



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LA UNIFIED STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED CARE IN ON-CAMPUS CENTERS HAD BETTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SAYS NEW STUDY USING THE LOS ANGELES TRUST FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH DATA xCHANGE**

**Attendance Improved by up to 5.4 days for students who received medical care, especially for children with mental health issues, report finds**

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (18 December 2023) – Students who accessed medical care on campus in Los Angeles Unified School District school-based Wellness Centers had better attendance in school, especially those who accessed care for mental health, according to a study conducted by Rebecca Dudovitz, M.D., a pediatrician, professor and researcher at the UCLA Children's Discovery and Innovation Institute. The report was published this month in the Journal of Adolescent Health and used data provided by The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health's Data xChange, the first database in the U.S. to integrate student health data with academic data. Dr. Dudovitz is a board member of the non-profit The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health.

Using the Data xChange, Dr. Dudovitz's analysis also contributed to The L.A. Trust's Impact Report which found that attendance, for example, improved by 5.4 days per student year for those who received medical care on campus. These findings were especially true for those students who received care for mental health issues.

"These report findings and information are monumental and will help us determine where more medical care resources are needed in the communities we serve," said Los Angeles Unified Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "It shows that our on-campus Wellness Centers work and that the outcomes are measurable and meaningful to our students, their families and the communities."

A long-standing partner of the Los Angeles Unified School District, The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health was asked by the district to recruit and support non-profit health care clinics to operate the Wellness Centers to ensure student health needs are met. The 19 Wellness Centers are part of a network of more than 75 school-based centers in the school district.

The L.A. Trust launched the Data xChange in 2013 as a federally compliant database and reporting entity, providing support for research, data-driven resource allocation and pinpointing the connection between student health and academic achievement.

"We can now confidentially connect the dots between a student's health record and their academic record," said Maryjane Puffer, a registered nurse who is Executive Director of the nonprofit The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health. "If a child has asthma, diabetes, dental pain or is

experiencing anxiety, depression or trauma and grief, that child’s performance in school will be impaired. With this data, we can work to allocate resources to prevent that.”

The Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health just published its 2023 report, which collected data from the 2021-22 school year. It concluded that visits to the on-campus school-based health and wellness centers increased from 142,414 visits in 2018-19 to 152,833 visits for 2021-2023.

Childhood obesity was the leading diagnosis for the reporting period. Almost 20% of children ages 6-19 seen in the centers were diagnosed with obesity. There was an increase of five percent over the previous reporting period, demonstrating that being overweight is still the leading condition following the COVID-19 pandemic. Diagnosis of anxiety disorders and PTSD increased by one percentage point.

For a copy of the study or report, visit [thelatrust.org/datainsights](https://thelatrust.org/datainsights)

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### **About The L.A. Trust**

The Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health (The L.A. Trust) is an independent nonprofit agency bridging health and education to achieve student wellness. The L.A. Trust focuses on student health issues, including expanding healthcare access, mental health, substance use prevention, oral health, sexual and reproductive health, data insights, student engagement, and policy and advocacy.