

Reimagining Schools as a Place for Improving the Health of Chicago's Children



Cohort:
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Location:
Chicago, Illinois

Focus Areas:
Disease Prevention & Health Promotion
Early Childhood
School-based Health Care

Wicked Problem Description

Asthma affects one in 12 children and is linked to poor academic and health outcomes. Significant asthma disparities exist with Black and Puerto Rican youth disproportionately affected. Schools represent an important venue for providing critical resources to optimize asthma management and reduce disparities. Prior school-based asthma programs have demonstrated the potential to improve outcomes; however, they are often transient and rely on external groups. Tight budgets and competing priorities have contributed to insufficient nursing support in many schools. Therefore, more robust and sustainable systems of care are needed. Community health workers (CHWs) have been used successfully in clinical and community settings. Thus, a program that fully integrates CHWs in schools represents an innovative approach to promote a culture of health in schools.

Project Strategies

We propose an innovative and scalable model that integrates CHWs into schools. We have developed a true academic-community partnership with the expertise, experience, and leadership to successfully carry this out. Our collaboration includes an academic medical center (University of Chicago), a community-based research institution in a safety-net health system (Sinai Urban Health Institute, SUHI), and a school system (Chicago Public Schools, CPS). We will actively engage the community in our Steering Committee.