

Vermont School-Based Health Centers

What are School-Based Health Centers (SBHC)?

SBHCs are clinics located in or near schools that provide a variety of healthcare services to elementary, middle and high school students. These services go beyond what is normally found in a school nurse's office. SBHCs improve health and educational outcomes for students by decreasing missed school time and missed work time for caregivers. SBHCs strive to provide equitable care by serving students regardless of their access to transportation or their insurance plan.¹



SBHC locations as identified in school-liaison assessment²

What do SBHCs look like in Vermont?

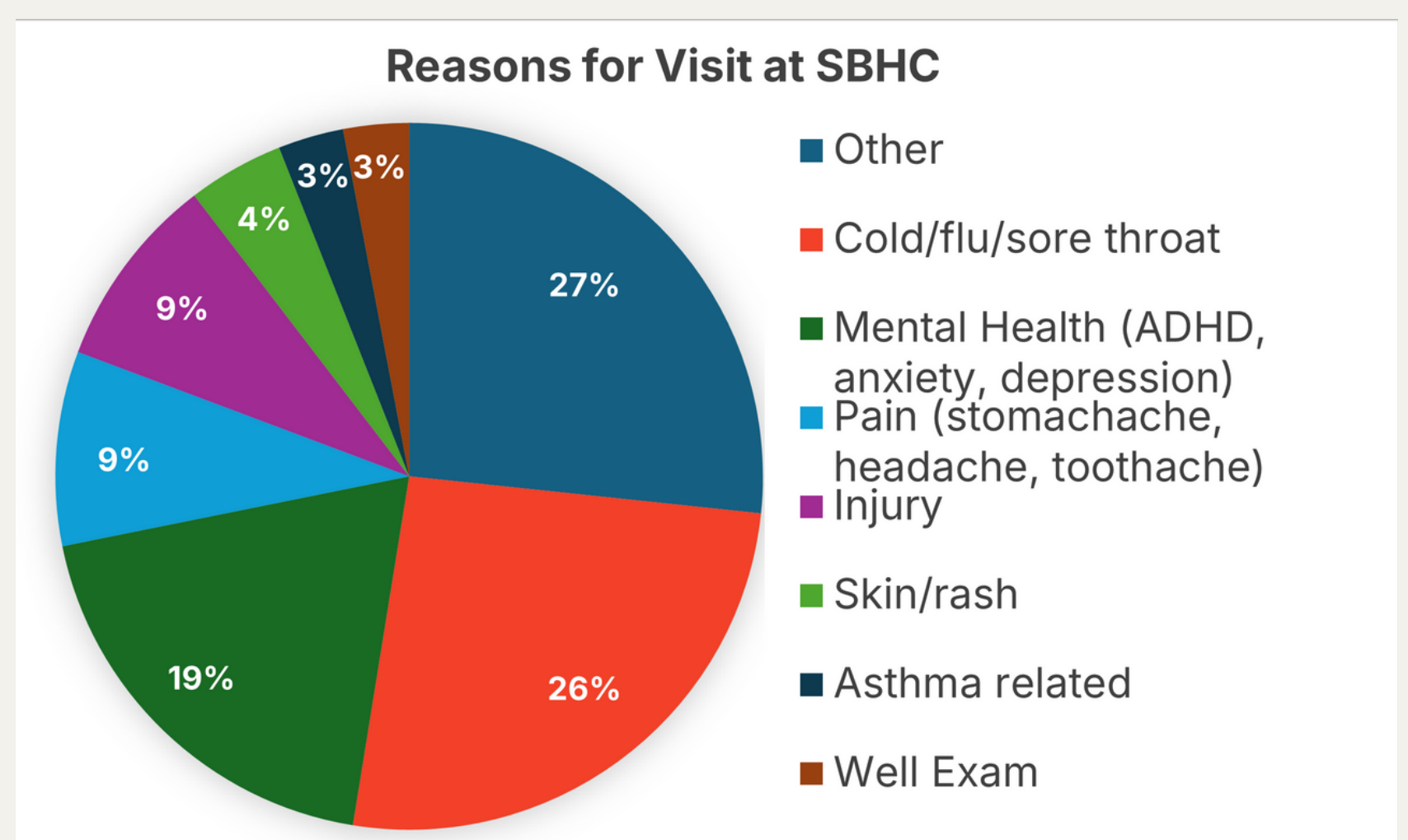
A 2024 assessment conducted by Local Health Office School Liaisons identified 23 schools with an SBHC.² The types of care provided at SBHCs in VT vary: some SBHCs provide pediatric primary care while others offer dental care or physical therapy in addition to primary care. Most children in Vermont have primary care providers (PCPs) so SBHCs work in partnership with students' medical homes.³ Because of this, Vermont SBHCs tend to operate as clinics, open for select and predetermined hours during the week as opposed to being open whenever school is in session like in some other states.

Vermont SBHC Study

Six Vermont SBHCs, each choosing a two-week period in the spring 2025, participated in an exploratory study to assess various factors associated with the use of SBHCs by students. These included reasons for visits, student outcomes, and educational time saved. Results of **134 patient visits** are presented and discussed below.

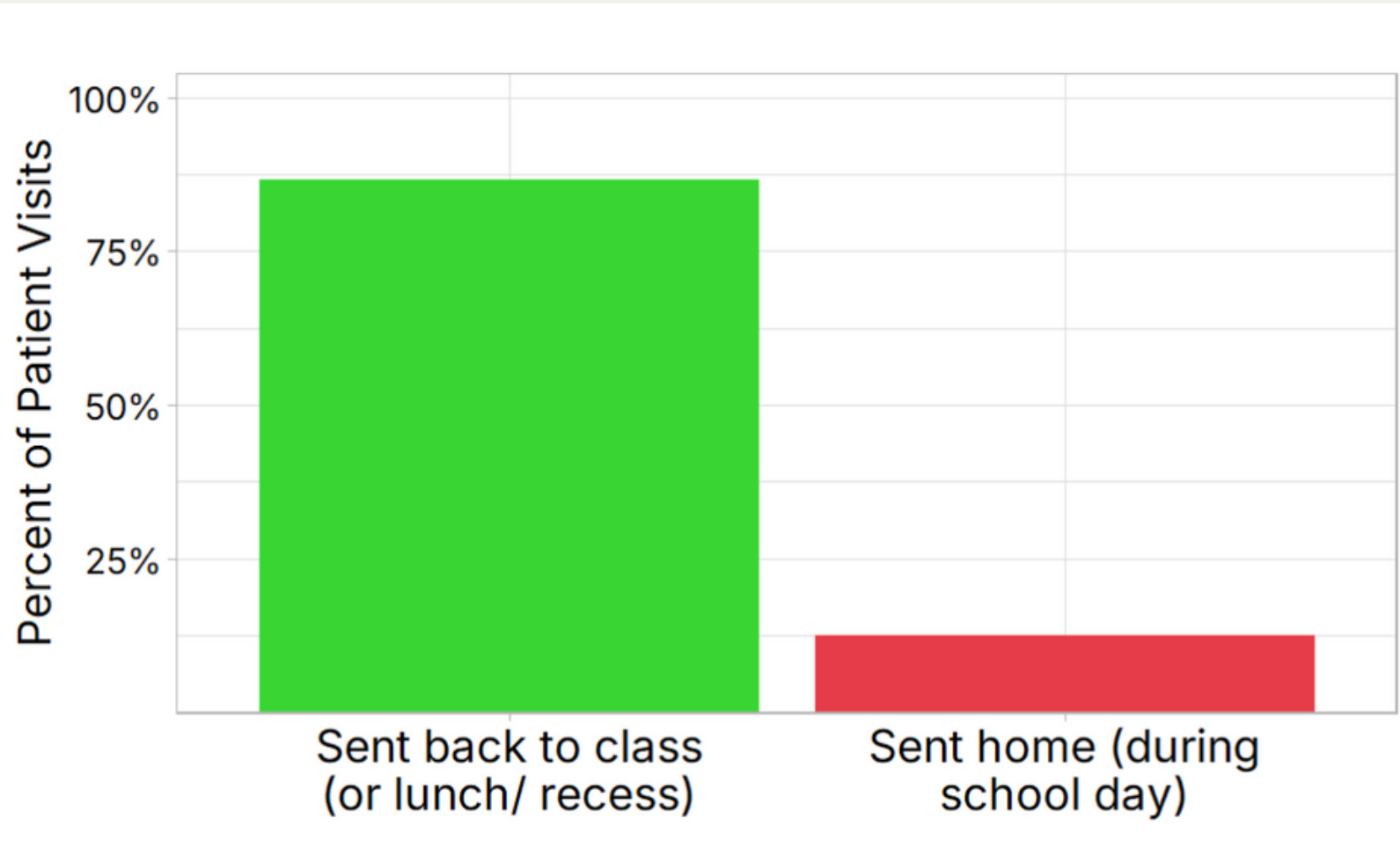
Health Outcomes

Upper respiratory symptoms (cold/flu/cough/sore throat) made up the majority of SBHC visits, followed by **mental health** visits. "Other" reasons for visits included reproductive health services, eye exams and physical therapy.

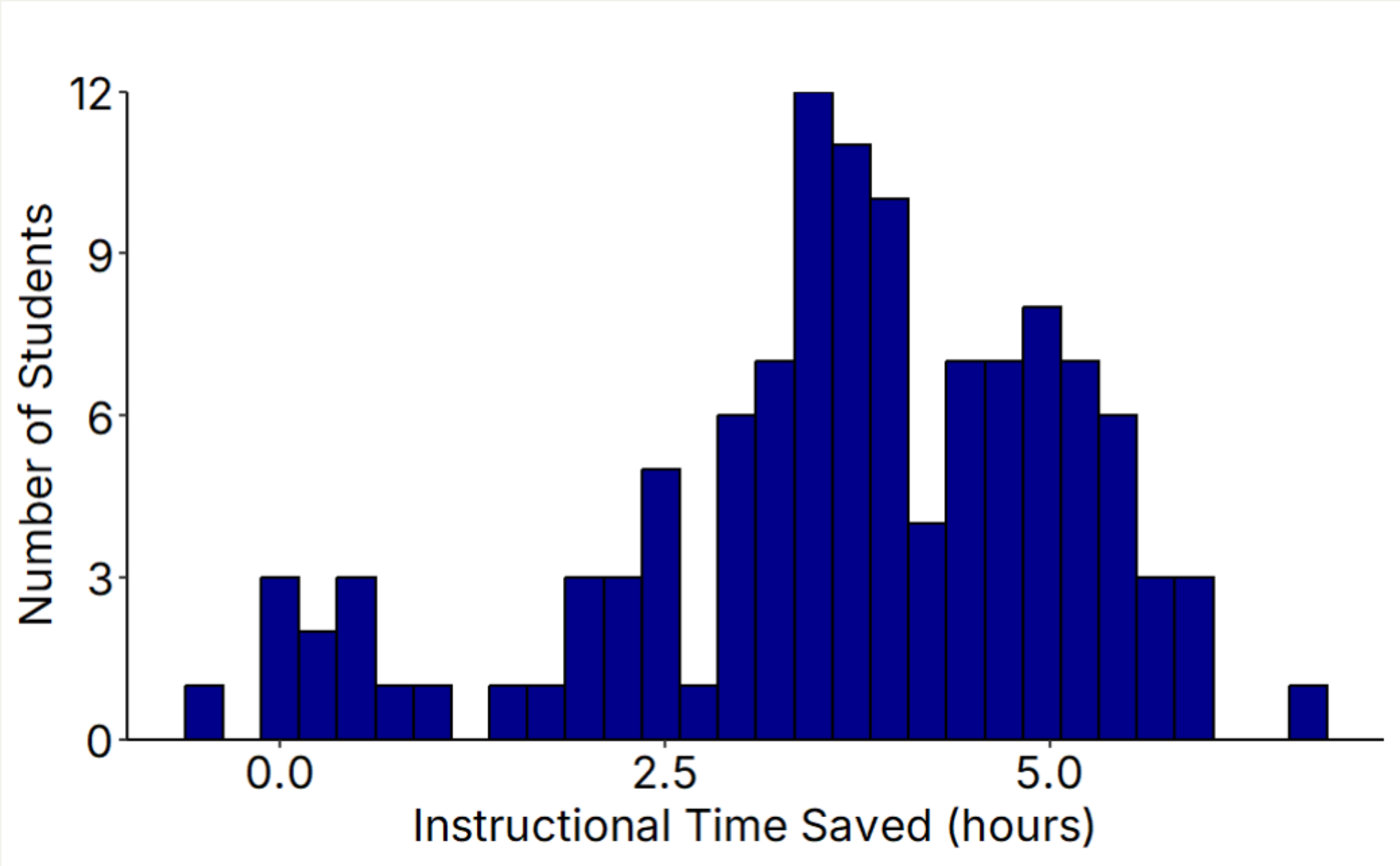


Educational Outcomes

Of the patient visits at the SBHCs in this study, 86.7% (117) ended with the student-patient being sent back to class or recess. 12.6% of patient visits ended with the student being sent home from school.



Instructional Time Saved



Of 117 student-patients that were sent back to class/recess, the mean instructional time saved was 3.67 hours (SD = 1.50 hours).

Ex: A student enters their SBHC at 2:00pm, leaves at 2:30pm, and the school day ends at 3:30pm.
1.5 hrs - 0.5 hrs = 1 hour saved.

Study Conclusions

- In this study, School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) primarily address acute illnesses and mental health concerns, while also offering a wide range of services—from physical therapy to well-child and eye exams.
- Most students returned to class after their visit, reducing time away from school and minimizing disruptions for caregivers who might otherwise need to miss work.
- An average of **3.67 hours** in instructional time was saved for students who used their school-based health center and were sent back to class/recess afterwards.
- SBHCs provide access to medical care for children who might not otherwise receive it.

References

1. School- Based Health Alliance. 2025. Accessed 04/26/2025. <https://www.sbh4all.org/school-based-health-centers/>
2. Source: Vermont Department of Health, unpublished data.
3. Characterizing Healthcare Utilization in Vermont: Attribution of Children to Primary Care, 2022. 2022:5. Accessed 04/25/2025. https://www.med.uvm.edu/docs/slidedoc_attribution_final_updated/vchip-documents/slidedoc_attribution_final_updated.pdf?sfvrsn=f961d20e_2

Created by Adam Matunas, Olivia Domingue, B.A., Kathleen Bryant, MPH, APRN, BC. April 2025