



Grand Junction High School – Integrated Health Center FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

MarillacHealth and Mesa County Valley District 51 are collaborating to implement an integrated health center on the campus of Grand Junction High School for students and staff enrolled in Grand Junction High School. Grant and donations have been secured to construct and open the student health center in August 2024. Below are answers to questions you might have about the new student health center.

What is a school-based health center (SBHC) or student health center?

A school-based health center (SBHC) or student health center brings the health care provider into a school so students can avoid health related absences and receive the support they need to succeed in the classroom. SBHCs are staffed by a multidisciplinary team of medical, mental health, and oral health professionals. Parents do not have to miss work to take their student to the doctor.

Why now?

Grand Junction High School was identified as a potential site back in 2018 when a Community Needs Assessment was conducted. The results showed that mental health and substance use are clear priority areas for the community. An updated Needs Assessment was conducted in April-May 2024 and supports the original assessment that behavioral health and care for acute illness were the top concerns for staff, parents and students. Providing a convenient and welcoming setting is the key to prevention, early identification, and effective health and behavioral health treatment for youth. Suicide rates are high in Mesa County. The SBHC would coordinate with current efforts focused on depression and suicide prevention; in addition, the SBHC would play a role in mitigating the impact of opioids and other types of substance use/abuse, including vaping. Central HS was selected due to the available space and MarillacHealth was the medical sponsor to partner with D51. Grand Junction HS could be added in the future. With the new GJHS building, District 51 administration requested proposals from multiple healthcare organizations locally and regionally to operate an integrated health center onsite. MarillacHealth applied and was selected to operate the health center.

Do most parents/families support SBHCs?

While many parents/families appreciate SBHCs and what they can offer, we realize opinions can vary. Here are some reasons parents do support SBHCs. Data has shown:

- SBHCs help their child to stay healthy and in school.
- Transportation, time away from school for appointments, working parents, and accessibility can all be barriers for students and parents.
- SBHC services are provided to all students, regardless of the student's health insurance status. So, it is affordable, and no one is denied care due to inability to pay.



A recent GJHS parent survey showed 54% of 138 parent responses said they would definitely or probably use the SBHC for their student. However, we do understand that not all parents favor SBHCs due to concerns of some services provided, parent involvement or noninvolvement in healthcare decisions or the implications of providing certain types of care at school.

What services will be provided at Tiger Wellness /GJHS Health Center?

Services provided may include:

- physical exams, well child checks, including sports physicals;
- immunizations;
- care for acute, minor injury, and illness;
- management of chronic conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes;
- behavioral health care assessments and counseling services;
- routine lab tests and throat cultures;
- prescriptions and medications;
- personal health wellness, education, and safety, including sexual health education; (no contraceptive services provided on site; only for those with parent consent or ages 18 yr and older (minors requesting would be referred to other providers offsite as it is not available onsite without parent consent)
- oral health dental screenings/care, referral to community providers and agencies;
- assistance to families with enrollment into Medicaid and CHP+.

Is there an onsite pharmacy?

No. There is no pharmacy onsite at Tiger Wellness Center. The Licensed Primary Care Provider can write prescriptions to be filled at any pharmacy. Those patients/families with no insurance, sliding fee discount program or even commercial insurance can access low-cost medications from MarillacHealth pharmacy or contracted pharmacy.

What vaccinations will be onsite and available?

MarillacHealth participates in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program to offer low-cost to no cost vaccines for children. Age-appropriate vaccines available include: Hep A, Hep B, Tdap, Meningitis (quad), HPV, Flu, COVID.

Who will be served at the GJHS Health Center?

Grand Junction High School Students and Staff only at this time.

Does the student need parental permission to receive services?

Yes. The student health center will require the parent or legal guardian to sign a consent form before their minor child (< 18 yrs) may receive services in the center. Because the student health center will take the approach that the clinic staff, parents, and child should work together



to resolve health problems, the staff will promote strong family communication and make every effort to involve parents.

The exception to parental permission are addressed in:

- Colorado's Revised Statutes § 13-22-105, 13-22-103.5, 12-43-202.5, 25-6-102(1), 25-6-102(3), 25-6-102(8).
- Colorado state law mandates that with minor's consent, a licensed health care provider may provide any minor with confidential services for mental health, substance use, and reproductive health.

NOTE: MarillacHealth signed an MOU with D51 carving out contraceptive services for minor consent. No services for minors will be provided on site. Only for those with parent consent or those 18 yr and older.

Can the parent choose for their student not to be seen at the Health Center?

Yes. The parent or legal guardian would not enroll and sign the consent. If a student came in with a need for a visit that requires parent consent and there was no consent on file, the staff would try and contact the parent for verbal consent. If no consent given, then the student would not be seen. There is no "opt out" - it's an "opt in" by signing the enroll/consent form.

Does the parent need to be present for the student to receive services?

As long as the parent or legal guardian has signed a consent form or has given verbal consent (and witnessed), he/she does not need to be present for the student to receive services.

Will the parent be notified when their child receives services?

Yes. The medical or mental health provider typically reaches out. Parents will be given as much information as possible under the law. The only exception is a life-threatening situation.

How can parents sign the consent?

There are several ways. In person at the Tiger Wellness Center; on the website by a form or a pdf that can be printed off Registration/Enrollment/Consent to sign and bring in.

How much will it cost for my child to receive services at the Health Center?

Insurance may be billed. No child will be refused services based on an inability to pay. For those who self-pay without insurance, a small copay is requested. For example, \$20 for a sports physical, medical or dental visit; \$5 for behavioral health visit. Families will be assisted with screening and enrollment for Medicaid or CHP+ if applicable. Patients will not have to pay co-pays, deductibles, or fees upfront to be seen. Billing arrangements can be made.

Are appointments and my information confidential?



Yes. As a healthcare provider we are bound by HIPAA practices. For adults 18 yr and older the patient would need to provide consent to release information. For most services under 18 yrs, services require parental consent. The health records are the property of MarillacHealth and personal health information will not be released to school personnel without required consents as required by law. The Tiger Wellness Center is located in the commons area and the waiting area is away from the door for some privacy.

Do SBHCs take money away from classrooms?

No. This is a separate entity from D51. Tiger Wellness Center is operated by MarillacHealth to provide primary care, behavioral health care and oral health services. SBHCs get their funding from many different sources. D51 will provide in-kind support such as utilities, and custodial services and MarillacHealth will pay a monthly rent payment in addition to paying all design fees and tenant finishes establishing the health center. D51 recognizes that student achievement can be increased if students are physically and mentally healthy.

How are SBHCs in Colorado funded?

There are nearly 70 Colorado SBHCs. SBHCs are funded through a mix of sources including: federal, state, and local government dollars, private grants, and donations, insurance billing, and in-kind support. The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment awarded a planning grant in March 2023 for planning to implementation for GJHS and in 2024 a grant award for operations.

Shouldn't the school district just focus on education?

Studies have found direct links between SBHC/Health Centers use and learning readiness. Schools cannot do their job of educating if students are not in school or are unable to concentrate because of pain or other health problems. Research shows that students who use SBHCs/Health Centers are less likely to be absent or tardy and more likely to graduate or be promoted than nonusers.

Will the Health Center at GJHS eliminate the need for school nurses and school counselors?

No. They complement services already being provided by placing additional resources in the schools. School nurses and counselors are vitally important for comprehensive health care for students through referrals, warm handoffs, and collaboration.

Will the Health Center at GJHS take patients away from local providers?

No. They collaborate, assist with care coordination, and make referrals back to established primary care providers and link to other healthcare and/or mental health resources. Health Centers are a critical entry point for students who may not otherwise be able or willing to seek help outside the school.



Will the health care providers at the Health Center be qualified?

Yes. All providers are licensed independent practitioners, i.e. Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Registered Dental Hygienist, and the services they provide will be limited to their scope of practice.

What is the timeline to open?

Renovation of a 1400 sq. ft area will be completed in the new high school by July. Per the MOU, Marillac paid for all costs of the construction, finishes and equipment/furnishings. The health center opened August 2024.

Who represents the Community Advisory Council for planning of the GJHS Health Center?

D51 Administration and Board of Education Members, Grand Junction High School Administration, Counselor, Nursing & Teaching Staff, Parents & Students selected by GJHS admin, local physicians, Mesa County Public Health Dept, and MarillacHealth representatives.

Resources:

Colorado's Revised Statutes § 13-22-105, 13-22-103.5, 12-43-202.5, 25-6-102(1), 25-6-102(3), 25-6-102(8).

Gudeman, Legal Guide to School Health Information and Data Sharing in Colorado, HSPF Learning Collaborative (2019).

American Public Health Association: https://www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/sbhc/well_being_in_schools (2018)

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