivory ReLeaf allows for safer dental and hygiene procedures by minimizing aerosol risk and the risk of backflow.
 - DryShield: suited to reduce the risk of contamination through aerosol and droplets. It helps eliminate aerosol and overspray.

Infection Control

Develop a disinfection protocol for the SBHC.

- Follow the [WHO guidelines](#) and/or [CDC guidelines](#) on how to clean health care settings for medical professionals.
- Make sure that staff members are educated on and consistent with cleaning any materials that may have been contaminated or reused.

Develop a communication plan on how to reach out to staff, students, and parents on how to control the infection.

- Create a communication protocol on what to tell students, staff, and parents if there happens to be an outbreak or infected individual.
- Make sure to be consistent and clear with your messaging.
- Include contact information if people have questions about the protocols or next steps if there is an infection.

Procure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and educate staff members on their use.

- Follow the [CDC guidelines](#) and protocol for hygiene, sanitization, and social distancing.

Promote prevention through teaching hygiene skills at school.

- Follow the [CDC guidelines](#) on teaching hygiene to children. You can also download posters and handouts from their website in multiple languages.

Addressing Equity

Address racial, income, gender, sexuality, and ability health disparities.

- Develop a plan to address racial, income, gender, sexuality, and ability inequities in patient care, including any COVID-19 screenings.

- Allocate more funding or staff to health centers that are in more at-risk areas or are better positioned to address the above inequities.
- Educate staff on racial, income, gender, sexuality, and ability issues in health care through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training. Culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and anti-racist practices are foundational.
- Ensure that the health center is accessible for each of these groups.

Reach out to communities that are most impacted to see what their major needs are.

- Use [IDPH data](#) or [CDPH data](#) to see which communities are being disproportionately impacted by the virus.

Collaboration with Community and Other Organizations

Collaborate with community members.

- Be proactive in collaborating with the community by contacting key stakeholders early on. Seek and utilize the student and family voice when planning.
- Use community outreach members to determine the key community members that the SBHCs in the respective community should partner with.
- Understand the needs of the community by talking to community members, then provide resources accordingly.
- Reach out to the parents and students through phone calls, surveys, etc., and assess what they need in the moment.
- Ensure that messages are included in multiple languages other than English. Look at the neighborhood demographics and work with community members to determine what other languages to use.
- Have the SBHC contact information available in any materials sent home to families.

Collaborate with governmental/private organizations.

- Determine what grants are available for SBHCs. Some places to look are:
 - [National School-Based Health Alliance](#)
 - [Forefront](#)
 - CONNECT: The ISBHA Newsletter
 - If you would like to be on this newsletter, please contact knuyen@everthriveil.org.
- Determine what funding is available from the government to provide healthcare services during the pandemic.
 - SBHCs may be eligible for [State CARES Pandemic Related Stability Payments Program](#). Visit the [Illinois HFS website](#) for further information.

Collaboration with School District

Ask school administration to include SBHC personnel in reopening planning.

- Meet early and regularly with school administration to help shape reopening policies.
- Discuss opportunities for SBHCs to help with schoolwide student and staff COVID-19 education.
- Clarify the health and safety roles of the SBHC with school administrators so that they understand your duties.

Gain an understanding of the school's plans for re-opening.

- Will the school provide in-person learning, remote learning, or a mixed-learning model?
- Understand school COVID-19 screening protocols and ask the school to designate a classroom as a COVID-19 isolation room.
- Does the school want the SBHC to provide COVID-19 testing?
- Understand what new health and safety protocols will be implemented in the school.
- Understand how the school will schedule classes and identify the best time for students to come to the clinic so that their core educational time is not interrupted.
- Coordinate any screening protocols and workflows with school nurses.
- Go over staffing hours for SBHC and school to understand when the center may be understaffed.

Understand the school's plan in case there is a shutdown.

- Can the SBHC continue to provide telehealth if students switch to remote learning?
- If schools reopen virtually, discuss how the SBHC can utilize various school platforms for enrollment outreach and education (school communications, social media, teacher platforms, etc.)

Partner with the school to identify the most pressing student and community health needs.

- Does the SBHC need to broaden the population that it serves?
- Does the SBHC want to prioritize certain services (e.g., immunizations or behavioral health services)?
 - Review plans for helping students that are suicidal or in a more at-risk group.
 - Consider enhanced screenings for students that think they have depression or another mental health problem.
- Does the SBHC want to implement a drive through vaccination clinic for routine vaccinations?
 - If so, utilize the [CDC's Considerations for Planning Curbside/Drive-Through Vaccination Clinics](#) guide in conjunction with [Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary, or Off-Site Locations](#)
- Consider screening patients for social determinants of health, such as violence in the home, housing, and food access.
- Consider developing self-care practices/guidance with the school district to send out to students

Illinois policy changes due to COVID-19

Telehealth Services Expansion: Telehealth services for patients covered under Medicaid will be reimbursed if they occur on or after March 9, 2020 until the end of the public health emergency.

- The Center for Connected Health Policy released a compilation of [COVID-19 Related State Actions](#), which summarizes all telehealth-related policy changes enacted because of COVID-19.

references and additional resources

National Resources

CDC Guide for Children on How to Wash Hands: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/child-development/how-to-wash-hands.htm>

CDC Guide on How to Use PPE: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>

CDC Guide for COVID-19 Symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

CDC's Considerations for Planning Curbside/Drive-Through Vaccination Clinics: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/downloads/curbside-vaccination-clinics.pdf>

CDC Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary, or Off-Site Locations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/mass-clinic-activities/index.html>

CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/contact-tracing.html>

COVID-19 Related State Actions, Center for Connected Health Policy: <https://www.cchpca.org/covid-19-related-state-actions>

COVID-19 Grant Opportunities: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/grants/index.html>

Common Canister Protocols for COVID-19: <https://www.ismp.org/resources/revisiting-need-mdi-common-canister-protocols-during-covid-19-pandemic>

FQHC Finder: <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

School-Based Health Center Funding Opportunities: <https://www.sbh4all.org/tag/funding-opportunities/>

Illinois-Specific Resources

EverThrive Illinois School-Based Health Alliance Information: <https://www.everthriveil.org/resources/illinois-school-based-health-alliance>

EverThrive Illinois School-Based Health Alliance Virtual Discussions: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/1258eZlf_ei3K_A8oAAPk6fT-jgsp4bhz

Chicago Department of Public Health: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home.html>

Chicago Public Schools: <https://cps.edu/coronavirus/Pages/covid19.aspx>

Illinois State Board of Education: <https://www.isbe.net/coronavirus>

Illinois COVID-19 Testing Sites: <https://dph.illinois.gov/testing>

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services COVID-19 webpage:
<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Notices:

- CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Budget Guidance and Instructions:
<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/notices/Pages/prn201009a.aspx>
- Calling for CARES Payment Applications:
<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/notices/Pages/prn201023a.aspx>
- Telehealth Services Expansion Prompted by COVID-19:
<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/notices/Pages/prn200320b.aspx>

Forefront Response Funds: <https://myforefront.org/covid-19-philanthropic-fund-list/>

Other State Guidance

Guidance for Missouri School-Based Health Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Missouri School-Based Health Alliance:

https://showmeschoolbasedhealth.wildapricot.org/resources/Pictures/Guidance%20for%20Reopening%20MO%20OSBH%20Programs_6.9.2020.pdf

Guidance for Washington School-Based Health Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Washington School-Based Health Alliance: <https://wasbha.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guidance-for-SBHCs-in-School-Reopening-v1-06.29.20-FINAL.pdf>