



SBHCs + GRADS = Better Health

Healthcare Support for Parenting Teens

NMASBHC and NM-GRADS Best Practices for Program Collaboration

Community and legislative support for SBHCs and GRADS hinges on GRADS-SBHC collaboration, awareness & understanding, and outreach.

State Level Collaboration

Collaboration between The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and the New Mexico Alliance for School-Based Health Care (NMASBHC) is essential to communicating to the general public and policymakers that:

- GRADS and SBHCs help and support expectant and parenting youth in making healthy decisions for themselves and their families
- healthy youth and families contribute to the health and well-being of the greater community
- the GRADS and SBHC programs' focus on prevention supports statewide fiscal stability

State level collaboration is also important in supporting individual sites in their outreach. PED/GRADS and NMASBHC together create strategy, coordinate state level outreach activities, and develop and provide outreach materials to GRADS/SBHC sites.

Site Level Collaboration

Relationship building is essential. Central to any kind of outreach to the community or decision makers is the development of a working relationship between the two programs. Program directors might consider scheduling regular times for both staffs to familiarize themselves with both programs, discuss common concerns, work on common goals, and create mutually supportive systems of care for students and their families. The work of creating accessible pathways for students to use both programs will build the kind of deep staff and student collaboration necessary for effective outreach to community and policymakers.

Awareness & Understanding

Educating the public and policymakers about the purpose and success of GRADS and SBHCs is central. Bringing current information to them through written media and presentations will work to dispel old myths, misconceptions, or sheer lack of knowledge. Students who share their experiences of GRADS and SBHCs often bring a convincing honesty and reality to adult audiences that is often more effective than adult presentations alone. It is important to share the mission and history of the programs, current data, and long terms goals. It is also important to help community members and policy makers make the link between the financial stability of the community and the preventative focus of both programs. Utilizing fact sheets is a great help in developing written materials and presentations. There is a wealth of information about each program available at:

<http://www.nmasbhc.org/advocacy.html> and <http://www.nmgrads.org>.

For more information on this and other NMASBHC Best Practice and Tip Sheets related to healthcare for expectant and parenting teens, please visit NMASBHC's website at www.nmasbhc.org or contact NMASBHC at (505) 404-8059. Please note that the contents of these tip sheets are general and not a replacement for information from the sponsoring agencies or healthcare providers.

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Outreach

Raising awareness and understanding of the GRADS and SBHC programs can happen through many channels. Designing outreach activities should be tailored to individual audiences. It is important to start building relationships early and maintain year-round with the community and policymakers. Consider ways that will best help them feel engaged with the GRADS and SBHC missions.

Possible Outreach Activities

Open House

An Open House can provide context to help people connect to GRADS and SBHCs. Visiting with staff and students in classrooms, health centers, and day care centers can make the programs more accessible and real to people whose only awareness is through written literature.

Annual Meeting & Dinner

Establish an Annual Dinner-Meeting where key policymakers and community members are invited. Such an event, over time, can begin to build supportive relationships and a sense of community participation in the programs.

School Staff Meetings

Sharing information with school staff is very important as they can be GRADS/SBHCs greatest advocates.

Information Tables

Schools offer many opportunities to distribute information to the public: parent meetings, school registration, health fairs, sports events, etc. When possible, consider having GRADS and SBHCs co-sponsor a table or at least have adjoining tables.

Presentations

There are many opportunities in communities to share the GRADS/SBHC mission: Rotary Club and other civic groups, County Health Councils, etc. These opportunities build awareness, recruit volunteers, and engender community support.

Meetings with Policymakers

Knowing that a great deal of work is done prior to the actual legislative winter sessions, it is important to contact legislators with concerns and requests well before the session begins. Providing them with succinct, compelling materials before the busy activity of the actual legislative session increases the possibility that they will engage with GRADS/SBHC concerns and requests.

Summary

Ongoing financial support of the GRADS and SBHCs is dependent on relationship building in the community and with policymakers. Providing community members and policymakers with accurate, compelling information about the programs, events to interact with GRADS/SBHC staff and students, and the opportunity to become personally engaged, supports expectant and parenting youth, their families, and the greater community.



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