### Leading Health Conditions Impacting Student Attendance

Central to the connection between health and learning is students’ ability to attend school and be ready to learn. Many students have one or more health problems that compromise their ability to learn and put them at risk for increased absenteeism. The prevalence of many of these conditions that impact both physical and behavior health have increase in the last decades. This has implications not only for children’s long-term health but also for their opportunities to learn and succeed at school. This chart shows those conditions for which there is prevalence and for which health disparities negatively affect minority youth; evidence of having a direct impact on student attendance; and feasibility of implementing proven or promising school-based programs and policies to address the health condition.

This chart was prepared by the National Collaborative on Education and Health, an initiative co-convened by Healthy Schools Campaign and Trust for America’s Health. The Collaborative has brought together over 70 stakeholders representing federal, state and local government agencies, health and education professionals, advocates and foundations and has taken important steps towards transforming the health and education sectors to support the conditions for health and wellness in schools across the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Condition</th>
<th>Health Disparities</th>
<th>Impact on Attendance</th>
<th>Sample Intervention(s)</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>Compared to Caucasian children, asthma prevalence is higher in children who are Puerto Rican (2.4 times), African American (1.6 times), and American Indian/Alaska Native (1.3 times).&lt;sup&gt;i&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism, accounting for 1/3 of all days missed instruction. &lt;sup&gt;iii&lt;/sup&gt; Children with persistent asthma are 3.2 times as likely to have 10 or more absences as their peers. &lt;sup&gt;iv&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Asthma Friendly Environments: &lt;br&gt;• Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative, &lt;br&gt;• Asthma Friendly Homes &lt;br&gt;• Environmental assessments and remediation in schools and homes</td>
<td>• Community health providers &lt;br&gt;• School staff, including school health team and maintenance team &lt;br&gt;• School-based health centers &lt;br&gt;• Regional EPA office &lt;br&gt;• Local American Lung Association chapter &lt;br&gt;• Housing advocates &lt;br&gt;• Before and after school programs</td>
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### Bullying, Violence and Abuse
- 20% of high school students report being bullied on school property in the past year.ii
- 24.7% of high school students report being in a fight in the past year.vi
- 20% of children witnessed violence in their family or the neighborhood during the previous year.vii
- 16.6% of children experience physical abuse, 9.3% experience sexual abuse and 7.1% experience emotional/psychological abuse.viii

African American children have higher rates of maltreatment than Caucasian and Hispanic children.vii

7.1% of students report not going to school at least 1 day during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.xi

Safe Routes to Schools
- School and community-based health, counseling and social services
- Bullying education programs, including playground-based and cyber-bullying
- School support groups such as Gay/Straight Alliance clubs
- School discipline policy reform and protective school climates

### Oral health
- 20% of children aged 5 to 11 years have at least one untreated decayed tooth.xii
- 13% of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years have at least one untreated decayed tooth.xiii
- Among school-age children, tooth decay is the most common chronic disease, five times more prevalent than asthma.xvi

Untreated caries are nearly twice as prevalent in Hispanic children (26%) compared to non-Hispanic white children (14%) aged 6–9, and are more than twice as prevalent for non-Hispanic black adolescents (25%) compared with non-Hispanic white adolescents (9%) aged 13–15.xiv

The percentage of children 5 to 19 years with untreated tooth decay is twice as high for those from low-income families (25%) compared with children from higher-income families (11%).xv

Children between 5 and 17 years miss nearly two million school days in a single year nationwide due to dental health-related problems.xvi

Children with poor oral health status are nearly 3 times more likely than were their counterparts to miss school as a result of dental pain.xvii

Community-based oral health programs, including school-based sealant programs, free clinics and mobile programs

### Sources
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### Food insecurity and nutrition

- 21% of children (<age 18) live in households that have been food-insecure at some point during the year.\textsuperscript{xviii}
- 31.8% of children and adolescents are overweight or obese.
  - 18% of children aged 6-11 years old are obese.
  - 21% of children aged 12-19 years old are obese.\textsuperscript{xx}

Food insecurity is more than twice as prevalent among children in households headed by African Americans (36%) or Hispanics (30%), than in those headed by Caucasians (15%). The proportion of households where children had “very low food security,” is between three and four times as high in African American or Hispanic households as it was in Caucasian households.\textsuperscript{xx}

32.5% of African American children and 38.9% of Hispanic children are overweight or obese compared to 28.5% of Caucasian children.\textsuperscript{xxi}

Children who come from food-insecure families are more likely to be suspended from school, have higher absenteeism rates and have poor health compared to children who come from food-secure homes.\textsuperscript{xxii}

Children who are obese are 1.7 times more likely to have 10 or more absences in a given year than their non-obese peers.\textsuperscript{xxiii}

Overweight children are exposed to negative social experiences such as peer rejection and bullying which may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety disorders and depression.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

Access to healthy school meals, including universal school breakfast programs, and water

- School Pantry Program
- Backpack programs
- School-based physical activity programs
- Programs to reduce screen time
- Programs to promote appropriate sleep

### Mental health and substance use disorders

- A total of 13%–20% of children experience a mental disorder in a given year.\textsuperscript{xxv}
- ADHD (6.8%) is the most prevalent parent-reported current diagnosis among children aged 3–17 years, followed by behavioral or

ADHD disproportionately affects urban minority youth from poor families, who may not only be more likely to be affected but also less likely to receive accurate diagnosis and treatment.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

Minorities have less access to mental health services and are

When students' mental health needs are met, they are less likely to be absent and more likely to be engaged in and have a sense of connectedness to school.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

Children affected by ADHD are more likely

- School-based mental health programs.
- Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Universal interventions such as the Good Behavior Game

### Additional Resources

- Local departments of health and public health
- Teachers unions
- Food service directors
- Local food banks
- Local anti-hunger groups, including Feeding America
- School staff, including food services team and facility and maintenance team
- Community food and fitness organizations
- Local health care providers
- Farmers markets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Teens need...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Statistics and Implications</strong></th>
<th><strong>Schools and Community Programs</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct problems (3.5%), anxiety (3.0%), depression (2.1%) and autism spectrum disorders (1.1%).</strong></td>
<td>Conduct problems are less likely to receive needed care. African American and Latino youth are more likely to drink alcohol for the first time before age 13 (21.0% and 21.8% vs. 16.7%).</td>
<td>School- and community-based mental health centers, community anti-drug coalitions of America, school staff, including school health team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>25% of children in need of mental health care get the help they need.</strong></td>
<td>African American and Latino youth are more likely to drink alcohol for the first time before age 13 (21.0% and 21.8% vs. 16.7%).</td>
<td>School and community-based mental health centers, counselors and behavioral health teams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8.8% of adolescents report current illicit drug users.</strong></td>
<td>Reduction of alcohol and drug use is associated with better attendance rates.</td>
<td>School staff, including school health team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>20.8% of adolescents report binge-drinking (five or more drinks of alcohol in a row within two hours) in the past 30 days.</strong></td>
<td>There is a 10% increase in attendance for every year that the student delays beginning marijuana or alcohol use.</td>
<td>Community anti-drug coalitions of America, school staff, including school health team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8.6% of students tried marijuana for the first time before age 13.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teen and unplanned pregnancies</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 in 10 teen American girls will get pregnant at least once before age 20.</strong> Teenage birth rates in African American and Latino communities are three and four times higher than in Caucasian communities.</td>
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<td><strong>African American and Latino youth are more likely to try marijuana for the first time before age 13 (11.5% and 11.7% vs. 6.6%).</strong></td>
<td>Teens who become pregnant are more likely to be chronically absent, less likely to stay in school, and less likely to complete high school or college.</td>
<td>Community health providers, school staff, including school health team, planned parenthood, local adolescent health community organizations</td>
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<td><strong>8.6% of students tried marijuana for the first time before age 13.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vision</strong></td>
<td><strong>25 percent of school-aged children have some form of vision impairment.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>African American and Latino youth are more likely to try marijuana for the first time before age 13 (11.5% and 11.7% vs. 6.6%).</strong></td>
<td>Students with vision impairments are at an increased risk of disengagement from school and are more likely to develop social and emotional problems.</td>
<td>Local vision providers, school staff, including school health team, community organizations, such as local Lions Clubs, local eyeglasses stores</td>
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<td><strong>School and community-based vision screening programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Low-income and minority youth are at greater risk of under diagnosis and under treatment of vision problems and unmet need for vision care services.</strong></td>
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1 National Health Interview Survey. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2013. [link](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data.htm) Accessed May 1, 2015


4 National Health Interview Survey. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2013. [link](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data.htm) Accessed May 1, 2015


6 ibid


9 ibid


11 ibid


13 ibid


20 ibid


xxx ibid


