

Identifying Opportunities for School-Based Health Care in Colorado

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Identifying the Need for New School-Based Health Centers

As Colorado policymakers, community partners, funders, and providers consider how best to expand school-based health care in the state, it is important to understand which schools are most in need of improved access to care.

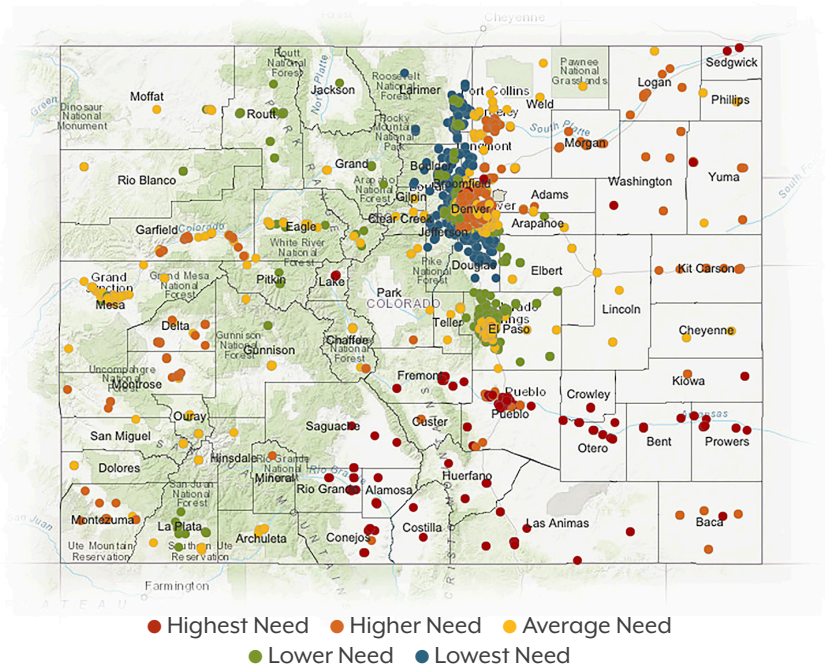
With this in mind, the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) conducted a needs assessment to identify public schools in Colorado that would most benefit from the establishment of a new school-based health center (SBHC).

Because SBHCs improve health and educational outcomes, establishing SBHCs in underserved communities can be an effective tool for advancing health equity in Colorado.

CHI assessed relative need using a combination of 14 measures related to health outcomes and risk factors, health insurance coverage, access to and utilization of care, student need, and the local economic impact of COVID-19.

Key Findings

- Due to systemic racism, schools serving predominantly students of color are disproportionately likely to have high needs, relative to schools with predominantly white student bodies.
- Schools in rural parts of the state, particularly the San Luis Valley and southeast Colorado, have relatively limited access to existing SBHCs, despite high needs.
- Disparities in urban Colorado are stark, signaling a need for targeted investment in schools and communities where health needs are highest.



What are school-based health centers?

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are health care facilities located inside a school or on school grounds. SBHCs offer a variety of integrated services, including immunizations, mental health care, and management of chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes.

SBHCs serve children and youth whose access to care is limited due to systemic discrimination and marginalization. SBHCs are an important component of Colorado's health care safety net.

As of January 2021, there were 69 SBHCs in Colorado.

FIND MORE ONLINE

The latest needs assessment from CHI identifies schools that would most benefit from the establishment of a new school-based health center.

The findings — including an interactive map and data on schools across the state — are available in full at coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/school-based-health-care-opportunities.