

Building Pathways to Student Support with the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative Fee Schedule Program

Schools are uniquely positioned to serve as hubs for behavioral healthcare and supports. As accessible and trusted environments where children spend much of their time, they provide natural opportunities for early identification and intervention. By integrating behavioral health services into the school setting, educators and mental health professionals can work together to deliver support where students learn and grow.

The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Fee Schedule program, a first-of-its-kind program in the nation, helps make that possible. Administered by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), in collaboration with the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) and California Department of Insurance (CDI), the program creates a permanent reimbursement pathway for Local Educational Agencies and public institutions of higher education. Through this pathway, schools and school-linked sites can receive funding for eligible outpatient mental health and substance use disorder services delivered to children and youth. The program sets standardized reimbursement rates for services provided to individuals under age 26 who are enrolled in public Transitional Kindergarten (TK) –12th grade schools, California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU) campuses, and University of California (UC) campuses covered by Medi-Cal managed care plans, Medi-Cal Fee-For-Service, commercial healthcare service plans, and disability insurers.

The program ensures that families pay no out-of-pocket costs and that their existing insurance coverage remains unchanged. By creating a sustainable funding mechanism, the CYBHI Fee Schedule program supports the education community in maintaining high-quality behavioral health programs, even when budgets are tight.

“When budgets tighten, supports beyond the classroom are often the first to be cut. The CYBHI initiative helps keep those services in place because social-emotional learning is just as critical as academics,” said [Laura Dyson](#), Director of Health Services at Palm Springs Unified.

Early Adopters Find Value in the CYBHI Fee Schedule Program

Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) was among the first to adopt the CYBHI Fee Schedule program as part of its expanding framework of behavioral healthcare and supports for students.

PSUSD’s comprehensive system of supports includes a robust Behavioral Health Support Team that promotes whole-child restorative, non-punitive approaches to keep students engaged in school. The district also partners with Daybreak Health, a community-based, school-linked affiliated provider, to expand access to virtual teletherapy with qualified clinicians when needed. Wellness centers across campuses offer students dedicated spaces to pause, regulate, and reset in a safe, calming environment.

Because the CYBHI Fee Schedule program is new and uniquely structured, PSUSD prioritized early and frequent communication with students and families. The district focused on clearly explaining the program’s benefits and outlining the information needed to ensure students could access services whenever appropriate.

The image contains three informational graphics. The first two are bilingual, and the third is in English.

WHAT CAN CYBHI DO FOR YOUR STUDENT?

- MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**
School-based counseling & therapy
Early screening for mental health concerns
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING & WELL-BEING**
Mindfulness & stress management programs
Peer support & mentoring groups
- FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
Culturally responsive outreach & support
Partnerships with community mental health providers
- EXPANDED ACCESS TO CARE**
On-campus wellness centers
Substance use prevention & intervention
- PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION**
Anti-bullying & violence prevention programs
School-wide mental health awareness campaigns

¿QUÉ PUEDE HACER CYBHI POR TU ESTUDIANTE?

- SERVICIOS DE SALUD MENTAL Y CONDUCTUAL**
✓ Consejería y terapia en la escuela
✓ Evaluación temprana para problemas de salud mental
- APRENDIZAJE SOCIOEMOCIONAL Y BIENESTAR**
✓ Programas de mindfulness y manejo del estrés
✓ Grupos de apoyo entre compañeros y mentoría
- COMPROMISO FAMILIAR Y COMUNITARIO**
✓ Alcance y apoyo culturalmente receptivos
✓ Alianzas con proveedores de salud mental comunitarios
- ACCESO AMPLIADO A LA ATENCIÓN**
✓ Centros de bienestar en el campus
✓ Prevención e intervención en el consumo de sustancias
- PREVENCIÓN E INTERVENCIÓN TEMPRANA**
✓ Programas de prevención del acoso escolar y la violencia
✓ Campañas de concientización sobre la salud mental en toda la escuela

MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR ALL
Student health insurance information will be needed.

- ✓ Your info is protected by FERPA & HIPAA
- ✓ No extra costs – no co-payments or bills
- ✓ No effect on coverage or service eligibility

PSUSD PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CYBHI Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

LEARN MORE AT CYBHI.CHHS.CA.GOV

CYBHI Fee Schedule Program in Action

Students like freshman Bella R. are already benefiting from the expanded access created by the CYBHI Fee Schedule program. Bella meets regularly with a school therapist who supports her as she navigates the complexities of high school and the emotions that come with it. Therapy is not new to her – she previously received school-based mental health support at another PSUSD campus, but the continuity of care has been invaluable.

“At first, I didn’t really understand the concept of therapy. I just knew it would help me get better about talking about my emotions,” Bella shared. “As you grow, therapy gets better. You gain more experience and you can talk more in depth.”

A key change is that her high school can now submit insurance claims and receive reimbursement for certain behavioral health services. This creates a sustainable pathway to attract and retain a wider range of qualified practitioners who can support students

when they need it most. Families continue to pay no out-of-pocket costs, and their existing insurance coverage remains unchanged.

Across the country, several states are exploring expansions of school-based Medicaid billing, but California remains the only state with a statewide model that enables both Medi-Cal and commercial insurance plans to reimburse school-linked mental health services at scale.

"I'm very happy California is the first state to do this. I feel like it's going to help a lot of kids and adults, so they can be helped and not feel so alone," said Bella.

Progress to Date Suggests Promising Change Over Time

Research shows that school-linked behavioral healthcare can significantly benefit students. A [study](#) of 17 school-based health centers (SBHC) in a large Southern California district found that students receiving mental health services through these centers demonstrated meaningful improvements in both attendance and academic performance.

"We found that [students with a mental health diagnosis who used a SBHC] exhibited both a more steeply declining attendance trajectory prior to visiting the SBHC and a more positive attendance trajectory following a first SBHC mental health visit. These findings suggest that students with a mental health need may represent a group for whom SBHCs are particularly effective for improving academic outcomes. Previous research also demonstrated that SBHC utilization for students with mental health needs resulted in improvements in grade point averages." – Caryssa Lim, MPH, et al.

Early indicators from California's implementation of the CYBHI Fee Schedule program reflect similar promise. As of March 2026, more than 140 school districts, public colleges, and school-linked providers have submitted reimbursement claims for services benefiting more than 22,300 students, generating \$4.9 million in new revenue from 36 Medi-Cal managed care plans.

This early momentum suggests a broader shift is underway: Access to behavioral healthcare is becoming not a barrier to learning, but a pathway to it.