Targeted Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention and Early Intervention Through Schools

National Health Law Program

California School-Based Health Alliance

2022

Welcome & Housekeeping

- This is a pre-recorded session
  - Closed captioning are available
  - Slides are available
- Check out two other pre-recorded sessions in this series
  - Identifying needs and gaps in mental health access for system-involved youth
  - Ensuring appropriate service provision for system-involved youth, especially in light of SB 221

Agenda

- Introduction
- Overview of mental health and substance use disorder services through schools
- Relevant issues or challenges
- How are services provided through schools?
- Takeaways
- Resources

Introduction

Presenters

- National Health Law Program (NHeLP)
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  Equal Justice Works Fellow

- California School-Based Health Alliance (CSHA)
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  Director of Policy and External Affairs

About the National Health Law Program

- National non-profit law firm committed to improving health care access, equity, and quality for underserved individuals and families

- Offices in CA, DC, & NC
- NHeLP's Equity Stance

- Find us on
  - www.healthlaw.org
  - Twitter @NHeLP_org
  - Facebook @NHeLProgram

Why implement services through schools?

- School is the hub of the community
- School is where the kids are and for many, where the social support is
- Prevention and early intervention
- Many youth are getting evidence-based behavioral health services through schools

Overview of MH & SUD Services Through Schools

Two categories of services in schools

- Educational Services
  - Special education and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) services are mandated and provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Health care services (which include MH & SUD services)
  - Health care services in schools may be covered under Medi-Cal (Medicaid in CA), private insurance, or other funding sources
  - Services may be available to uninsured students as well

Today we'll focus on **heath care services** (especially Medi-Cal)

Medi-Cal Service Delivery Systems

- County Behavioral Health Delivery System
  - Provide Specialty Mental Health services (SMHS)
  - Substance Use Disorder services
- Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plans (MCPs)
  - Provide physical health services and non-Specialty mental health services (NSMHS), i.e. individual, group, and family psychotherapy
  - Brief intervention referral screening services
- Fee for service (FFS) (aka "straight Medi-Cal")
  - Some populations have the option to choose to remain in FFS

Medi-Cal & the EPSDT mandate

- The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit entitled **Medicaid ("Medi-Cal") beneficiaries under 21** to all appropriate and medically necessary services to correct or ameliorate behavioral health conditions
    - **Early:** Assessing and identifying problems early
    - **Periodic:** Checking children's health at periodic, age-appropriate intervals
    - **Screening:** Providing physical, mental, developmental, dental, hearing, vision, and other screening tests to detect potential problems
    - **Diagnostic:** Performing diagnostic tests to follow up when a risk is identified, and
    - **Treatment:** Control, correct or reduce health problems found.

EPSDT Services

- Services may include:
  - Medical, dental, vision, and hearing
  - Mental health screening, early intervention, and treatment services
  - Alcohol and Drug Screening, Assessment, Brief Interventions and Referral to Treatment (SABIRT) (ages 11 and older, including pregnant youth)

- Services must be available regardless of county of residency (county may be required to coordinate with another county to locate services)
- Early intervention services must be available

Expanded Medi-Cal Specialty MH Services

- Having a condition that places the youth at high risk for a mental health disorder due to
  - Experience of **trauma**
  - Involvement in the **child welfare system**, **juvenile justice system**, OR
  - Experiencing **homelessness**
- No need to have a MH or SUD diagnosis

(Cal. W&I § 14184.402)

Medi-Cal & Foster Youth

- All foster youth are entitled to get Medi-Cal/ Medicaid
- Former foster youth (who were in foster care on their 18th birthday in California or another state) can get Medi-Cal until age 26, regardless of income

Relevant issues or challenges regarding services provided through schools

Confidentiality and Limits on Info Sharing

- Health care v. Educational records
  - HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) regulates the use and disclosure of individual's protected health information, with some exceptions (such as victims of abuse or neglect or domestic violence, judicial and administrative proceedings, law enforcement)
  - FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) protects the privacy of student education record
- Cross-agencies policies

Consent

- Generally, parental/ caregiver consent or involvement is needed
- Some minors may consent to MH and SUD services in CA
  - In CA, age 12 and over may consent to mental health and substance use disorder services (Fam. Code § 6924; H&S Code § 124260; Fam. Code § 6929(b))
  - Under the Medi-Cal Minor Consent program, minors age 12 and older may consent to their own drug and alcohol abuse treatment and counseling & outpatient mental health treatment and counseling services
  - Minor Consent services are **confidential** from the parents

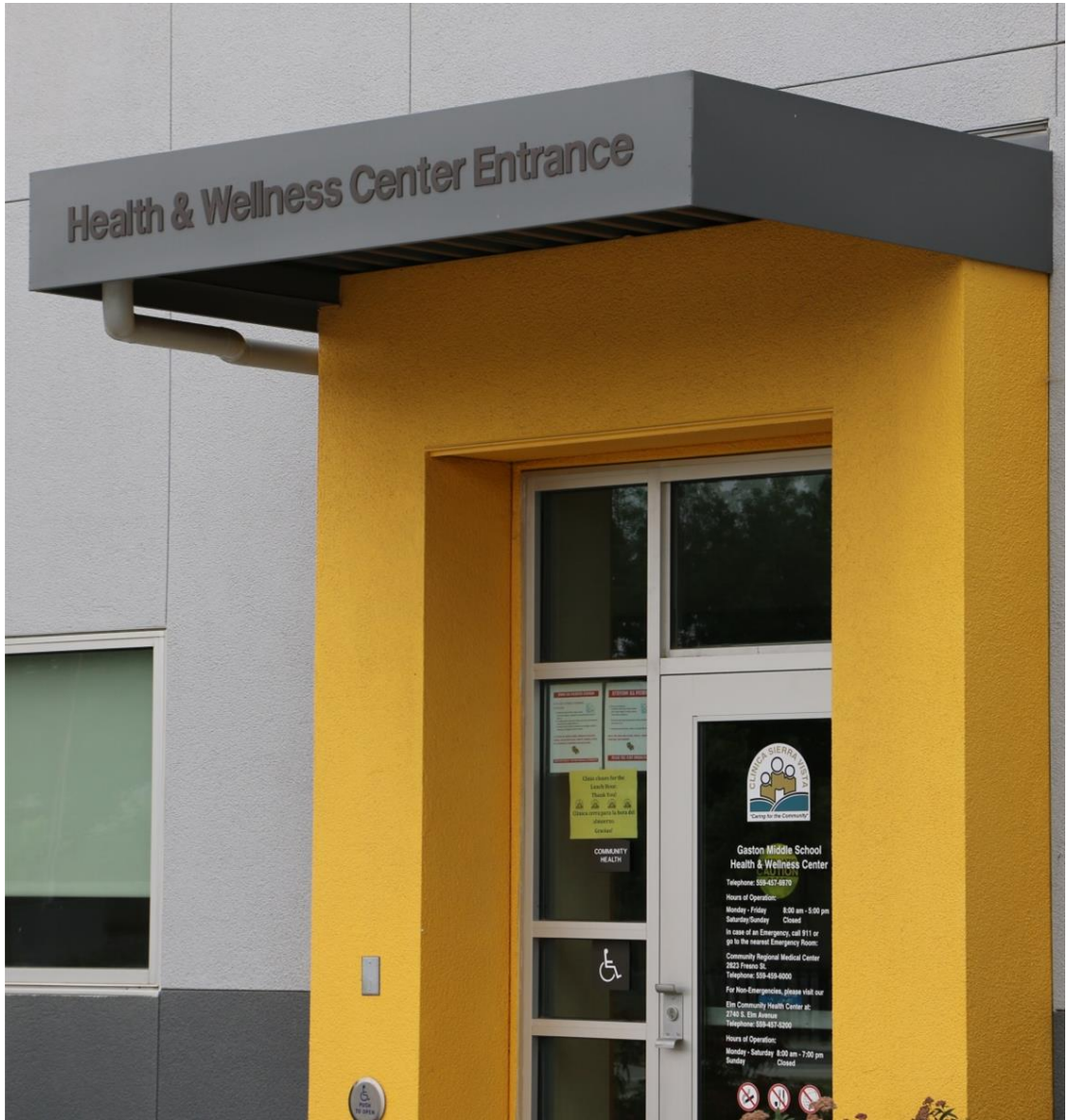
Additional relevant issues or challenges

- Multiple systems involvement makes things more complicated
- Definition of "child" in Medi-Cal (age 21) v. justice system (age 18)
- Extended Foster care goes to age 21 v. justice system (age 18)
- Healing and recovery is not linear
- The need for trauma-informed care
- Mental health staffing and program availability varies by school district and county
- Unstable housing and unstable schooling situations impact service linkages

How are services provided through schools?

Putting Health Care in Schools

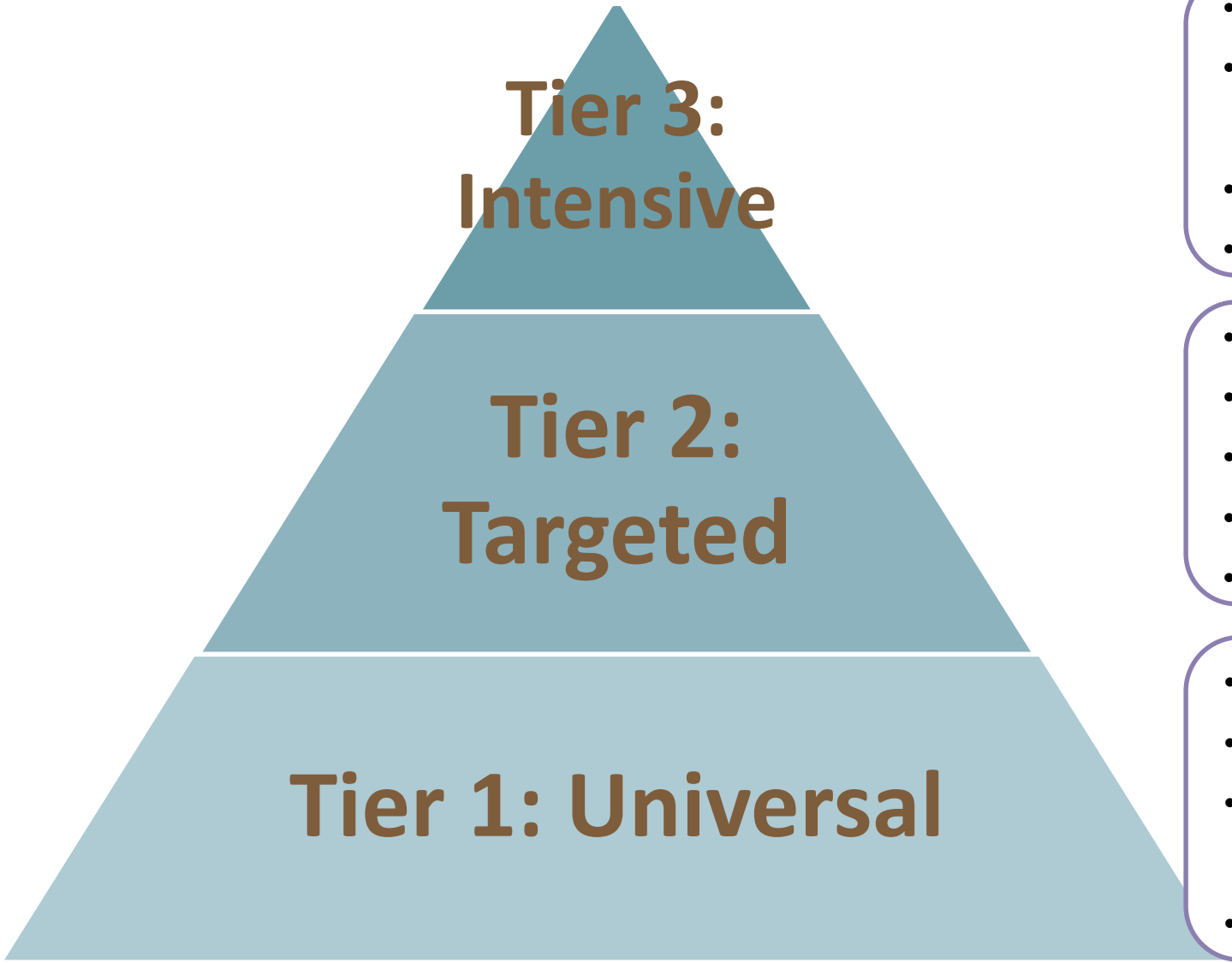
The California School-Based Health Alliance is the statewide non-profit organization dedicated to **improving the health & academic success** of children & youth by **advancing health services in schools**.



Learn more:
schoolhealthcenters.org

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH ALLIANCE
Putting Health Care Where Kids Are

What is School Mental Health?

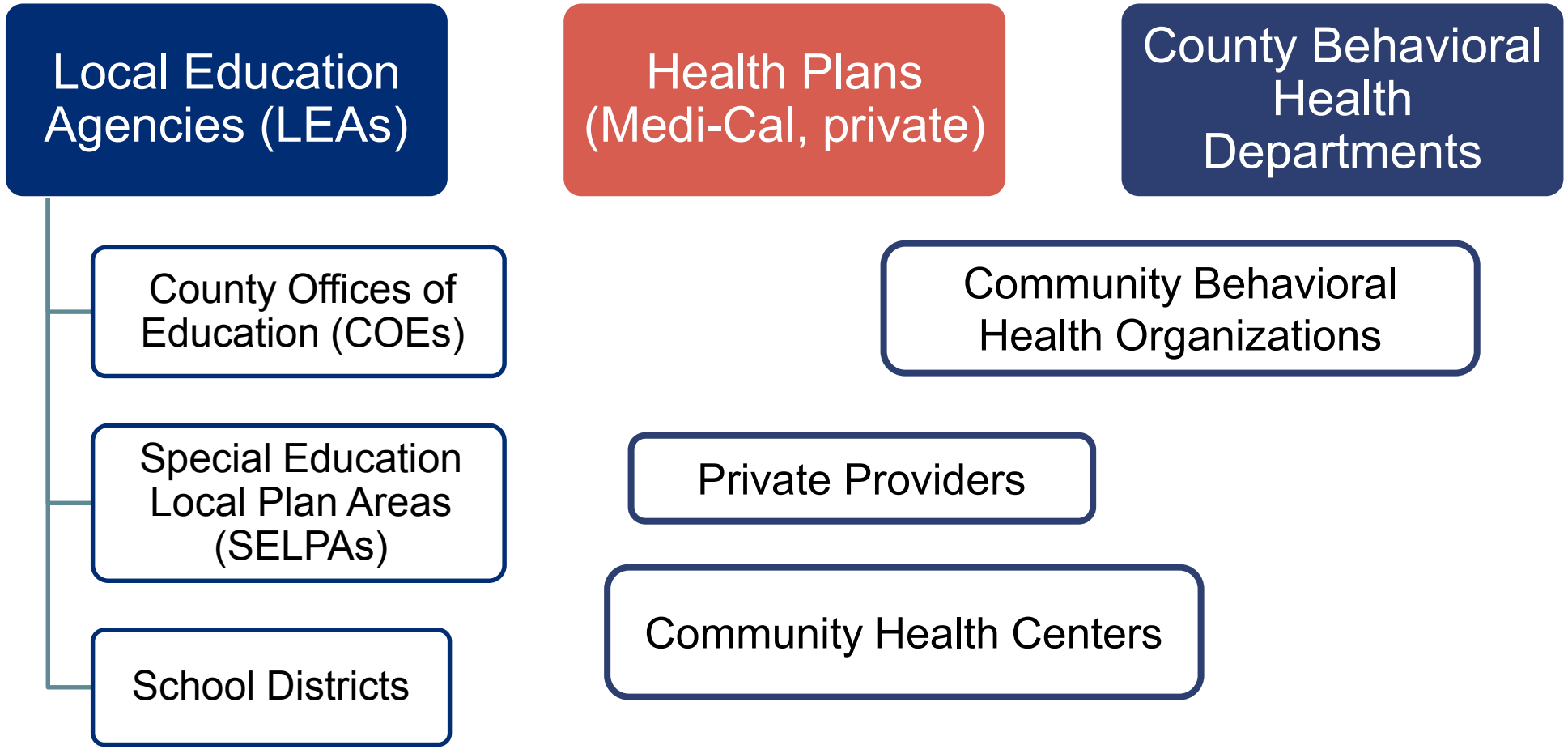


- Clinical groups
- Intensive individual mental health services
- Crisis intervention
- Multi-system case management

- Assessment & referral
- Support groups
- Coordination of Services teams
- Alternatives to suspension
- Short-term individual counseling

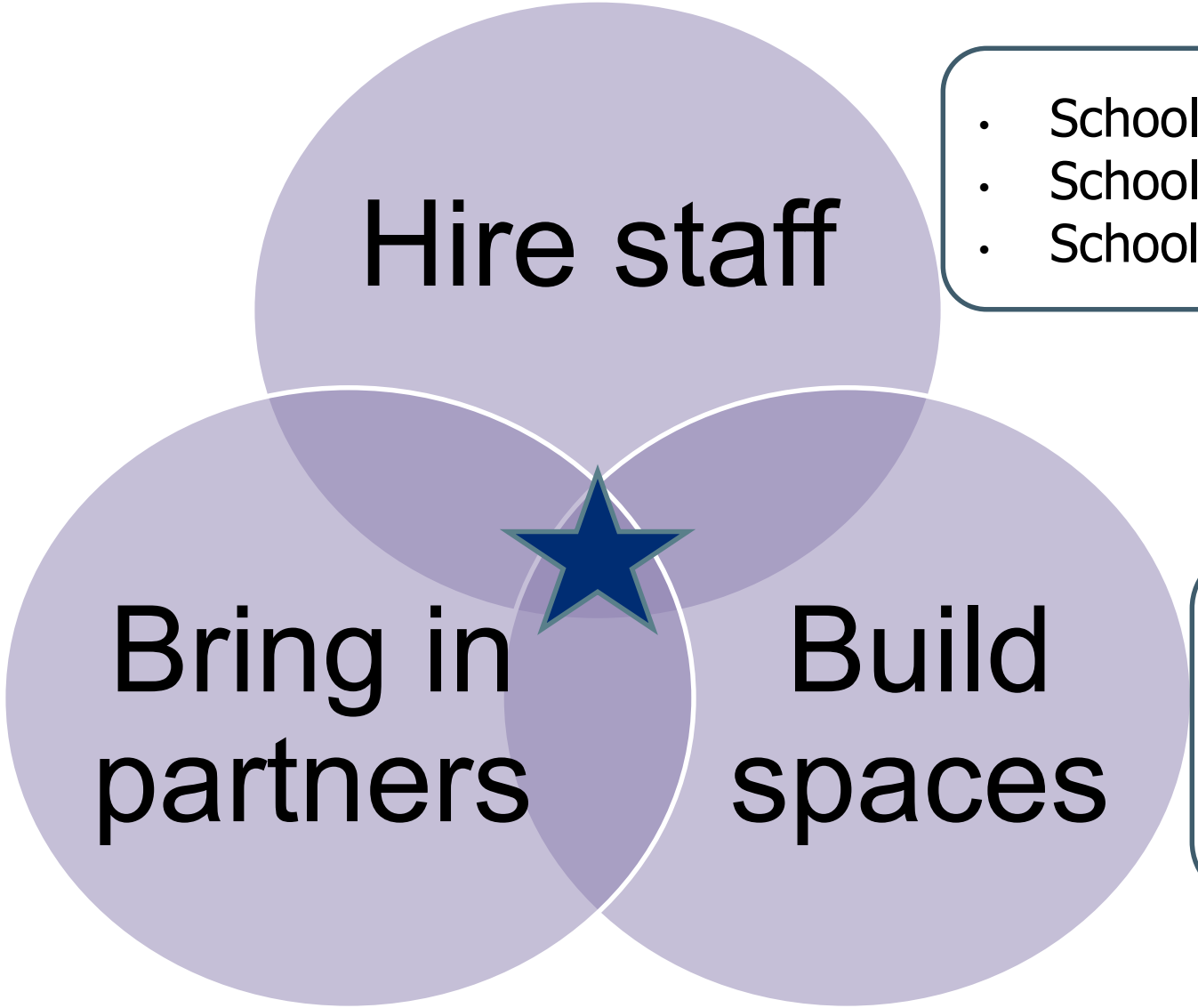
- Schoolwide education & activities
- School climate efforts
- Teacher/staff professional development & training
- Youth development activities

WHO ARE THE LOCAL PARTNERS?



More info: [Possible Partners in Delivering School Mental Health]

What Are Schools Doing?



- School counselors
- School social workers
- School nurses

- County
- CBOs
- FQHCs
- Hospitals

- School-based health centers
- Wellness Centers or rooms

What is a School-Based Health Center?

A student-focused health center or clinic:

- Located **on or near** a K-12 school campus
- Organized through school, community, and health provider **relationships**
- That provides age-appropriate, **clinical** health care services

SBHCs may provide primary medical care, behavioral health services, or dental care onsite or through mobile or telehealth

SBHC or "Wellness Center"?

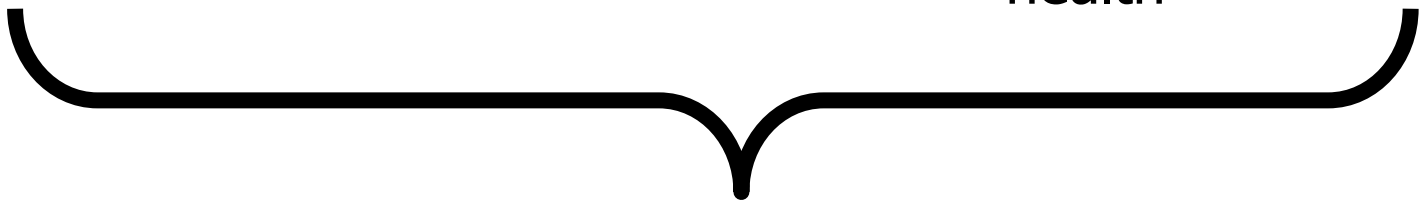
Wellness Centers

Calming Rooms
Welcoming, safe drop-in spaces without any clinical services, staffed by some caring adult

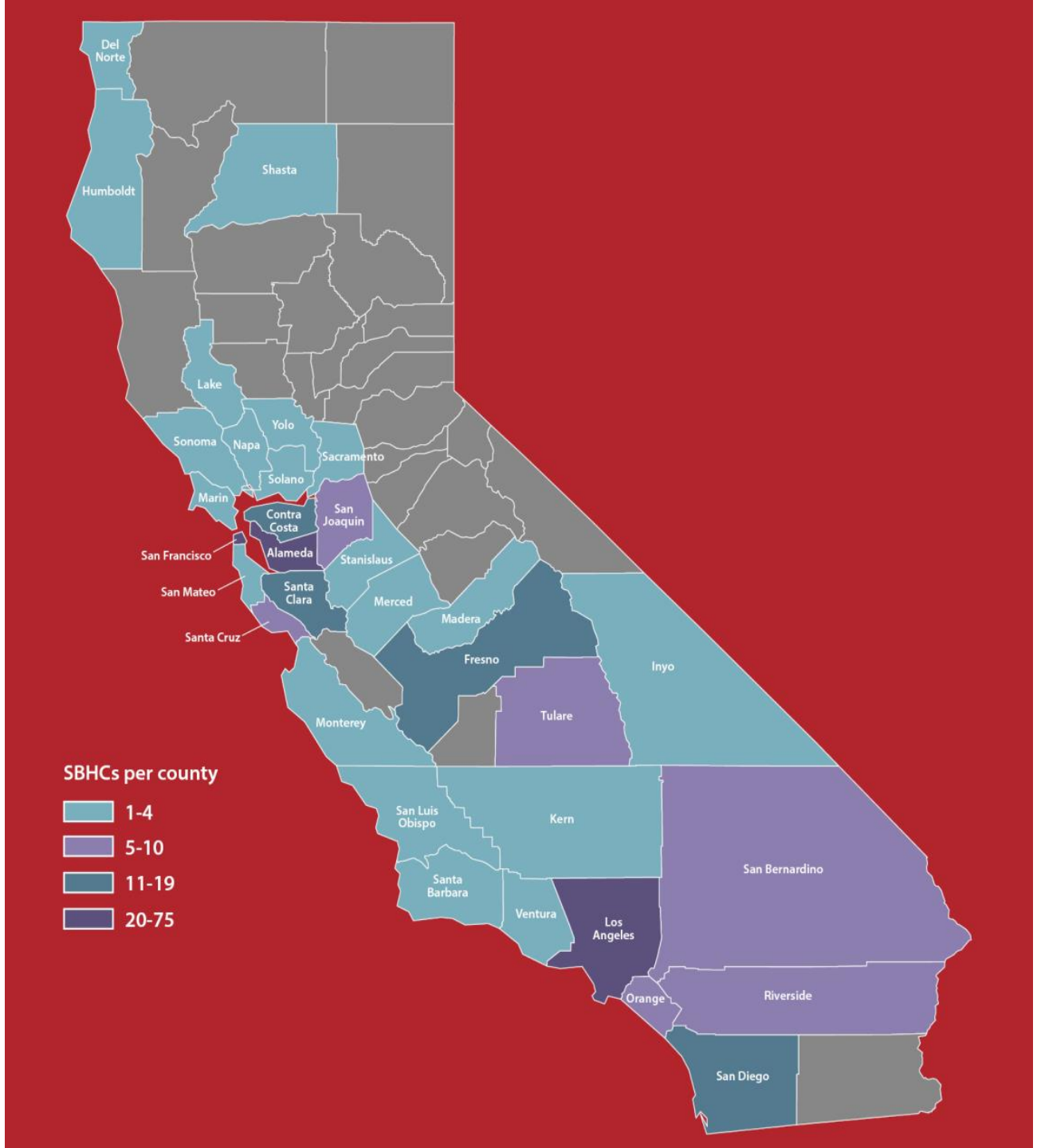
Mental Health only
Calming rooms plus some on-site clinical behavioral health services, provided by school-employed staff and/or co-located CBOs

Mental Health+
Centers with mostly clinical behavioral health plus some other services, like a school nurse and/or sexual/repro health

Comprehensive
Clinics with full-scope of health services, including physical medical care, behavioral health, and oral health



School-based health centers!



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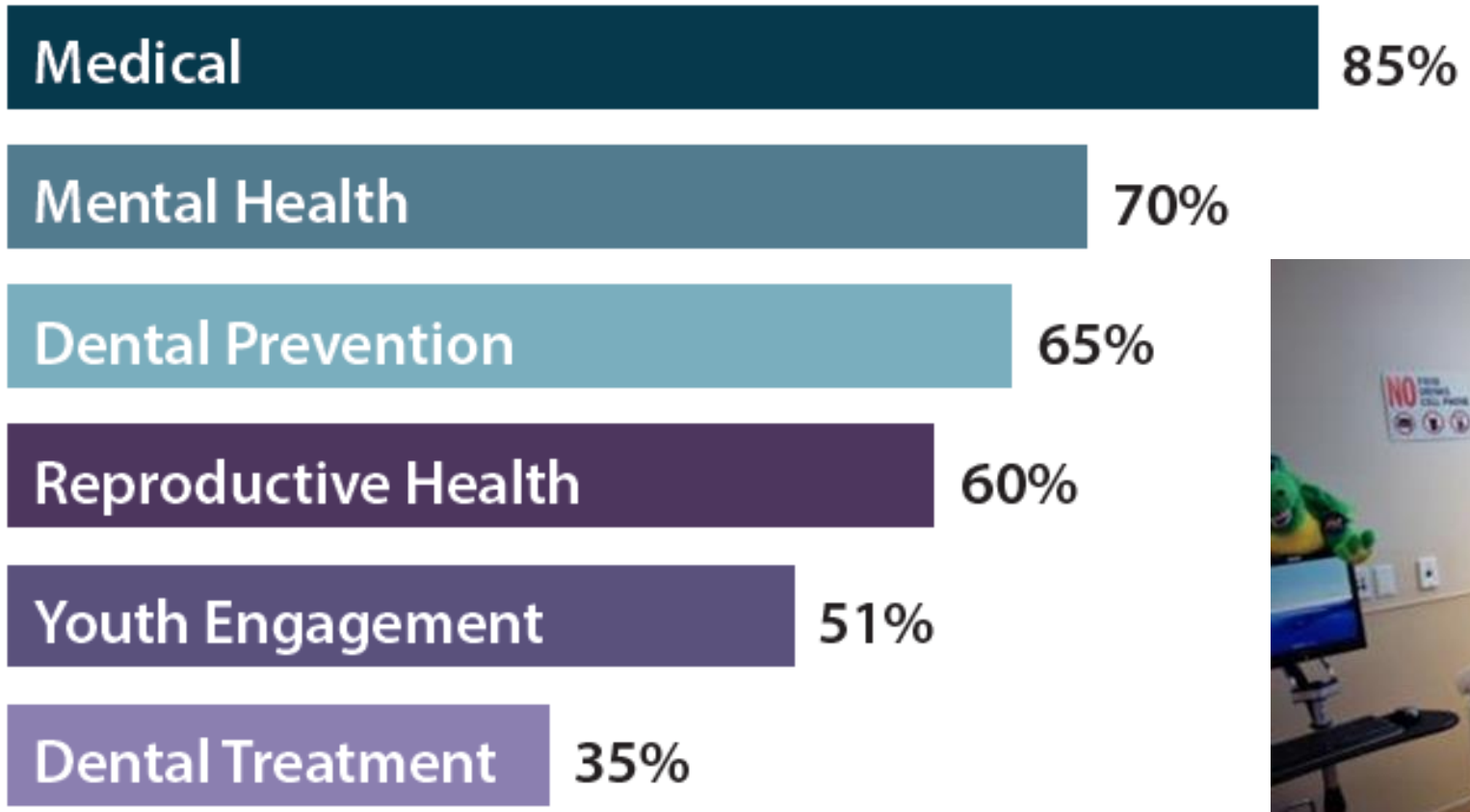
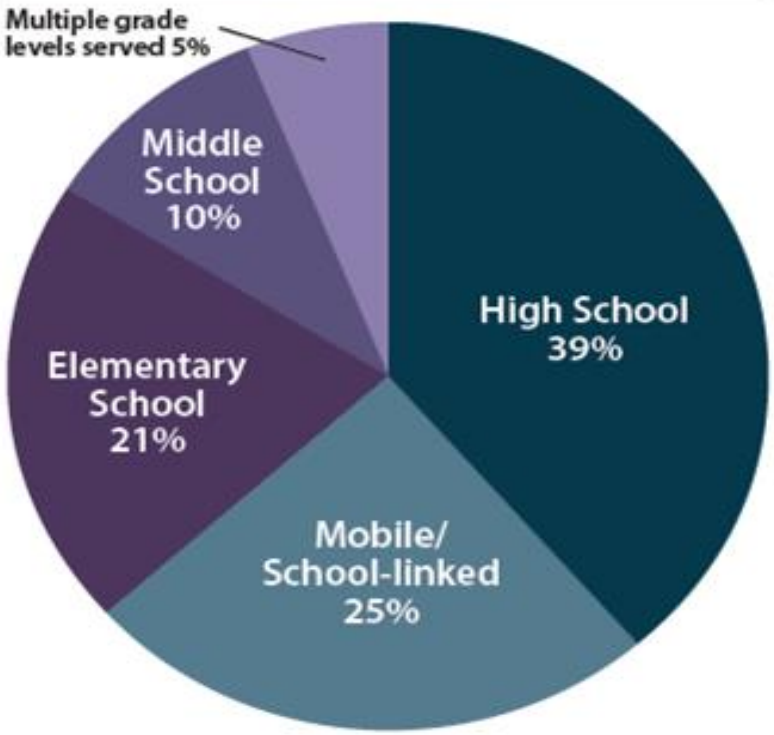
SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS AND GROWING

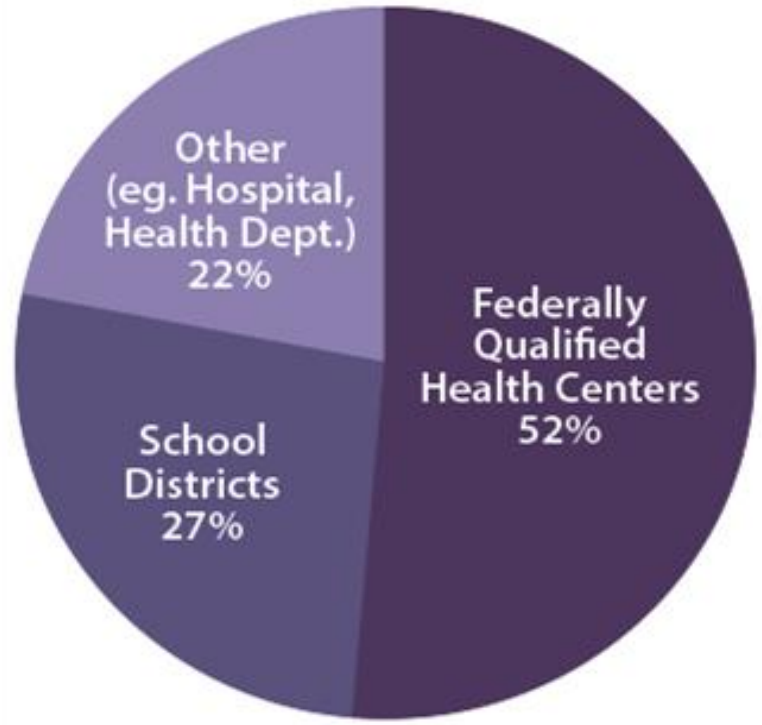
What Services are Provided?



School Levels Served



Who Operates SBHCs



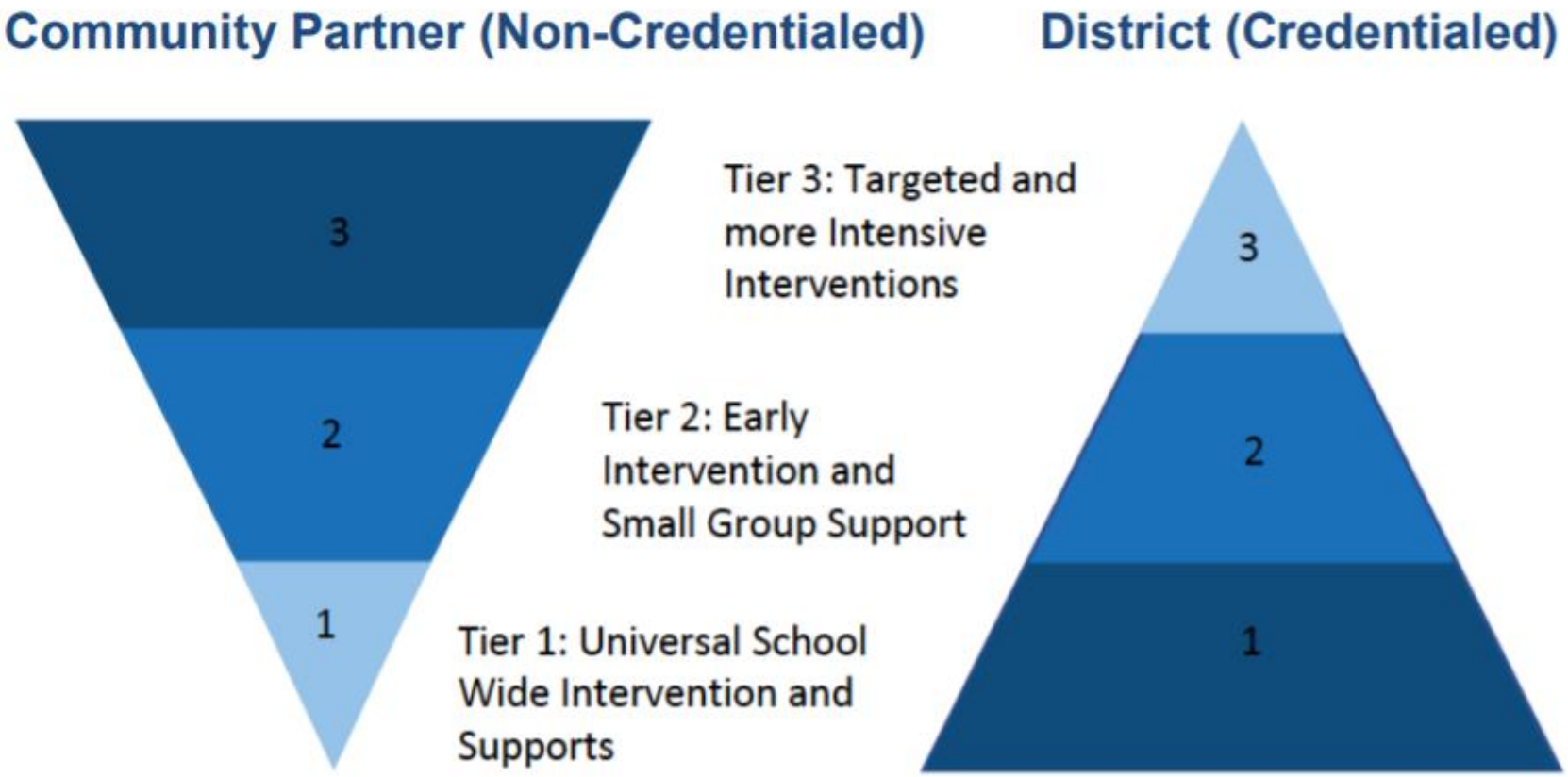
83% of SBHCs serve broader community

17% of SBHCs serve students only

SBHC Impact on Youth Mental Health

- **70%–80%** of children and adolescents who receive mental health services, access the services in school.
- Youth are **6 times more likely** to complete evidence-based treatment in a school setting vs a community-based setting
- With access to mental health professionals, **educators** report **increased abilities to respond** appropriately to students in psychological distress and **better relationships with students.**
- **Higher quality relationships with adults** for youth has been linked to reduced mental health distress and a protective factor against suicide.

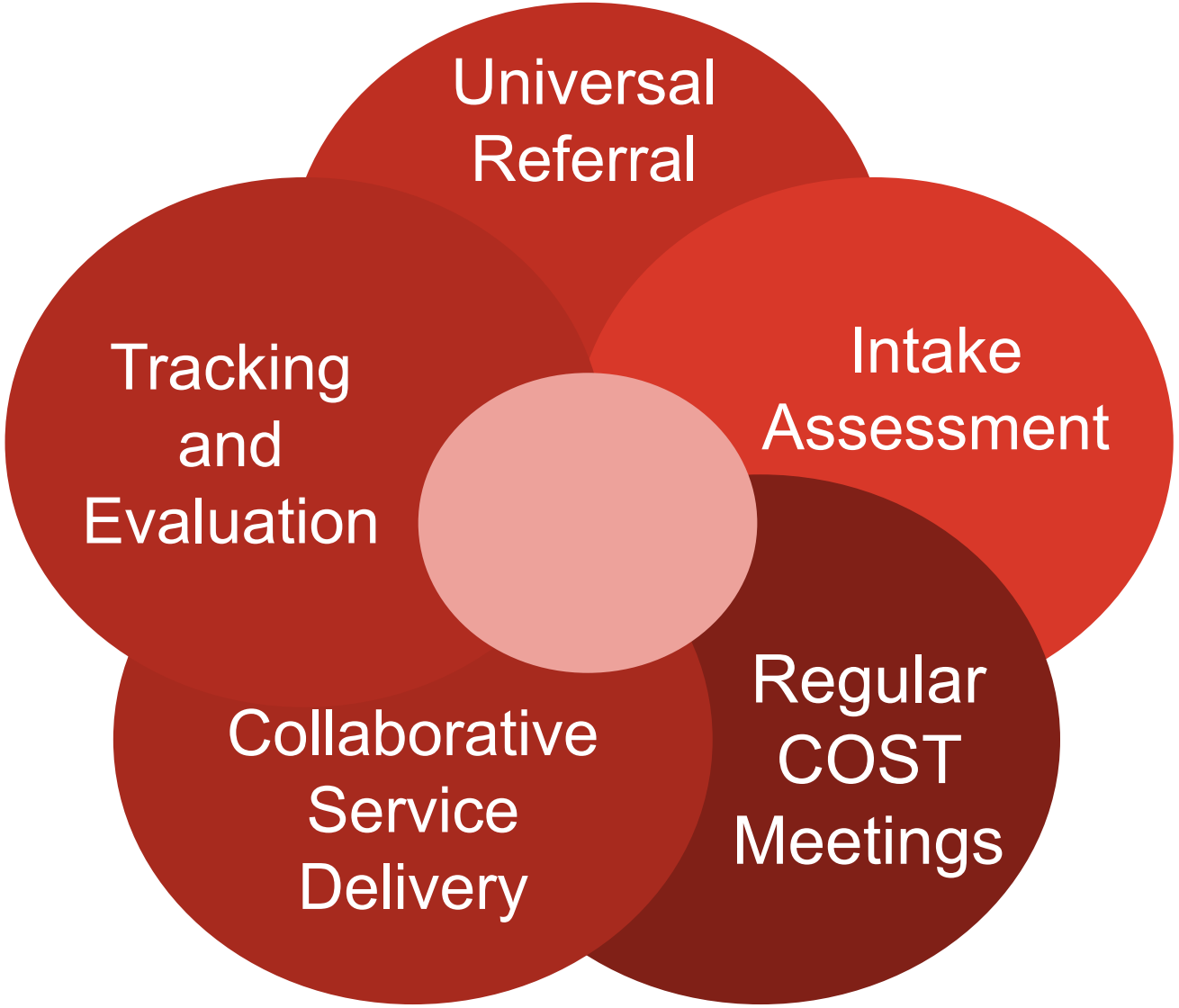
Staffing



- Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Licensed MFT
- Associate clinicians (pre-license)

- School Counselors
- School Social Workers
- Uncredentialed staff **

Coordination



Components of school-site coordination team

Referral Systems

Streamline	2 Forms	Tracking	Informed Staff	Crisis
Coordinate referrals through one person, program or team	Develop at least 2 forms- for adults and youth/self-referral	Create a system to track status of referrals, interventions, provider(s) and outcomes	Educate everyone on campus about how to make a referral and what happens next	Ensure the school community knows where to refer in a crisis (and what constitutes a crisis!)

WAIT a minute! What about…

- Confidentiality (HIPAA! FERPA!)
- Funding!
- MOUs and contracts!
- Quality assessment and improvement!
- Evidence-based practices!
- Summer vacation!

Takeaways & Resources

Takeaways

- Most court-involved youth are eligible for school-based behavioral health services (including uninsured students) but what is available depends on the county or district the youth is in
- It's important for the youth/ families AND adults working with youth to know what services the youth is entitled to (including confidential services) and what services are available through schools
- There are a lot of resources available!

Questions to Consider

- Is the youth over or under age 12?
- Is the youth currently enrolled in a school? Or will be?
  - What is the county and the school district in which the youth is (or will be) enrolled in?
  - What kind of programs and services are available at the school or the district?
- Does the youth have health insurance coverage?
  - If the youth has Medi-Cal
    - What county is the youth's Medi-Cal in?
    - Does the youth know how to use Medi-Cal?
    - Does the youth know about the minor consent program?

Resources

- **School Mental Health 101**
  - School-Based Mental Health: Improving School Climate & Students' Lives
  - Overview: School-Based Mental Health Programs

- **County examples**
  - Connecting Students to Mental health Services Guide
  - Summaries of County-School Partnerships to Advance School Mental Health

Resources Continued

- **School-based services in Medicaid**
  - School-based Health Services in Medicaid: Funding, Documentation, and Expanding Services" informational bulletin

- **Medi-Cal**
  - Meeting the Moment: Understanding EPSDT and Improving Implementation in California to Address Mental Health Needs
  - Medi-Cal Eligibility for Former Foster Youth Under the Affordable Care Act
  - Addressing Barriers to Behavioral Health Coverage for Low-Income Youth

Resources Continued

- **California Minor Consent Laws**
  - Mental Health Chart & Comparison
  - Substance Use Disorder FAQ
  - Additional resources

- **California Confidentiality Laws**
  - HIPAA or FERPA? A Primer on Sharing School Health Information in California, 2nd Ed. (2018)

Resources Continued

- **Department of Health Care Services**
  - Medi-Cal Member Helpline
    - Call 1(800) 541-5555
    - Visit online resources

- **Health Consumer Alliance (HCA)**
  - Offers **free assistance** over-the-phone or in-person to help people who are struggling to get or maintain health coverage and resolve problems with their health plans
    - Consumer Hotline 888-804-3536 (TTY 877-735-292
    - healthconsumer.org/ (English)
    - healthconsumer.org/es/ (Spanish)

HCA
Health Consumer Alliance

Thank you!

Questions?

Contact

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