

School-based prevention and intervention services

Overview

In 1989, the Washington State Legislature passed the Omnibus Alcohol and Controlled Substances Act authorizing state agencies to conduct a variety of programs addressing the public's concern about the level and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. As a result, the Student Assistance Prevention and Intervention Services Program (SAPISP), with a mix of local, state, and federal funds, places prevention and intervention specialists in schools to implement comprehensive student assistance programs addressing problems associated with substance use and violence.

SAPISP funds are distributed to each of the state's nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) as part of the Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI). Funding amounts are allocated to ESDs to support 80% of one full-time position in each of the nearly 100 CPWI communities. The CPWI communities or school districts provide a 20% match to support the prevention intervention specialist positions.

Universal prevention activities typically target classrooms or the entire school. Examples include supervising peer leadership clubs; providing prevention curriculum to students, staff, and families; and coordinating with community coalitions.

Direct intervention services involve identifying students who are:

- At risk of initiating substance use or antisocial behavior
- Coping with the substance use of significant others
- Using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Developing a dependence on alcohol or other drugs

An array of education, peer support groups, social skills training, and individual and family interventions are employed to address the needs of

each student. When the severity of use requires services that cannot be provided in the school setting, students are referred to community-based services such as substance use disorder treatment or mental health counseling.

Findings for the 2021-22 school year indicate great outcomes reported for students in grades 6-12 who engaged in selective and indicated services.

Examples of these outcomes include:

- The program is effective at encouraging students to abstain, delay and stop substance use. Results showed that 74% or more students receiving selective/indicative services through the program, delayed, stopped, or reduced their substance use.
- Decrease in antisocial behavior including a significant decrease in 5 of the 6 categories measured: getting in trouble at school, being suspended, skipping school, getting into a physical fight, and hitting or trying to hurt someone.
- Significant decreases of 17% or more in 30-day substance use for students that had a substance use intervention goal related to tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, binge drinking or marijuana.
- Significant increases in the perception of risk for all measured categories, which are: experimenting with marijuana, regularly using marijuana, daily drinking and binge drinking, and smoking a pack of cigarettes or more a day.
- High student satisfaction with the program. 91% reported that the program was very or pretty important to them and 95% reported being happy they participated in the program. Among those that did not attend school regularly, 82% reported that they were more likely to attend school because of the program.

Eligibility requirements

The focus for SAPISP services in CPWI communities is within middle school(s) and in some cases within

high school(s). All students are eligible in the schools serviced by the intervention specialist.

Authority

DBHR is authorized to receive and administer the grant that supports substance use disorder prevention and mental health promotion.

Budget

- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Substance Abuse Block Grant including COVID Enhancement funding: \$6,975,833
- Washington State Dedicated Marijuana Account: \$576,520
- 2018 Partnership for Success grant: \$548,000
- State Opioid Response to the Opioid Crisis grant: \$1,319,040
- All numbers are for fiscal year 2023.

Cost and people served

During the 2021-22 school year, services were provided in 111 schools across Washington State and 2,408 students received selective/indicated services. Universal prevention activities, including presentations about service and other information dissemination, were provided to:

- 108,913 students
- 58,351 parents/other family members
- 7,140 staff
- 17,392 community members

Partners

HCA/DBHR partners with each of the nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in the implementation of SAPISP as part of CPWI: 101 (Spokane), 105 (Yakima), 112 (Vancouver), 113 (Olympia), 114 (Bremerton), 121 (Renton), 123 (Pasco), 171 (Wenatchee), and 189 (Anacortes).

Oversight

ESSHB 1793 and RCW 28A.170 states that intervention specialists are to:

- Provide early alcohol and other drug prevention and intervention services to students and their families
- Assist in screening and referral to treatment providers
- Strengthen the transition back to school for students who experience suspension or expulsion due to violation of a school drug or alcohol policy

DBHR provides funding for SAPISP as part of CPWI implementation. DBHR provides funds directly to the ESDs for placing Student Assistance Professionals, also known as, prevention intervention specialists in schools.

For more information

Carola Brenes, School-Based Policy and Program Manager

Email: Carola.Brenes@hca.wa.gov

Phone: 360-819-6821

Website: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/behavioral-health-recovery/substance-abuse-prevention-and-mental-health-promotion>;
https://www.theathenaforum.org/cpwi_coalitions