# Oregon Marks 20 Years of School-Based Health Center Success; Governor Proposes Expansion

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

As 2006 draws to a close, Oregon marks the completion of 20 years of school-based health center success, and Governor Ted Kulongoski has proposed future growth.

School-based health centers, or SBHCs, are located in schools or on school property. They provide physical and mental health services to students and families, many of whom would not otherwise be able to obtain such care.

Oregon's first school-based health center opened in 1986. Today there are 44 SBHCs in 17 counties and two more will open in 2007. The Governor's 2007-2009 budget proposes adding 13 more SBHCs throughout Oregon.

"Oregonians can be proud that we were among the first in the nation to launch this innovative health-care delivery model," said Katherine Bradley, family health program administrator in the Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division. "They are proven to fill a critical access need and deliver high-quality services. They consistently receive high marks from students and parents."

Bradley said more than 20,000 students visited a center in their school in the 2005-2006 school year. Forty-two percent of these students were uninsured and 60 percent said they probably would not have received care outside of the SBHC.

The 2005 Legislature allocated additional funds that allowed for five more clinics to be developed.

Three already are certified by the state:

â€¢ Coos County: Marshfield High School SBHC is partnering with Waterfall Clinic, a local federally qualified health center. â€¢ Deschutes County: La Pine K-12 Campus SBHC is partnering with Deschutes County Health Department. A monthly clinic helps children with asthma better manage their condition so they miss less school and can successfully participate in sports. â€¢ Jefferson County: Madras High School SBHC is partnering with Ochoco Health Center, a local federally qualified health center. Staff are amazed at how well used the clinic is and say they are seeing youth who probably wouldn't otherwise be able to see a provider.

Two are in the final planning phase and are expected to be certified by spring 2007:

â€¢ Marion County: Hoover Elementary School SBHC is partnering with Marion County Health Department. The center opened Nov. 27 to serve Hoover School students and Boys and Girls Club members in Salem and Keizer. â€¢ Wheeler County: Mitchell School SBHC is partnering with Asher Community Health Center, a local federally qualified health center. It is the first frontier SBHC; previously the nearest health services were a 45-mile drive away.

"These centers help families in various ways," Bradley said. "Because they are located in schools, parents don't always have to miss work to take their child to the doctor. SBHC staff treat minor illnesses and injuries but many of the services are preventive -- physical check-ups and immunizations, for example. And because many students feel the health center is a trusted environment, they seek medical and emotional help early."

Bradley said all centers are staffed by trained, licensed professionals and are certified to state standards, but each one is unique to reflect the communities they serve.

The typical SBHC costs an estimated $150,000 to $250,000 per year. They are funded by a variety of sources including state general funds. Local funds, grants and other revenue sources supply the majority of operational costs.

The DHS Public Health Division certifies all school-based health centers, provides technical assistance, evaluates and reports on adolescent health and access issues, and coordinates statewide activity. School-based health centers are one of many public health programs that focus on prevention and helping people manage their health so they can be as productive and healthy as possible. More information about Oregon school-based health centers is on the Web at www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/ah/sbhc/sbhc.shtml.