The Journey Continues

Reflections from the School-Based Health Care Coordination Learning Collaborative

Introduction

Building on their fall 2024 care coordinator training as part of the School-Based Health Care Coordination (SBHCC) Initiative, 12 care coordinators and six supervisors from Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, and Miami convened from February to May 2025 for an energizing eight-session learning collaborative. Care coordinators and supervisors deepened their knowledge and skills through peer learning, strategic goal setting, and exploration of topics like workflow integration, system navigation, community engagement, and time management.

Each session included case presentations from the care coordinators and discussions grounded in real-world application, emphasizing the importance of care coordination capacity and integration within their school-based health centers (SBHCs), schools, and communities.

> **"...This is what care coordination is all about: connecting, supporting, being resourceful. A helping hand to others and being that superhero that people may need is always a WIN."**
>
> **- Care Coordinator, Miami**

At the beginning of each month, care coordinators developed individual and team SMARTER goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound, Equitable and Inclusive, and Reason) for one or more of the following focus areas:

Relationship Building

Connecting with students, families, schools, and communities

MyCareCircle Workflow

Utilizing MyCareCircle software in alignment with care coordination policies and procedures

SBHC Integration

Integrating the care coordinator role into SBHC practices, policies, and procedures

Their goals embodied these themes:

- Strengthening relationships with students and parents.
- Establishing and deepening rapport with school staff.
- Increasing collaboration with community organizations.
- Increasing engagement with new students and enrolling students into the MyCareCircle software.
- Implementing internal structures to enhance team cohesion and problem-solving.
- Creating templates to document care coordination, referrals, and pre-engagement follow-up calls.

As a result of the learning collaborative and strategic goal setting, the care coordinators **experienced and shared successes and areas for growth.**

Successes

Increased school-based health center (SBHC) visibility and student enrollment by actively participating in school events such as report card pick-up nights, Donuts for Dads, Easter raffles, and career days.

Expanded community outreach by partnering with local organizations, joining library events, and engaging families where they live.

Connected students and families to critical resources, including food pantries, backpack buddy programs, transportation support like Uber vouchers, and Medicaid enrollment assistance.

Built confidence and clarity in the care coordinator role, leading to stronger engagement and more effective resource navigation for students and families.

Areas of Growth

Clarifying role scope and delegation by developing skills to recognize when requests fall outside their scope and should be redirected to other team members. They focus on building strong connections and appropriate referrals rather than trying to address every need directly.

Building confidence in seeking support and working on identifying when and how to ask for help, reinforcing a collaborative approach to problem-solving, and ensuring quality care.

Strengthening care coordination workflows by refining and co-creating effective workflows in partnership with SBHC and school staff, improving the integration and impact of care coordination efforts.

Example successes

"This week, I truly learned the importance of trusting the process. I had the opportunity to support other care coordinators at their schools, and it was encouraging to see the momentum of students picking up. It was a week filled with positive progress, and it felt rewarding to contribute to the events and see everything unfold smoothly. Overall, it was a good week, and the experience reinforced the value of patience and consistency in the work we do."

Atlanta

What's Next

Bringing on a new care coordinator; Working with Zane Networks on electronic health record integration

Houston

What's Next

Working with Zane Networks on electronic health record integration; Adopting a summer location and rotation schedule; Supporting SBHC enrollment

Example successes

"I was able to overcome a barrier that my school clinic has had with getting referrals from the school nurse. I had set up a meeting with the school nurse to debrief my role as a Care Coordinator on-site, ask her if she has any pushbacks with SBHC, answer any questions she had regarding the mission of SBHC, and give her hope for a great relationship established between the SBHC clinic and herself. By the end of the week, she had referred a total of 6 students!"

Example successes

"Recently, one of my students was withdrawn due to a custody change, underscoring the complex interplay of systemic and familial factors affecting these children. Throughout their time with us, this student benefited from the collaborative efforts of our community partners, who provided critical supports—a testament to the power of collective care."

"I have my best relationship with the kids, the students. They literally come knocking at my door every chance they get."

Miami

What's Next

Implementing care coordination software; Clarifying the care coordinators' role with school and SBHC staff to support workflow integration

Chicago

What's Next

Universal care coordination screening at each site; Proactively addressing immunization compliance with schools

Example successes

"This past week, I had meaningful engagement with students regarding their needs, including food insecurity, transportation, and clothing. I was surprised by the number of students seeking assistance and am committed to leveraging existing resources while identifying new ones to provide support."

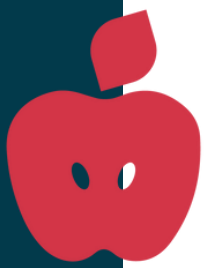
"This past week, I experienced many difficulties. I found myself wanting to help out patients, but having the barrier of an absent or hard-to-reach parent. However, I used my resources and with time, trust, and patience, I was able to make appointments and close loops. This taught me about maximizing appointment time."

Talk the Talk

The learning collaborative also trained care coordinators on how to talk about their work with students, families, school staff, and community members. Here are a few examples of their elevator pitches:

"As a Care Coordinator at our school-based health center, I serve as a bridge between students' health needs and their academic goals. Many students face challenges that go beyond the classroom—whether it's mental health, chronic illness, or access to basic resources. I work one-on-one with them to create tailored care plans and connect them with the right supports. By partnering with school staff and families, I help ensure no student falls through the cracks. My goal is to make sure every student feels seen, supported, and set up for success—both in school and in life."

"I am a Care Coordinator for a school-based clinic, meaning that I am like a specialized shuttle bus between a school and a clinic. I am familiar with classrooms, teachers, and specialty care providers that serve my patients. I must be able to map out students and their teachers to promote an environment where I can hinder chronic absenteeism and promote health by ensuring that students are healthy. Furthermore, I must be knowledgeable about the resources present around the school to be able to provide them to my students and teachers. Care coordination drives in many directions, but it has one main goal: To link two institutions for the well-being of a child, their classroom faculty and environment, and their family."



"Healthcare can feel like a noisy orchestra without a conductor—appointments, specialists, medications, and follow-ups all playing at once with no harmony. I'm a care coordinator, and I can act as the conductor of your healthcare symphony. I help bring all the moving parts together—making sure everything is in sync, on time, and working toward one goal: your well-being. With me coordinating your care, you can finally hear the music instead of the chaos."

"I'm the ultimate connector in the school system—the one making sure no student slips through the cracks! As a Care Coordinator in a school-based health center, I'm the glue between families, schools, and healthcare providers. Medical appointments? I make sure they happen. Resources? I get them into the right hands. Barriers? I break them down. My mission? To turn chaos into clarity—so every student can show up, feel good, and crush it in the classroom and in life! Woo!"

"As a Care Coordinator, I am here to assist students and their families to help manage and stay in control of their medical appointments. Providing support by educating the students/families on the steps needed to overcome any obstacles they may face for their medical needs. If the family needs assistance getting connected to resources externally, either for food insecurities, utility payment assistance, etc., locating the resources available and providing the information to the family to obtain the resources. Following up with the family to ensure they did reach out to the resources. If unsuccessful, check to see what barriers prevented the completion of the resource connection and assist with overcoming those barriers."

Summary

The Spring 2025 SBHCC Learning Collaborative highlighted the tremendous growth of care coordinators and supervisors as they strengthened SBHC and school relationships, built confidence in their roles, began implementing care coordination workflows, expanded community outreach, and supported students and families in accessing the services and resources they need, changing lives for the better.

Moving forward, SBHA will continue to support this progress through monthly all–care coordinator group meetings and ongoing data and evaluation efforts to capture and guide the impactful work happening across the sites.

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH ALLIANCE
The National Voice for School-Based Health Care

School-Based Health Alliance | 1032 15th St. NW, Suite 365, Washington, DC 20005 | www.sbh4all.org