

Council on Advancement of School-Based Health Centers
Recommendations related to SBHCs and the COVID-19 vaccine
February 16, 2021

School-based health centers (SBHCs) could play an important role in the COVID-19 vaccine effort because they are trusted community resources located in schools in medically underserved areas. As such, SBHCs have a unique capability to address vaccine hesitancy and promote health equity.

While the role of SBHCs may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the Council recommends that State officials planning for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine engage with SBHCs to discuss their possible utilization during appropriate phases of the vaccine rollout. In many instances, school health services and SBHC staff employed by school systems or Local Health Departments (LHDs) already are engaged in these efforts.

SBHCs are sponsored by organizations already involved in the vaccination effort, including LHDs, education agencies, hospitals, and Federally Qualified Health Centers. While the contribution of an individual SBHC to the vaccination effort may vary depending on its sponsor type and the SBHC's capacity, SBHCs have important assets that should be utilized in the vaccine effort. These assets include clinical facilities, skilled clinicians, medical equipment and supplies, and trusted patient and community relationships. The SBHC role in vaccine distribution should not supplant, but rather complement, the work of LHDs and mass vaccination sites.

As a public health resource, SBHCs could be utilized to vaccinate not only the students they typically serve (when vaccine becomes available for children), but also school staff, families, and the broader community. SBHCs represent an innovative way to reach vulnerable Marylanders at a time when health care capacity is already stretched. Given this unprecedented vaccine rollout and the likelihood of this being a long-term effort, SBHCs should be equipped and utilized for vaccine distribution now and in the future.

More information about the role and potential role of SBHCs during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in the Council's [July 2020 recommendations](#).