

LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM



SUPPORTS



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A.9288

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Health Committee

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS:

This legislation amends the social services law, in relation to coverage for services provided by school-based health centers for medical assistance recipients; and to amend part JJ of chapter 57 of the laws of 2021 amending the social services law relating to managed care programs, in relation to the effectiveness thereof.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:

Statewide, there are 266 school-based health centers (SBHCs) that serve nearly 260,000 k-12 students. SBHCs provide primary, mental health and preventative health care services to a wide array of students, with no out-of-pocket costs to them or their families. SBHCs provide care to students whether they have insurance or not but will also work with a student's doctor if they already have one.

When New York State directed all schools to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these centers quickly transitioned and adjusted to a home-learning environment and quickly adopted a mode of care that corresponded with virtual learning to provide tele-health services to students. These tele-health services included mental and behavioral health, chronic disease management (e.g., asthma and diabetes), reproductive health, social work, nutrition, substance abuse counseling, health education, prescriptions and primary care services.

During the pandemic, mental health and behavioral health were the most requested services provided during tele-health visits. A significant number of SBHCs reported that tele-health allowed the parent to be involved in mental health consults. This allowed providers and social workers to increase coordination and provide parents with additional resources to help students. Approximately 17 percent of SBHCs are in rural areas and provide necessary care for our students, in many cases, they were the only health services these students had access to during the pandemic.

Currently, SBHCs are paid under a fee for service (FFS) billing methodology. However, if they are required by the Department of Health to transition to a mainstreamed Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) program, it would require SBHCs to negotiate their terms and conditions of payment from managed care plans.

SBHCs have been carved-out of the MMC program since 1985, enabling them to receive reimbursement directly from the State for the Medicaid services that they provide to students. SBHCs have expressed their preference for remaining carved out of MMC plans due to the administrative complexities and burdens to change their current fee for service billing methodology that comes with being in an MMC. NYSUT supports the school-based health centers' desire to remain separate from Medicaid managed care plans.

FOR THE ABOVE MENTIONED REASONS, NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS SUPPORTS THE PASSAGE OF THIS LEGISLATION.

JG/JP/AB/PS
School-Based Health Centers
2/28/22