

School-Based Community Access Platforms

A Prototype Prevention Service

The Challenge

Too many kids in schools today are suffering from the stress of everyday life, and the number who are at risk of developing serious mental illness and or attempting/completing suicide is increasing at an alarming rate. Expanding access to preventative mental health supports is key to keeping our next generation healthy and safe. Prevention supports and services, made available in and/or through the schools of our communities can enhance resiliency, promote stability, and improve wellbeing.

What DMH is Doing

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is leveraging schools as platforms for community access by providing programming and training for students, their families and the school's workforce to address issues related to violence and trauma, and to facilitate healthy dynamics in schools and community.

DMH is establishing School-Based Community Access Platforms (SBCAPs) via three initiatives:

- Community Schools (CSI) with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE);
- Prevention Programming with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD); and
- Partnerships with the Department of Public Health's Student Wellbeing Centers.

These initiatives position schools as centralized hubs where students and their families can get access to information, training and a continuum of resources including mental health treatment. Activities range from prevention services and supports, to assessment and linkage, to more intensive care, as needed. As an example, the CSI will target students at five LAUSD Early Education Centers and 15 LACOE high schools located throughout Los Angeles County.

The Benefits

Through this model, DMH is uniting school personnel, community partners and families to provide all students with top quality academics, enrichment, health and social services and opportunities to learn and thrive. It also promotes social-emotional wellbeing and resilience for children from birth to eight years of age. The initiatives will also provide youth access to health, mental health, and substance use services, and educate students on lifelong protective practices and health affirming actions. SBCAPs exemplify the ways DMH is integrating access to resources into communities where people work, learn, and live.

SBCAPs have five-targeted outcomes which include:

- Creating a trauma-resilient classroom;
- Increased kindergarten readiness;
- Increased family and community engagement;
- Increased consistent school attendance; and
- Increased social connectedness through referral and linkage.