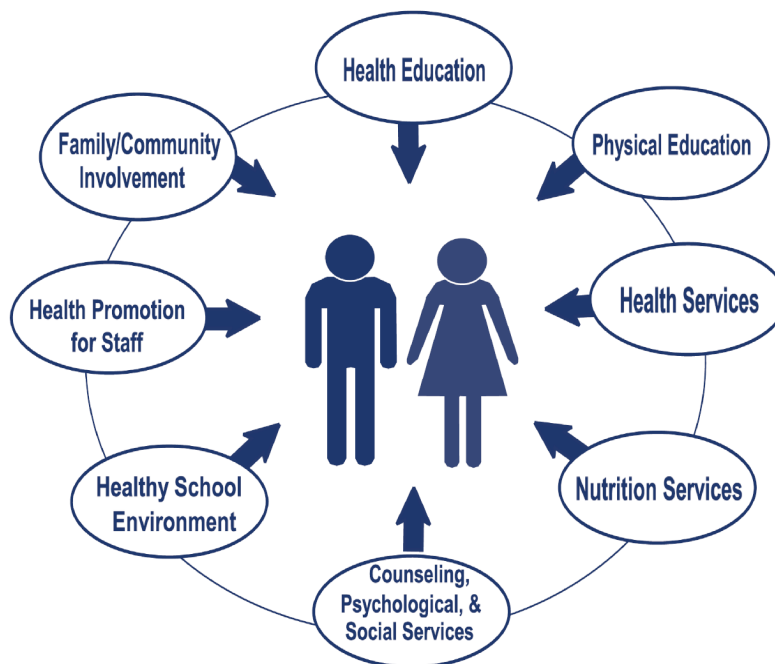


School Health Programs: An Investment in Our Nation's Future

AT-A-GLANCE
2000



“Schools could do more than perhaps any other single institution in society to help young people, and the adults they will become, to live healthier, longer, more satisfying, and more productive lives.”

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Health Challenges of Young People

Many of the health challenges facing young people today are different from those of past decades. Advances in medications and vaccines have largely addressed the ravages once wrought on children by infectious diseases.

Today, the health of young people, and the adults they will become, is critically linked to the health-related behaviors they choose to adopt.

Damaging Behaviors

A limited number of behaviors contribute markedly to today's major killers, such as heart disease, cancer, and injuries. These behaviors, often established during youth, include

- Tobacco use.
- Unhealthy dietary behaviors.
- Inadequate physical activity.
- Alcohol and other drug use.
- Sexual behaviors that can result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies.
- Behaviors that may result in intentional injuries (violence and suicide) and unintentional injuries (motor vehicle crashes).

These behaviors place young people at significantly increased risk for serious health problems, both now and in the future.

Young People Are at Risk

- ▶ Every day, nearly 3,000 young people take up daily smoking.
- ▶ Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 27% in 1997.
- ▶ Almost three-fourths of young people do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables.
- ▶ Every year, almost 1 million adolescents become pregnant, and about 3 million become infected with a sexually transmitted disease.

School Health Education Proven Effective

Every school day, 50 million young people attend more than 110,000 schools across our nation. Given the size and accessibility of this population, our schools can make an enormous, positive impact on the health of the nation.

Rigorous studies show that health education in schools effectively reduces the prevalence of health risk behaviors among young people. For example,

- Planned, sequential health education resulted in a 37% reduction in the onset of smoking among seventh-grade students.
- The prevalence of obesity was decreased by half among girls in grades 6–8 who participated in a school-based intervention program.
- Forty-four percent fewer students who were enrolled in a school-based life skills training

program used tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana one or more times per month than those not enrolled in the program.

In 1998, Congress emphasized the opportunity afforded by our nation's schools when it urged CDC to "expand its support of coordinated health education programs in schools."

Enthusiasm for addressing health among young people has grown in the private sector as well. National health and education organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, and the National PTA, actively endorse a coordinated approach to health education in the school setting.

CDC Program Elements

With FY 2000 funding, CDC is strengthening national efforts and providing support to 22 states for coordinated school health programs that focus on chronic disease prevention.

National Framework

CDC has established a national framework to support coordinated school health programs. More than 40 professional and voluntary organizations work with CDC to develop model policies, guidelines, and training to assist states in implementing high-quality school health programs.

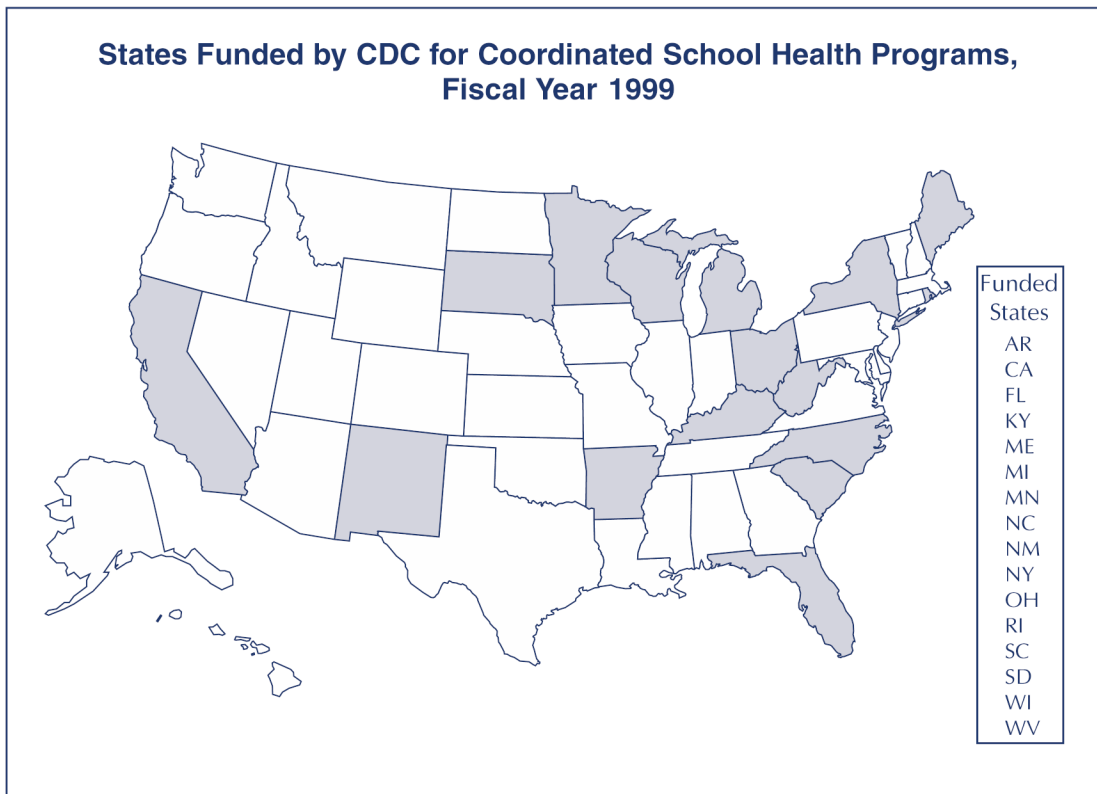
As part of this effort, CDC collaborates with scientists and education experts to identify curricula that have successfully reduced health risk behaviors among young people. CDC provides resources to ensure that these curricula, including training for teachers, are available nationwide for state and local education agencies interested in using them. Schools themselves decide which curricula best meet their students' needs.

State-Based Programs

Through the established national framework and in collaboration with health and education partners,

CDC assists funded states in providing young people with information and skills needed to avoid risk behaviors, including tobacco use, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and inadequate physical activity. In addition to receiving instruction, students practice decision-making, communication, and peer-resistance skills to enable them to make positive health behavior choices.

In addition to the 16 states funded for coordinated school health programs, CDC helps all 50 states, seven territories, the District of Columbia, and 18 major cities provide HIV education for young people. Through cooperative efforts with national organizations and the states, CDC supports training for more than 180,000 teachers annually on effectively administering HIV-prevention programs. These programs are designed to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to avoid becoming infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Fiscal year 2000 funding for HIV prevention in schools is approximately \$47 million.



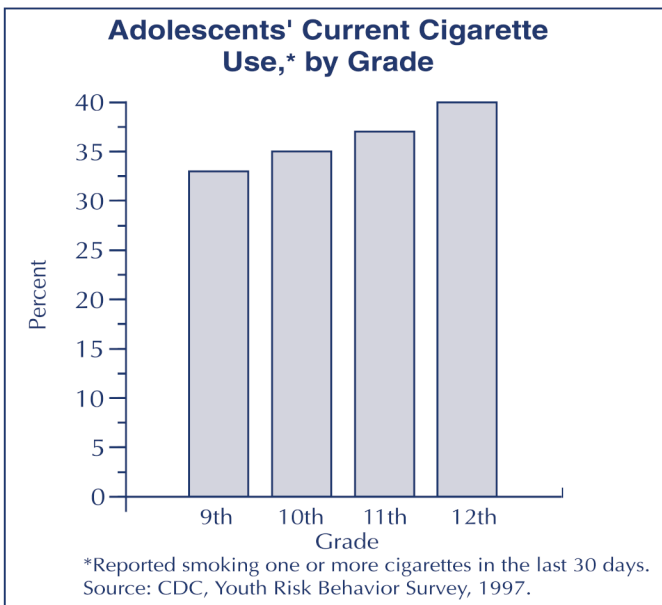
School Health: Coordinated Efforts

Research Benefits Schools

National efforts for coordinated school health programs have been hampered by a lack of information on school health policies and programs. To address this need, CDC has conducted the School Health Policies and Programs Study to obtain valuable answers to specific questions about school health programs at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. For example, although most schools have a written policy prohibiting tobacco use, only about half have a policy that bans all smoking in school buildings and on school grounds.

Surveillance Plays a Key Role

Until recently, little was known about the prevalence of health risk behaviors among young people. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) now provides such information. Developed by CDC in cooperation with federal, state, and private-sector partners, this voluntary system includes a national survey of about 12,000 students and smaller surveys conducted by state and local education agencies. The YRBSS focuses on priority risk behaviors such as tobacco use and provides vital information to improve health programs.



CDC's Funded National Partners Fiscal Year 1999

- Advocates for Youth
- American Association for Health Education
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Cancer Society
- American College Health Association
- American Psychological Association
- American School Health Association
- Association of American Colleges and Universities
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Bacchus and Gamma Peer Education Network
- Comprehensive Health Education Foundation
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Education Development Center
- Education, Training, and Research Associates
- GIRLS, Inc.
- National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
- National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
- National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
- National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc.
- National Association of People with AIDS
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
- National Center for Health Education
- National Coalition of Advocates for Students
- National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations
- National Commission of Correctional Health Care
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Council of LaRaza
- National Education Association
- National Governor's Association
- National Latina Health Network
- National Middle School Association
- National Network for Youth
- National School Boards Association
- National Youth Advocacy Coalition
- Public Education Network
- Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
- Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
- United Negro College Fund

**For more information or additional copies of this document, please contact the
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