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# Community Awareness and Utilization of School Based Health Centers in Burlington, Vermont

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## Background

Most K-12 students will miss at least one day of school each year due to illness or injury; in 2010, six percent missed 11 days or more<sup>1</sup>. School Based Health Clinics, SBHC, are provider-based health clinics located in schools, supplementing routine nursing care and complementing the role of a pediatrician while the child is in school<sup>2</sup>.

SBHCs aim to:

- Reduce the amount of school that students miss
- Provide quick and convenient care for a variety of routine and acute medical concerns

Our objective was to:

- Investigate community awareness and utilization of the SBHCs in the Burlington School District
- Providing insight regarding how to increase engagement of students and parents with the SBHC's and thereby reduce avoidable class absenteeism.

## Methods

An eight-question survey was constructed to assess parents' understanding of SBHCs.

Questions on the survey included:

- Awareness of SBHC
- How information regarding SBHCs is spread
- Student SBHC usage
- Student's health care providers
- Desired services provided by SBHCs.

Surveys were distributed in person at the open houses of four schools in the Burlington School District with 133 completed responses.

Additionally, the survey was converted into a digital copy using Google Survey and emailed to parents of Edmunds Middle School with 5 responses.

Cross variable analysis was preformed using SPSS.



## Results

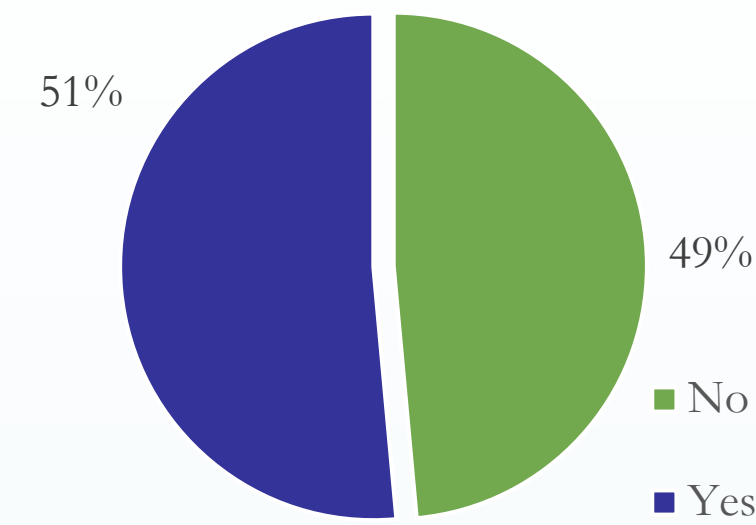


Figure 1: Proportion of parents surveyed that were aware of the SBHC.

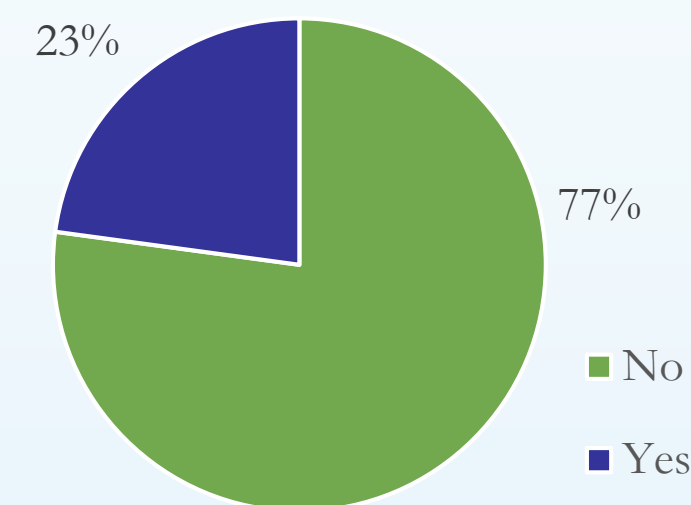


Figure 2: Usage of the SBHC given parental awareness.

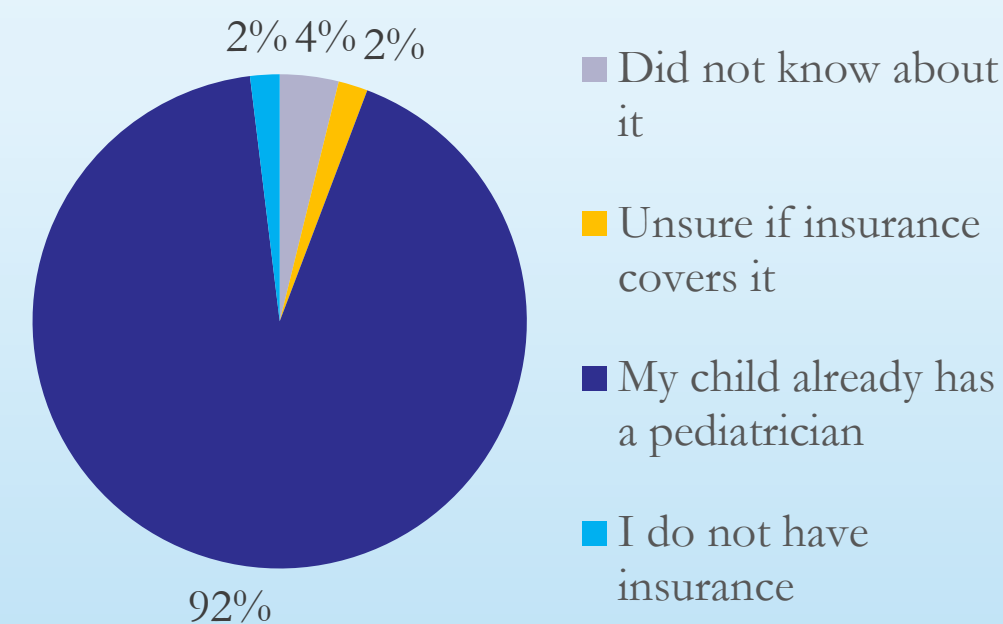


Figure 3: Reasons reported by parents for not using SBHC

Qualitative analyses of survey results were performed. Figures outline key findings from the survey which are most relevant to the usage and accessibility of the SBHC.

Parents who were aware and those who were unaware respondents were stratified based on their child's pediatrician in an effort to identify practices that could improve their promotion of the SBHC.

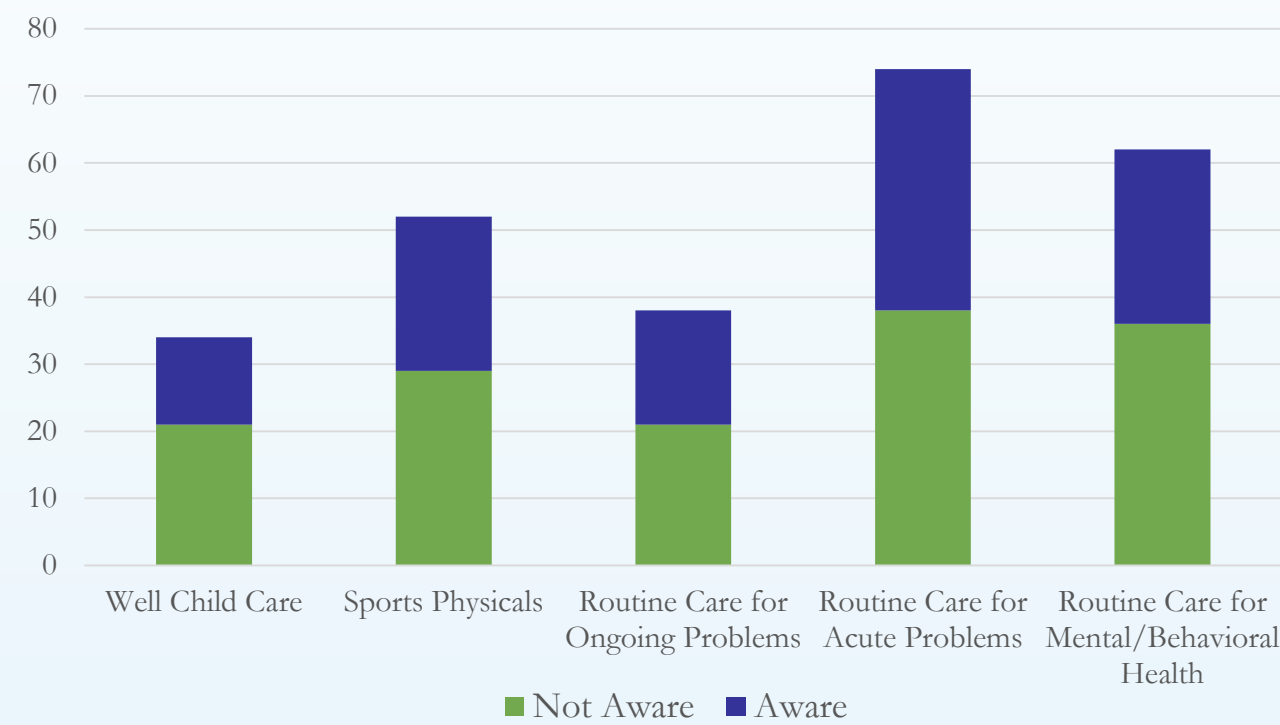


Figure 4: Services desired at the SBHC by parents aware and not aware of it.

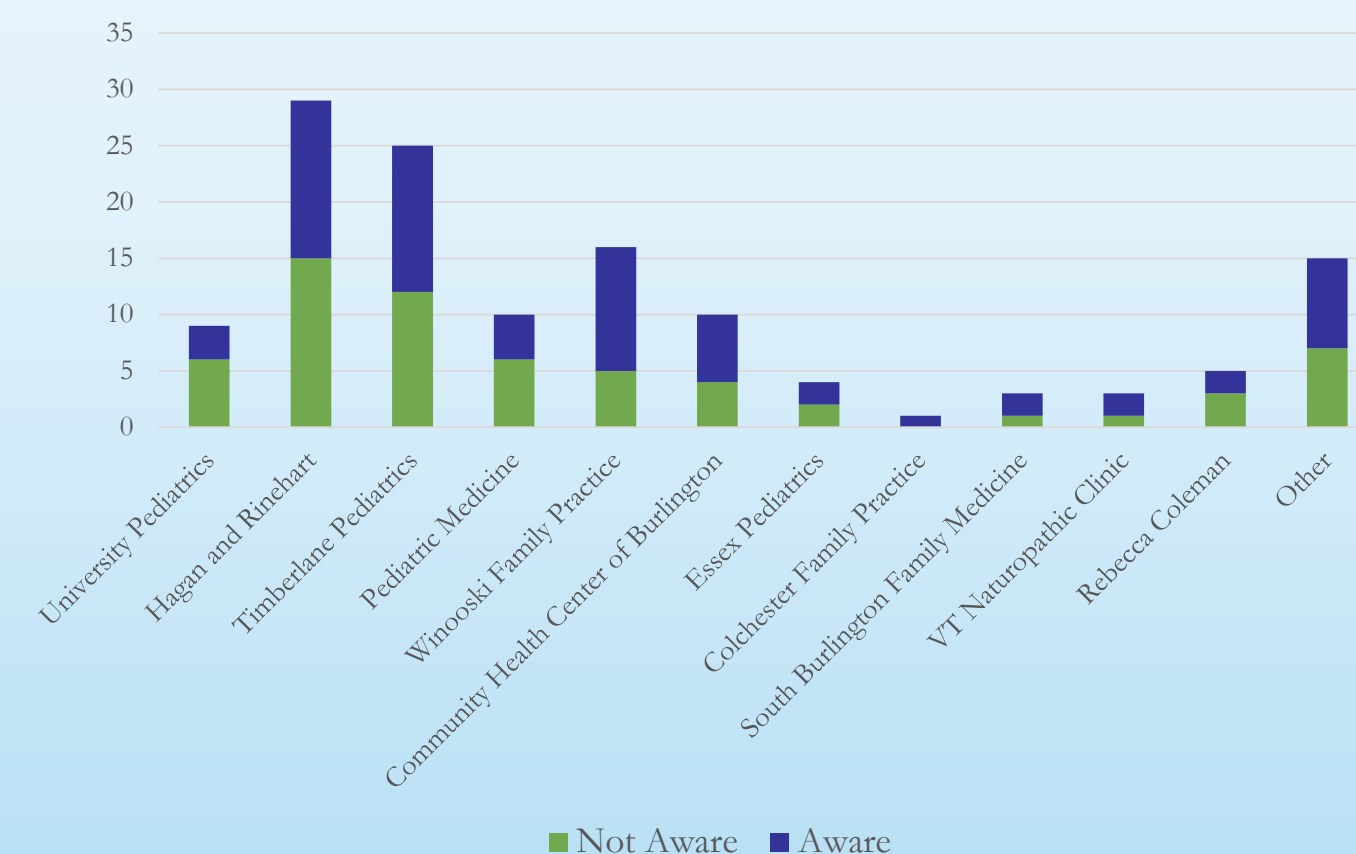


Figure 5: Pediatric practices attended by children of parents who were and were not aware of the SBHC.

## Discussion

Roughly half of parents/guardians surveyed were not aware of the SBHCs. Of those who were aware of the SBHCs, roughly three quarters reported that their student did not make use of them. The most commonly cited reason being that their child/student already sees a pediatrician.

Being that this is not mutually exclusive with usage of the SBHC, this indicates that efforts should be focused on refining how the SBHC services can act synergistically with primary care services. This will likely entail further study focusing on the perceptions of pediatricians and other primary care providers regarding the SBHCs.

Notably, surveying the attitudes of English language learning (ELL) families proved challenging and response rates were relatively low, even when translated surveys were provided; to obtain a holistic view of the population in question, it will be necessary to address this discrepancy moving forward.

## Future Directions

- Increase parental awareness of the existence and purpose of the school-based health clinic through community outreach.
- Reach out to local practices with pediatric patients to discuss purpose of SBHC to potentially increase utilization from other practices.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Bloom B, Cohen R.A, Freeman G. Summary health statistics for U.S. children: National Health Interview Survey, 2010. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 10(250). 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Health Resources and Services Administration. 2017. School Based Health Centers. <https://www.hrsa.gov/our-stories/school-health-centers/index.html>