

Patient Navigators as the Core of School- Based Health Center Staffing:

Enhancing support through dedicated and defined roles

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Hawai'i Island Community Health Center

Mission

Hawai'i Island Community Health Center promotes lifelong health and wellness through quality healthcare that is comprehensive, integrated, culturally responsive, and accessible to all.

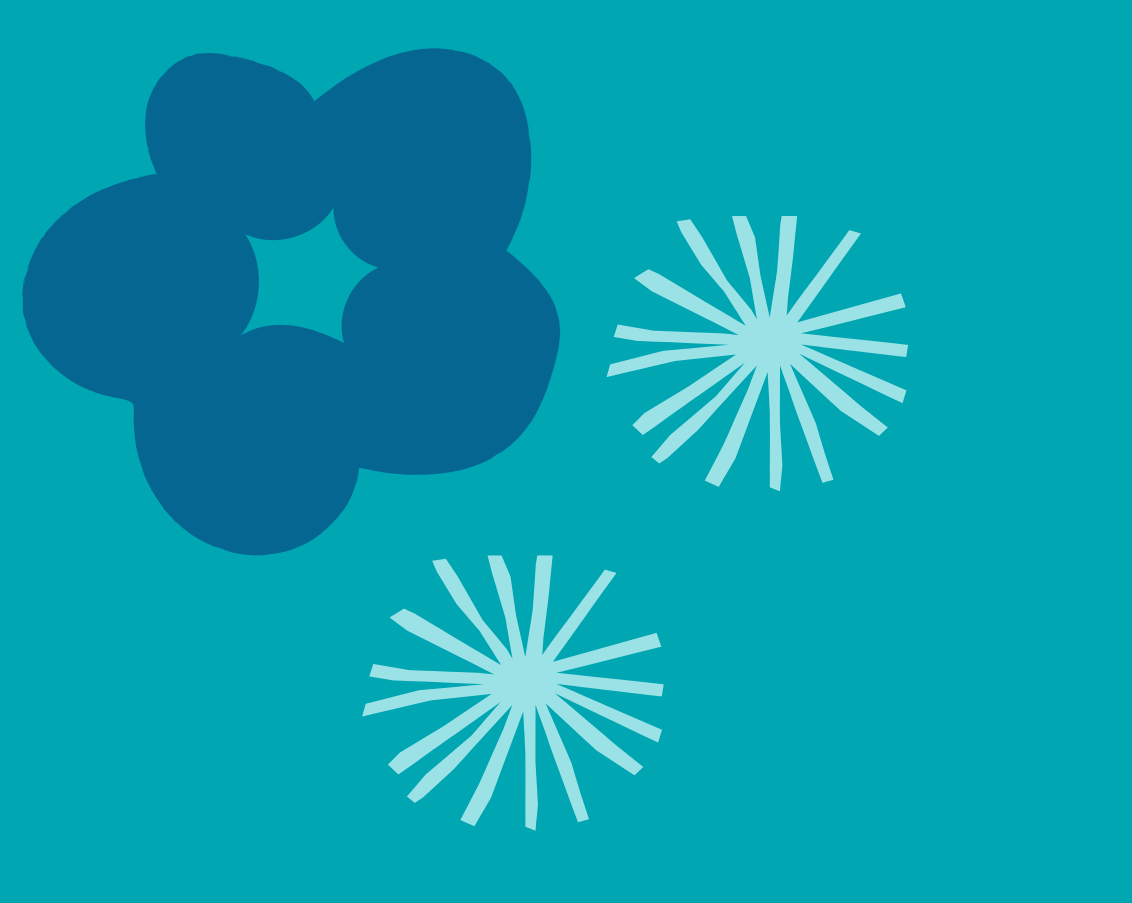
Vision

A strong healthy nurturing community.

Values - REACH

Respect	Excellence	Advocacy	Compassion	Humility
<i>Hō'ihi</i>	<i>Kūpono</i>	<i>Ho'opai</i>	<i>Aloha</i>	<i>Ha'aha'a</i>





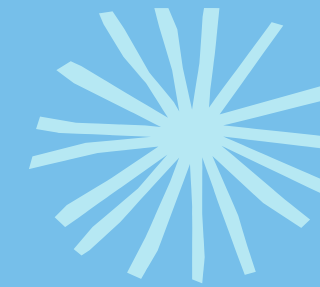
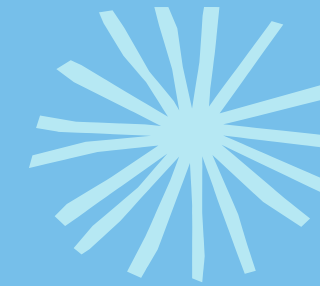
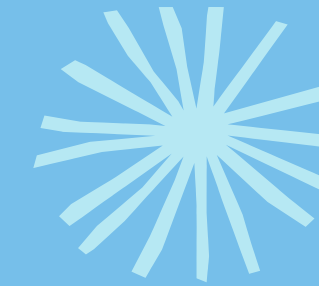
Who We Are



Our History



- **2019:** Opened our doors and began offering services for school co-located Care Coordination.
- **2020:** Temporarily paused services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **2021:** Resumed operations with a focus on care coordination to support students transitioning back to school.
- **2022:** Secured HRSA funding to launch three school-based health centers, serving approximately 1,500 students.
- **2023:** Expanded with the opening of our fourth and fifth locations, supported by a second round of HRSA funding.
- **2024:**
 - Received funding from a healthcare payor to acquire a mobile clinic, enhancing access to school-based health services.
 - Received additional funding from the County to open a sixth brick-and-mortar location.
- **2025:** Now proudly serving over 8,500 students across six brick-and-mortar locations and one mobile health clinic.



What We Do

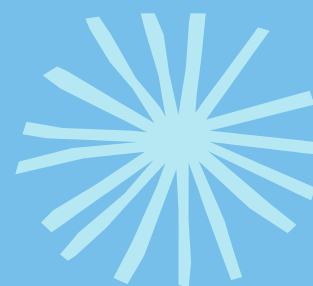
SBHC Services



- 01 Individual therapy with behavioral health care providers and behavioral health associates
- 02 Group skill-building intervention
- 03 Medical visits including well child exams, physicals, immunizations, chronic care management, and same day visits for acute care needs
- 04 Confidential teen services including family planning and behavioral therapy
- 05 Preventative dental visits including cleanings, radiography, sealants, and exams



Workshop Overview

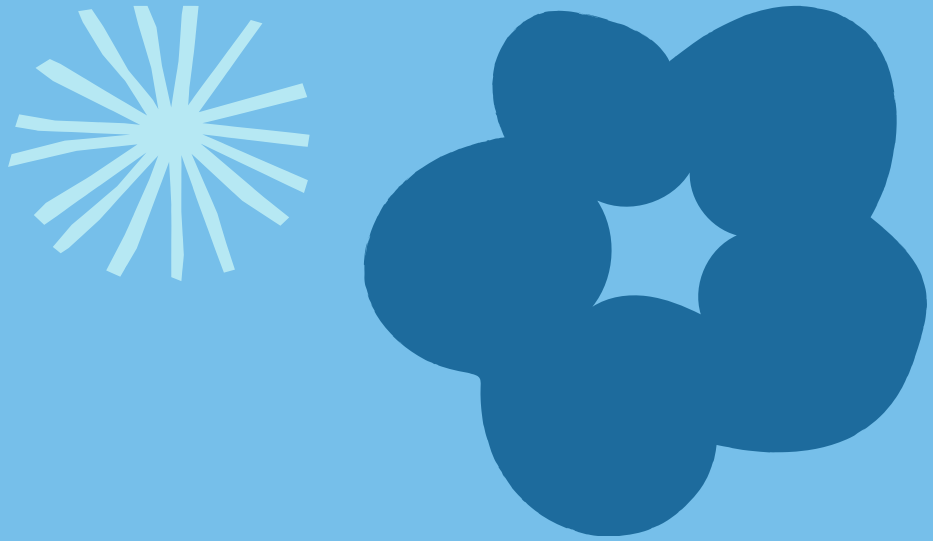




Workshop Overview

- Learning Objectives
- Staffing Structure
- Core Functions of Patient Navigators
- Patient Navigator Professional Development
- Effective Engagement Strategies
- Q&A





Learning Objectives





Knowledge and Application Goals

- How Patient Navigators can improve healthcare access in School Based Health Centers
- How Patient Navigators help reduce absenteeism and improve academic performance among students
- How Patient Navigators engage diverse communities
- How to implement an effective outreach plan led by Patient Navigators

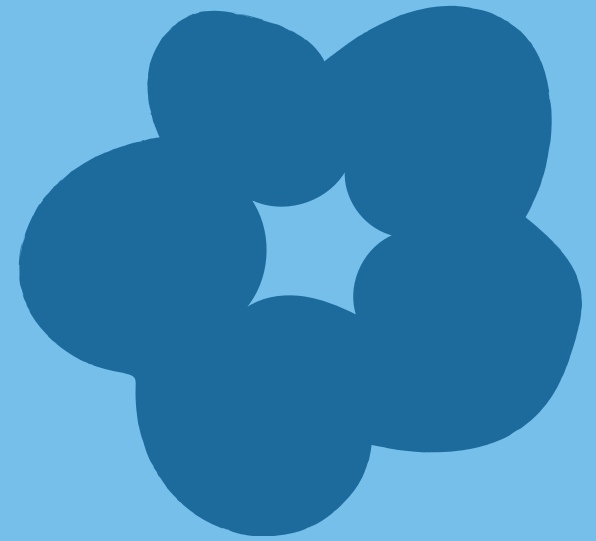
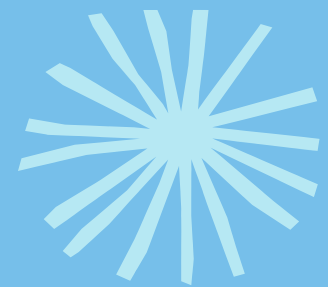


Do you have a Patient Navigator in your SBHC?



- <https://www.menti.com/al3io1eym3g5>

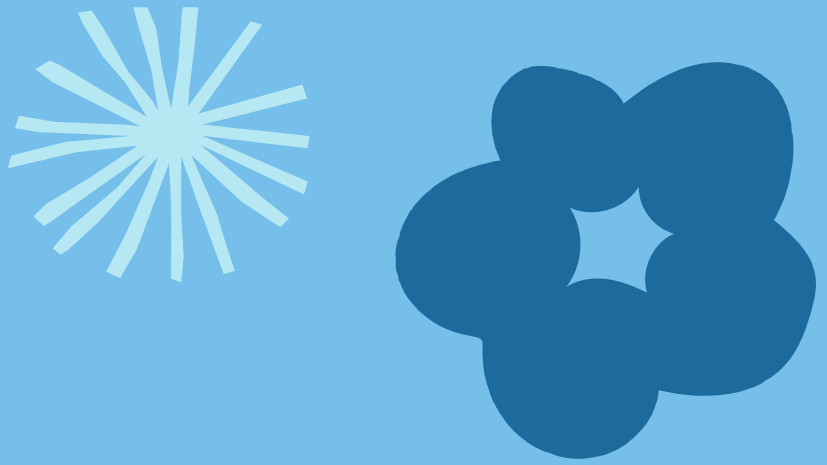
Staffing Structure



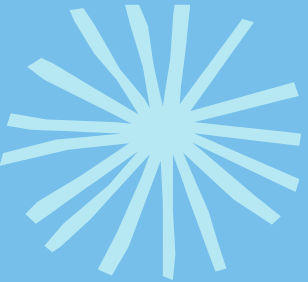
Staffing Structure



- **Director**
 - Leads external partnerships and oversees grant acquisition and budget management.
- **Program Manager (RN)**
 - Provides clinical oversight, manages daily operations, and supervises staff across all service sites.
- **Medical Assistant**
 - Supports clinical services by rotating alongside the medical provider to deliver patient care.
- **Patient Service Representative**
 - Manages front desk operations, including phone calls, paperwork, scheduling, and community outreach.
- **Behavioral Health Patient Navigators**
 - Staff each brick-and-mortar location Monday through Friday, offering behavioral health support and care coordination.



Core Functions of Patient Navigators





Fundamental Role

- Acts as the main point-of-contact for students and school staff
- Maintains a consistent presence on campus Monday thru Friday
- Strengthens familiarity and builds trusting relationships among students and staff
- Reinforces integration of the health center within the school community
- Promotes student advancement through coordinated supports



Focus Areas

- Student and community engagement
- School partnerships and collaborations
- Access to care
- Quality of care
- Improved health and academic outcomes



Care Coordination



- **Receives and processes all incoming referrals** from school personnel, parents, students (self-referrals), and the interdisciplinary care team.
- **Coordinates initial and follow-up appointments** for students receiving behavioral health services.
- **Maintains ongoing communication** with school staff and parents regarding student progress and engagement.
- **Monitors and tracks trends** in student attendance and academic performance to support care planning and outcomes.

Access to Care

- Bridges the gap during service interruption
- Connects students to telehealth visits or future appointments
- Expands access to critical health services even when direct on-site services are unavailable
- Ensures continuity of care in between regular therapy sessions and over school breaks
- Conducts one-on-one check-ins with students with high acuity needs in between therapy sessions
- Schedules visits for students during school holidays
- Assists students to navigate telehealth modalities
- Provides counseling on available external resources (i.e. Crisis Line)



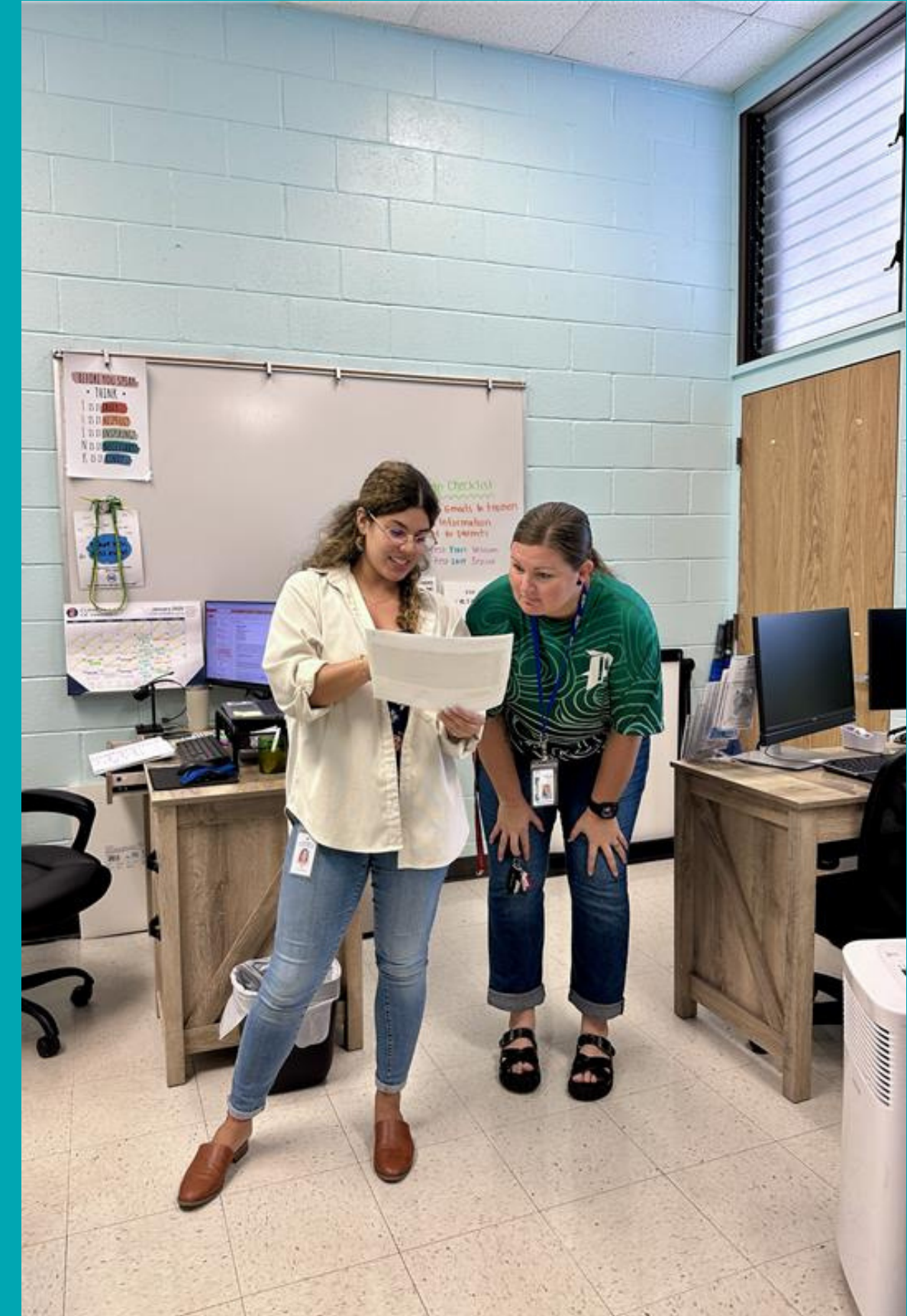


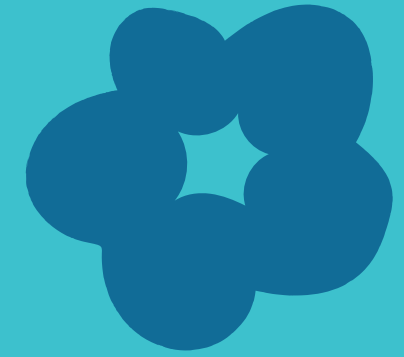
Access to Care

- **Bridges service gaps** by maintaining student engagement during interruptions in on-site care.
- **Connects students to telehealth services** and schedules future appointments to ensure uninterrupted access.
- **Expands access to essential health services** when direct, in-person care is unavailable.
- Ensures continuity of care between regular therapy sessions and during school breaks.
- **Conducts one-on-one check-ins** with students experiencing high acuity needs between scheduled sessions.
- **Coordinates appointments** for students during school holidays to maintain consistent care.
- **Assists students in navigating telehealth platforms**, ensuring ease of use and accessibility.
- **Provides counseling and referrals** to external resources such as crisis lines and community support services.

Collaboration

- **Serves as a key resource** for both staff and students, offering guidance and support related to behavioral health services.
- **Participates in collaborative peer review meetings** to gain insights and contribute feedback on individual student cases.
- **Monitors student attendance and academic performance** to inform care decisions and identify emerging needs.
- **Works in close partnership with the school social worker** to identify and respond to high-priority cases.
- **Promotes equitable access** to behavioral health therapy, prioritizing students who would benefit most from services.
- **Optimizes service utilization** and ensures efficient use of provider time.
- **Supports school staff and students** during the activation of crisis response protocols, helping to stabilize and coordinate care.





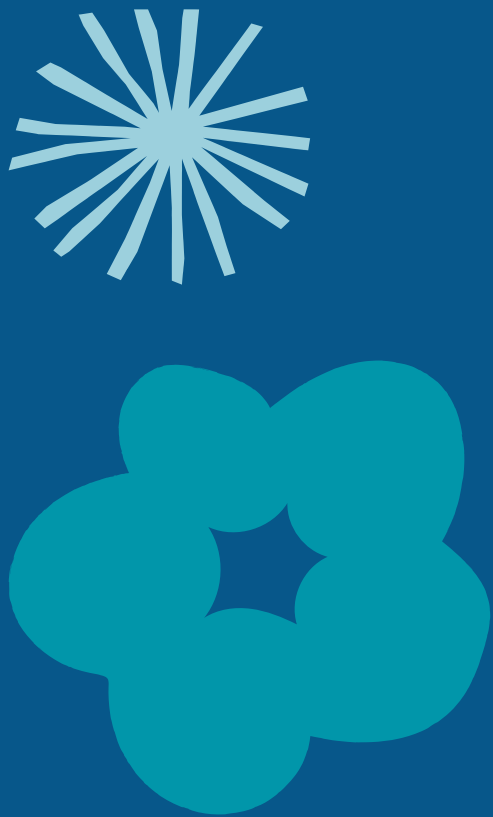
Specific Training & Skills





Skill Building

- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Psychological First Aid
- Family Planning Health Worker
- Pregnancy Options Counseling
- Basic Life Support for HCP
- Cross-cultural communication
- Motivational interviewing



Helpful Skills & Qualities

Organizational Systems Expertise: Strong understanding of internal processes and systems to streamline collaboration and service delivery.	Champions the needs of others with empathy and compassion, serving as a dedicated advocate for equitable support	Community Resource Navigation: Extensive knowledge of local services and supports to connect individuals and families with appropriate resources.
Foreign language	Demonstrates strong independent problem-solving skills, effectively navigating challenges with minimal supervision.	Public speaking

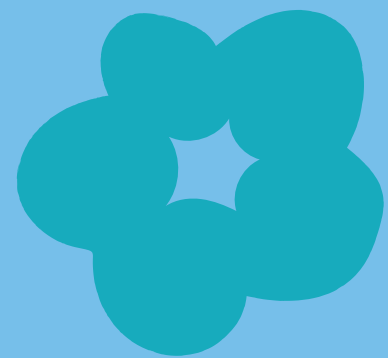
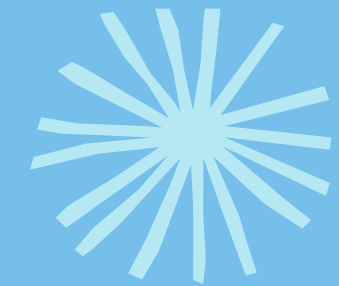
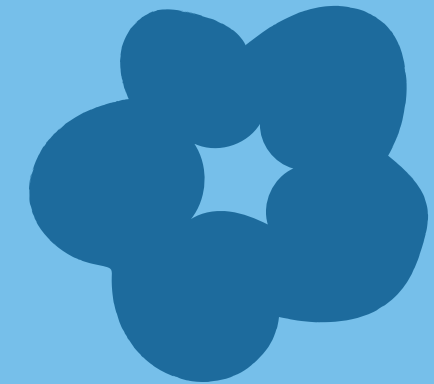
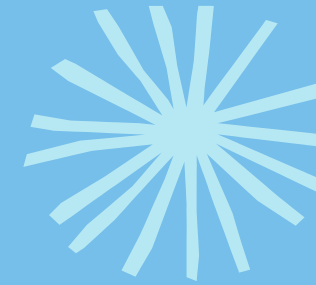


Patient Navigator Background

- **Maintains a meaningful connection to the school community**—whether as a parent, alumnus, or former staff member—fostering trust and relatability.
- **Demonstrates deep familiarity with the school's culture** and an understanding of existing challenges faced by students and staff.
- **Driven by a passion for building a healthier school environment**, with a focus on student well-being and equity.
- **Respects and reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds** represented within the student population.
- **Aligns with the cultural identity and values** of the community, promoting culturally responsive care.
- **Fosters a sense of belonging and emotional safety** among students through inclusive practices.



Effective Engagement Strategies



Primary Objectives



Family Engagement: Ensure families understand the role of the SBHC, its services, and how to access support.

Student Trust & Continuity: Build strong, trusting relationships with students that encourage ongoing participation in SBHC services.

Improved Student Outcomes: Support students in achieving better academic, behavioral, and emotional outcomes through consistent care and intervention.

Staff Collaboration: Foster trust and understanding among school staff, encouraging continued referrals and collaborative efforts to meet student needs.

Provider Utilization: Increase the effective use of SBHC providers by streamlining access and promoting awareness of available services.

Engagement Strategies



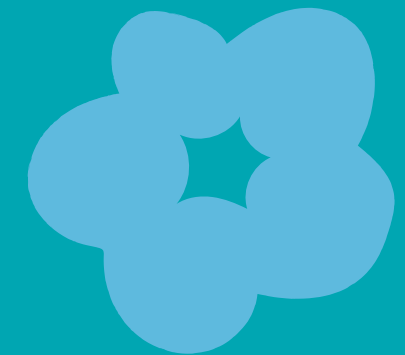
Maintain a welcoming and emotionally supportive space on campus where students can decompress, process their emotions, regulate stress, and prepare to re-engage in learning



Maintaining a consistent and regular campus presence to build credibility and deepen trust among students and staff



Attending school- and community-sponsored events to increase awareness and provide a direct pathway to care by scheduling appointments on site



Proactive and strategic outreach to students who stand to benefit the most from SBHC services

SBHC - Safe Space

With the support of school administrators, the SBHC can function as a trusted safe space on campus, offering students a place to decompress, regulate emotions, and receive support during challenging moments in the school day.

- Offer healthy snacks, tea, or water
- Provide a creative outlet like journaling or art
- Stock personal hygiene items like deodorant and oral hygiene kits
- Use positive affirmations displayed through posters and artwork
- Distribute brochures, flyers, and community resource materials



Maintaining Consistency in Student Interactions



Maintaining a consistent and welcoming environment is essential for building trust and encouraging continued engagement. When students are greeted by the same staff member and experience a familiar, supportive atmosphere each time they seek help, they are more likely to:

- Feel emotionally safe and understood.
- Encourage peers to seek support.
- Develop a foundation for navigating the healthcare system and advocating for their own needs, promoting improvements in long-term health outcomes
- View the SBHC as a reliable part of their school experience.

Consistency in staffing, tone, and environment reinforces the SBHC's role as a dependable resource for student wellness.



Maintaining Consistency in Staff Interactions

Consistency in communication and collaboration between school staff and the SBHC is key to building trust and maximizing student support. When staff regularly engage with the same SBHC personnel and experience a reliable, responsive approach, they are more likely to:

- Feel confident referring students for services.
- Trust the SBHC to handle sensitive student needs with care and professionalism.
- Maintain ongoing collaboration to support student wellness.
- Encourage students to utilize SBHC services.

Consistent follow-up and follow-through by SBHC staff strengthens credibility, reinforcing the center's role as a dependable partner in supporting the whole child.



Visibility



Patient Navigators attend events sponsored by the school and other community organizations, providing opportunities to:

- Increase awareness of SBHC services to the greater community (parents, partners, etc.)
- Promote SBHC services through direct engagement and visibility.
- Distribute informational materials such as brochures, flyers, and resource guides.
- Offer on-site appointment scheduling, creating an immediate and accessible pathway to care.
- Build relationships with families, staff, and community partners.
- Instill confidence in community partners thereby promoting referrals to SBHC services.

By maintaining a consistent presence at these events, SBHC staff reinforce their role as approachable, reliable, and integrated members of the school and broader community.

Strategic Outreach



Patient Navigators proactively outreach to parents of students identified as having high potential for positive outcomes through SBHC services. This includes students experiencing:

- Chronic absenteeism
- Academic regression
- Noncompliance with student health requirements and at-risk for exclusion
- Lack of a primary health care provider
- Uninsured or underinsured status
- Noncompliance with preventative health care measures as identified by payor reports



By identifying and reaching out to these students and their families, the SBHC creates direct pathways to care, builds trust, and encourages early intervention. These efforts help ensure that students receive the support they need to re-engage in school, improve their well-being, and achieve better academic and health outcomes.



Q&A



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