

Husky Health and Wellness Center (HHWC)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the HHWC?

The HHWC is a “School-Wellness Program” (SWP), and a partnership between the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department (BLDHD), Benzie County Central Schools (BCCS), and the State of Michigan, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). SWPs were launched in 2010 to provide health services to promote academic success by helping students achieve their best possible physical and mental health status. SWP staff assist schools, parents, and other health professionals in the assessment, identification, planning, implementation and evaluation of the health needs of the school community, in order to appropriately direct services toward a healthy school environment.

Will testing, such as COVID, be done without parent consent/notification?

No laboratory testing, including COVID testing will be done without a parent’s consent. The exception is testing that is allowed by law (See next question for details)

When will parents will be notified about interactions with the HHWC staff and when they won’t be?

In most cases, parents will be notified about any care provided to students, except in those cases where Michigan law allows for minors to receive services without parental consent. Even when consent is not required, HHWC staff will always encourage students to talk with parents about important health issues.

- **Students who are minors 12-17 years of age**, may, without parental/guardian consent, receive advice, testing and/or treatment for the following: substance use disorders, sexually transmitted infection (STI), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), pregnancy testing, and referral for birth control services.
- **Students who are minors 14-17 years of age**, may also seek and receive most outpatient mental health visits up to 12 visits or 4 months without the consent of a parent or guardian.

Please note: Students can access these services confidentially, at these ages, at ANY health clinic, including the health department or other family or pediatric provider office, not just a School-based Wellness Center

Can a child refuse service if they don’t want to see the school nurse?

Yes, a child can refuse to be seen by the nurse. In this case, the usual school staff will provide first aid/illness care. One of the benefits of having a nurse on-site is that nursing assessment and care may prevent a parent from having to pick up a child from school unnecessarily. HHWC staff will always notify a parent when care is provided.

What happens in an emergency or if a parent can’t be reached?

Parental consent and release of information is NOT needed for crisis intervention and emergency care. For non-emergency care, one-time only verbal consent is allowed to provide services and then a written consent must be on file.

How often is consent form signed?

The consent remains active until withdrawal in writing or by notifying the HHWC, or the student reaches age 18. Changes to student information must also be submitted in writing

Will families be responsible to pay for these services?

There is no personal out-of-pocket cost for health services provided at the HHWC. If health insurance is available, mental health visits may be billed as this helps to support the program.