

National Collaborative on Education + Health

Memorandum

Date: December 23, 2015

To: Steering Committee of the National Collaborative on Education and Health

From: Rochelle Davis and Rich Hamburg, co-chairs of the National Steering Committee

Re: 2016 Scope of Work for the National Collaborative on Education and Health

On October 1, 2015 the Steering Committee of the National Collaborative on Education and Health (the Collaborative) met to review the 2015 work of the Collaborative and discuss plans for the Collaborative's future work. Based on the Steering Committee's feedback and discussions with our allies, we are proposing the following scope of work for the Collaborative for 2016 and beyond.

Current Landscape

There are a number of tremendous opportunities for advancing the Collaborative's work in 2016:

- On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed into law the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which was last reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act. The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes several provisions that support student health, including a requirement that Title I schools include chronic absenteeism as an indicator on their school report cards and a requirement that school districts conduct a needs assessment to identify the health and safety needs of their students in order to access funding from Title IV (the Safe and Healthy Students program). In addition, ESSA includes health services as a part of the Title I Schoolwide Program Plans, specifically mentioning counseling, mental health and specialized instructional support services. The Collaborative can play a key role in supporting the implementation of these and other provisions and building the capacity of states and school districts to effectively leverage these opportunities to support student health.
- On October 7, 2015, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) launched the Every Student, Every Day initiative which is working to galvanize multi-sector support to catalyze federal, state and local efforts to address chronic absenteeism. The Collaborative played a key role in informing the development and launch of this initiative. As a part of the Every Student, Every Day initiative, ED will be hosting a summit this summer to bring together states and school districts working to reduce chronic absenteeism. The Collaborative can play a key role in supporting ED's initiative and informing its implementation.
- The December 2014 reversal of the free care policy presents an important opportunity to increase access to and resources for school health services. The free care policy stated that Medicaid funds may not be used to pay for services that are available without charge to everyone in the community and had long been an impediment to allowing school districts to receive reimbursement for health services delivered

to Medicaid-enrolled students. States and school districts can now implement this change and the Collaborative is well-positioned to inform and disseminate guidance that can catalyze state and local efforts to leverage the reversal of the free care policy to increase access to school health services.

- With the upcoming change in administration in 2017, the Collaborative has an opportunity to ensure school health is prioritized within the new administration's agenda. Trust for America's Health will be developing the *Blueprint for a Healthier America* to serve as a policy guide for the next administration and Congress on ways to improve the health of Americans. The Collaborative has the opportunity to develop recommendations for promoting school health that can be integrated into the *Blueprint for a Healthier America*.

These opportunities are shaping the Collaborative's scope of work for 2016 and beyond.

Proposed 2016 Workplan

Given the current opportunities at hand, we propose the following workplan for the Collaborative for 2016:

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism will continue to be a key focus of the Collaborative moving forward. Given ESSA includes chronic absenteeism as a required school report card metric for Title I schools and the launch of the Every Student, Every Day initiative, we propose that the Collaborative's 2016 work around chronic absenteeism focus on the following activities:

- Support the Every Student, Every Day summit, which will take place in summer 2016. This will include helping inform the summit content and disseminating the lessons learned.
- Identify and disseminate local models for using student health data to better understand the health-related causes of chronic absenteeism.
- Develop and disseminate tools on the connection between health and chronic absenteeism. This will include refining the tools developed through the Collaborative's Chronic Absenteeism Working Group and sharing case studies highlighting the connection between student health and chronic absenteeism.
- Develop and promote recommendations for ED to more fully integrate chronic absenteeism into their policies and programs.
- Work with the Steering Committee to promote efforts on chronic absenteeism through their own organizations.

Health Systems Transformation

We propose the following activities for advancing the Collaborative's work to increase access to school health services:

- Leverage the change in the free care policy to increase access to school health services. This will include supporting the implementation of this policy change at the state and local levels by convening a small number of state Medicaid directors and school districts that are well positioned to move forward with

implementation. Best practices and strategies for advancing implementation of the change in the free care policy will be identified and disseminated through this work. In addition, interested stakeholders will be regularly convened to promote and track implementation of the free care policy change.

- Support implementation of the joint letter between ED and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ED and HHS are expected to release a joint letter emphasizing the importance of school health and highlighting key opportunities, including the change in the free care policy, for increasing access to school health services and promoting collaboration between health and education.
- Leverage community benefit requirements to encourage non-profit hospitals to invest in primary prevention, including school-based programs, that have benefits in multiple sectors and for multiple health issues. This work will include leveraging the community health needs assessments of hospitals and public health departments to promote data sharing/mapping between hospitals, public health and school districts.

ESSA Implementation

The Collaborative can play an important role in supporting implementation of ESSA by ensuring strong regulations and guidance are adopted that support student health and by developing and implementing policies and programs that build the capacity of states and school districts to successfully implement the health-related portions of ESSA.

As part of this work, the Collaborative has an opportunity to partner with Pew Charitable Trusts to conduct a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of ESSA. Conducting an HIA of ESSA presents an important opportunity to better understand the impact of ESSA on student health and support the inclusion of the key health-related provisions of ESSA within the regulatory process. A working group of the Collaborative would be convened to work on ESSA implementation, including the HIA.

Health and Academic Data

The issue of how to access and use health and education data has been a common thread through much of the Collaborative's work. This includes supporting schools in using student health data to better understand student health needs that impact achievement and supporting the integration of key academic measures, such as rates of chronic absenteeism, in health and public health data systems, such as community health needs assessments. In addition, ESSA requires schools seeking Title IV funding to conduct a needs assessment to identify the health and safety needs of their students. Ensuring that states and school districts understand how to access and use student health data to conduct these assessments is an important opportunity to advance this issue.

As a result, we are proposing that the Collaborative convenes a data working group in 2016. It is expected that this working group will focus on identifying strategies, best practices and models that ensure the education and health sectors understand how to use the data they currently have access to and/or collect to support the health and academic success of children. For example, schools can leverage the needs assessments conducted by local hospitals and public health departments to better understand the health conditions impacting their student population. In addition, integrating data about chronic absenteeism into community health needs assessments can help non-profit hospitals identify health issues that are impacting educational attainment.

A Public Health Approach to Mental Health

The Collaborative has the opportunity to partner with Mental Health America to convene a working group to explore the research on primary prevention in mental health and identify relevant policy barriers to scaling up evidence-based interventions, particularly in schools.

This working group will specifically build on the work of the Substance Misuse Prevention and Early Intervention in Schools Working Group and the strategies this working group identified for helping spread and scale evidence-based interventions that positively influence behavioral health and many other outcomes, including academic achievement. In addition, mental health emerged as a key issue in the Collaborative's work on chronic absenteeism and health systems transformation. Convening a working group that focuses on primary prevention in mental health aligns closely with the mission of the Collaborative and will build on the Collaborative's past work.

Blueprint for Healthier America

The Collaborative has the opportunity to develop and integrate recommendations for supporting school health into Trust for America's Health's *Blueprint for Healthier America*. This will provide an opportunity to ensure the lessons learned through the Collaborative's work to date are integrated into these policy recommendations and shared with the next administration.

In addition, a number of key issues that were discussed at the October 1 Steering Committee meeting could be addressed through the *Blueprint for Healthier America* including the following:

- Promote state infrastructure to scale evidence-based interventions, such as the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) provides.
- Promote models that braid sources of funding for long-term financial sustainability, a key strategy identified through the Substance Misuse Prevention and Early Intervention in Schools Working Group.
- Support the development of professional development programs for teachers and administrators that integrate content about children's health and development. This will include ensuring administrators and teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate evidence-based practices, such as the Good Behavior Game, that support the whole child.
- Develop strategies for framing concepts, such as substance misuse and chronic absenteeism, as a part of a broader agenda (e.g. school climate, youth development or social and emotional learning).
- Support the implementation of trauma informed practices.
- Support the reorganization of federal school health programs so they are less fragmented.
- Support a collaborative approach to local needs assessments and implementation plans to foster partnerships and reduce duplication.
- Highlight case studies collected through the Collaborative.

The Steering Committee will continue to play an important role in helping inform the work of the Collaborative and advancing the Collaborative's work through their own organizations. In addition, we anticipate that the Steering Committee will play a key role in developing the recommendations for inclusion in the *Blueprint for a Healthier America*.

Thank you again for your engagement in the Collaborative.