

“I don’t know who I would have gone to if I didn’t find out about the health center. -SBHC client”

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are medical clinics that offer primary care services either within or on the grounds of a school. With easy access to health care in a school setting, SBHCs reduce barriers such as cost, transportation, and concerns surrounding confidentiality that often keep children and youth from seeking the health services, they need. SBHCs provide a full range of physical, mental and preventive health services to all students, regardless of their ability to pay.

SBHCs have existed in Oregon since 1986, offering 78 certified SBHC sites throughout Oregon. Deschutes County Behavioral Health began providing School Based Health Services in 2011, offering seven (7) certified SBHC’s in Sisters, Redmond (2), Bend (2), LaPine and Gilchrist. In 2021, Deschutes County SBHC provided a served 4,148 clients, and offering 5,420 total visits.

According to the Portland State University Population Research Center, Deschutes County has had a stunning growth rate of 28.9% from 2010-2021. Local data through the 2019 Central Oregon Regional Health Assessment indicates that 35.6% of 11th graders seriously considered attempting suicide over the past year. Outlined in the 2020-2024 Regional Health Improvement Plan (RHIP) strategies outlines the need to “expand access to primary care clinics (locations, hours such as night/weekends, school based health centers).’ The RHIP further outlines the needs for “Equitable Access to Services” focusing on access to screening, early intervention services, substance abuse treatment and increased coordination with outpatient treatment providers through SBHC.

As part of an effort to meet, the identified needs outlined in the RHIP and based on national statistics regarding youth/young adults mental health needs we identified the need to increase support in both Redmond and Sisters SBHC’s. Both Redmond High and Sister’s SBHC have allocated a .5 FTE. In order to serve the unmet need identified we need to increase support to both of these locations by making each position a 1.0 FTE.

Below we have taken the 2020-21 School Year Enrollment and compared that with the national averages. The data suggests that while 1 out of 4 youth report mental health challenges only 13.7% will seek treatment. It also proposes that based on our volume of Mental Health Services offered in SBHC’s we are not able to meet the demand with current staffing levels. While data recommends that Bend/LaPine would need 37.1 therapists, we recognize that youth who live in Bend have better access to panel providers, services through outpatient clinics offered by Deschutes County Behavioral Health Clinics (Wall Street, Courtney, and Antler). The data illuminates major staffing shortages for Redmond and Sisters for “equitable access” and a need to “expand access “to mental health care.

School Year 2020-21			
District	Bend LaPine	Redmond	Sisters
Total Enrollment	17,542	7,069	1,076
1 out of 4 w/MH Issues	4386	1767	269
13.7% or Average of Adolescents Seen for MH	2403	968	147

SBHC Clients	384	239	62
% of Enrolled Served in SBHC Care	2%	3%	6%
SBHC Visits	1215	1534	460
Average of Visits	3.2	6.4	7.4
FTE Requirement for Meeting National Average of 13.7 % Treatment*	37.1	14.9	2.3

In partnership with schools and medical providers as part of the integrated SBHC team the following additional information was offered to support the need:

- Parent Request - School counselors have lots of requests from parents/students asking for additional mental health resources. We just have such a limited number of community-based resources. This would be a blessing for our families!
- Resources - Substance use and mental health referrals to our partner Rimrock Trails have already proven to overload the system. There's a current waitlist and parents are desperate for support.
- Student Struggles - As a result of the pandemic, we are seeing lots of struggles. At the high school level, we are seeing lots of students struggling with eating disorders, anxiety, depression, panic disorders, substance use.
- Culture of Care - The SBHC at Lynch Elementary is a bustling pillar in the community. Community members and schools rely on their services and rely on someone being there full-time. We'd like Redmond HS's location to be the same. A part-time FTE makes it so difficult to really create a culture of care. We'd love for our community to know that we are available and ready to serve.
- Reliability - Part-time schedules change often and make it very difficult to be available for families. Families that may need a higher level of support may not come back a second time.
- Equity - It's would be great to have fully staffed SBHC like Lynch.
- Successful Outcome - I have chatted with counselors and parents that are utilizing Redmond HS's site and are so thankful. In a Kids Center meeting, it was shared that one of our kiddos was accessing support at Redmond HS's SBHC and it felt so good to have that student be able to walk to their appointment.

“Without the health center — knowing how to handle myself in class and deal with my health issues would be immensely harder. The counseling services offered also offer a huge breath of relief. They’ve helped me figure things out and make things manageable as well as set up appointments for treatment and care outside of class time. Both the physical and mental health services we have are a huge benefit/asset to our school! -SBHC client”