

MAXINE E. DEXTER, MD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 33



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Date: March 16, 2023

Subject: Support SB 549

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter and I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park. I am grateful for this opportunity today to share my strong support for SB 549, which will expand and strengthen school-based health centers across Oregon.

As a mother to children who have gone through our public school system and a physician, I see school based health centers (SBHCs) as vital infrastructure for students and families to receive culturally-competent, responsive and trusted care. This improves not just health outcomes, but educational outcomes for our students as well.¹

Some of you may have heard me discuss Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a framework for understanding human behavior first described by Abraham Maslow in 1943, explaining how humans are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to more advanced needs. This framework for understanding human behavior reinforces what we see in schools - students who are houseless or hungry are less able to learn². These students are also less able to pursue access to healthcare³. SBHCs facilitate a stronger sense of support and community in our schools while offering healthcare and public health education and interventions. With the utilization of existing school infrastructure, we can truly meet the needs of our youth where they already are to help address their social and health needs. Additionally, by providing students and families with healthcare and social services in a culturally competent and trusted building, SBHCs efficiently close many gaps in our social infrastructure.

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https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/137/download?inline&file=Community_Schools_Effective_REPO_RT.pdf

² <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X221091232>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5750953/>

I also want to elevate the enormous opportunities offered through the utilization of telemedicine to help support our SBHCs. This technology, when effectively applied, allows for efficient use of clinician resources by applying a hub-and-spoke model to the delivery of care in these centers. We can have one attending clinician in a centralized location who is able to support the work of SBHC nurses, community health workers, and other clinicians without having to have in-office presence.

SB 549 will provide funding for school districts across the state to implement community-informed service hubs, driven by the needs of families and students for community wraparound services. The bill also includes grant funding for communities to implement SBHCs, a school nurse model, or a mental health model depending on the needs of a specific community.

I am grateful to Senators Sollman and Patterson and Representatives Reynolds, and Bynum for their leadership and partnership on this bill. I urge you all to understand the importance of taking action to expand the proven model of School Based Health Centers to improve health care access and outcomes for students and families statewide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, & Cathedral Park)