Wellness: The Journey Continues

It's difficult for children to study and learn when they don't feel well. It's hard for a child who's got a toothache to concentrate. Just as importantly, when kids are exposed to trauma and stress, it can take a significant toll on their emotional health and their ability to thrive in school. When physical and emotional health conditions are chronic it can be a major challenge for students to come to school at all, let alone succeed. Subsequently, many of our children fall behind. Some fail classes. And too many never graduate.

In 2008, the Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health (The L.A. Trust), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and other stakeholders joined together to find solutions for our children and teens who were disproportionately “falling victim” to obesity, uncontrolled asthma, sexually transmitted infections, violence, and poor access to health care. It was time to face the facts.

Facing Facts: LAUSD Student Population

Improving the health of the children of L.A. is a major challenge with several critical problems in need of immediate attention:

- 2% identified as homeless (13,000)
- 8% report dental pain (52,000)
- 10% suffer with asthma (65,000)
- 23% will contract a sexually transmitted disease (149,500)
- 33% will become pregnant before age 20 (214,500)
- 33% will be a victim of violence (214,500)
- 40% suffer from obesity (260,000)

A Vision Comes into Focus

In 2009, The L.A. Trust in partnership with LAUSD worked together to create a strategic plan to address these health challenges and a vision was born: Wellness Centers located on LAUSD school campuses across the district in areas with the greatest need.

The Challenges Our Children Face

About our Wellness Centers

The Wellness Centers are open to all LAUSD students, their families, and the surrounding community. With a strong focus on primary prevention and early intervention, each Wellness Center site is operated by community clinic partners and other community-based organizations who offer fully integrated health care services including physical health, mental health and at many sites, oral health care. By providing these new access points for care, the Wellness Centers greatly strengthen L.A. County’s safety net.

The Good News

Five years have gone by and twelve of these new Wellness Centers are open and operating on LAUSD school campuses throughout Los Angeles. They are beautiful, clean, accessible to both students and communities, and furnished with state of the art equipment. By the end of 2014 two more sites will be completed.

Please refer to The L.A. Trust website www.thelatrust.org for hours of operation and contact information.
Seeking Visionary Partners/Investors

While there are school-based health centers across the county, nowhere else is the Wellness Center model found on this scale or at this level of investment. To date, more than $50 million including voter approved bond funding has been invested in construction and start-up of the Wellness Centers. But bricks and mortar don’t change health outcomes for our kids. It is the dedicated people and effective programs working in these beautiful new facilities that can make the difference. The L.A. Trust and LAUSD are seeking strategic partners -- public and private partners throughout the City and County -- to invest in this bold vision to achieve our five year goals and help us realize the promise of these Wellness Centers.

Getting on the Same Page

One of the most vital roles of The L.A. Trust is to bring to the table the numerous stakeholders, sponsors, and experts in education and health to agree upon strategies and best practices in improving delivery of services in this new care model. Through the convening of a Learning Collaborative, partners and participants can share resources, learn from each other, and measure the collective impact of the Wellness Centers on student achievement and health outcomes.

Join Our Efforts

Your tax-deductible donations to The L.A. Trust for Children’s Health support the Wellness Centers Network for a variety of vital programs including: student and parent engagement activities, career pathways, oral health care, mental and physical health care, and training for staff. In short, your support enables us to realize our mission of improving student health and readiness to learn. Student Health = Student Success.

Please make a donation today, won’t you? It’s very easy through our website: www.thelatrust.org.

For more information contact: 213-241-3511

Don’t Take Our Word for it...

“LAUSD is committed to removing barriers that prevent our students from learning. The easy access to quality physical and mental health services that our Wellness Centers provide is a huge step in removing barriers and ensuring that our students are able and ready to learn.”
Dr. Debra Duardo, Executive Director of Student Health and Human Services

“Through our Wellness Center, the physical, mental, and the oral health that our students are getting in a preventive way – services that they’ve never had access to before – this is a huge improvement that affects attendance rates and academic outcomes.”
Michael tart, Principal/Jefferson High School

By 2018: Our 5-year goals for each Wellness Center

• Improving education and health outcomes
• Operating at full capacity as a patient-centered medical home (or health home)
• Providing students access to new career pathways and even college
• Managing and coordinating systems of care that integrate wellness into the lives of all LAUSD students and the communities around them

For contact information visit www.thelatrust.org