

Dr. Gerald Hass Center

A School-Based Health Center Serving The Blackstone Elementary School in Boston's South End

Emily F. Suther, The University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester MA

What is the Dr. Gerald Hass Center?

The Hass Center is a satellite clinic of the South End Community Health Center, and is physically attached to the William Blackstone Elementary School in Boston's South End Neighborhood. The clinic serves students attending the Blackstone School as well as members of the community.

Who attends the William Blackstone Elementary School?

The Blackstone School is part of the Boston Public School system, and serves students from kindergarten through fifth grade. The majority of students are African-American and Hispanic; many come to the school from East Boston.

The History of School-Based Health Centers

School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) originated in the late 1960s and early 1970s; their development was fostered initially by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The majority of SBHCs are located in urban regions, and are predominantly managed by nurses with nurse practitioners or physicians working full-time in over half of the clinics. As of 2010, there were 58 SBHCs in 19 communities in Massachusetts. School-Based Health Centers are located primarily in schools with higher rates of: students eligible for free/reduced lunches; students who are non-English speaking; and student absenteeism and high rates of drop-outs.

How are School-Based Health Centers Funded?

SBHCs receive both private and public funding. They may receive budget line item funding through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and other grants and private funds. SBHCs can also bill MassHealth and other commercial insurance carriers.

What Services Does the Hass Center Offer?

The Hass Center offers medical services, dental services, and behavioral health services to Blackstone students and members of the community.

How do Students Access the Clinic Services?

The clinic offers both routine healthcare maintenance as well as urgent-care services for students at the Blackstone School. The medical assistant collects children directly from their classroom for their appointment and then returns them once their appointment has concluded. Children rarely wait for the provider, expediting the process and allowing them to return to class with very little interruption. Over 50% of the students' parents have consented to their child receiving healthcare at the clinic during the school day; however, if a non-consented student is brought to the clinic emergently, every attempt is made to get verbal consent from the parent so that they child may be treated. Paperwork is filled out at the clinic when the parent later arrives, or is sent home with the child to be completed and returned to the school.

Major Benefits of School-Based Health Centers

By providing these healthcare services to students during the school day, children are much less likely to miss school for their doctor's visit. Frequently, children come to the clinic for complaints that can be managed easily, such as an ear infection, and the child can be sent back to their class. Likewise, parents are not required to be present at the appointment, which cuts down substantially on missed work days. The clinic also ensures that students are up-to-date on immunizations and all consented children receive dental fluoride treatments every three months.

Special Programs Offered at the Gerald Hass Center

The Hass Center Clinic has three distinct programs for its student-patients:

- ◆ Asthma program – medication management and compliance
- ◆ Nutrition program – the nutritionist and pediatrician work in tandem to manage students with BMI > 85%tile; 3 month follow-ups for every child
- ◆ Multiple disabilities program – streamlines care for children with advanced needs

1. What is a School-Based Health Center? Massachusetts Association for School-Based Health Care. <http://www.ma4sbhc.org/whatis.html#hasbhc>
 2. Gustafson EM. [History and overview of school-based health centers in the US](#). Nurs Clin North Am. 2005 Dec;40(4):595-606, vii. Review.
 3. South End Community Health Center. Dr. Gerald Hass Center. <http://www.sechc.org/en/dr-hass-center/>