

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | CONTACT ROB WRAY | 323.702.4709 | [r.wray@thelatrust.org](mailto:r.wray@thelatrust.org)

## The L.A. Trust joins allies, schools and providers observing school-based healthcare month

### School-based clinics provide healthcare home to thousands

LOS ANGELES (February 1, 2021) – [The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health](#) is joining healthcare providers, educators, allies, students and community members in celebrating National School-Based Healthcare Awareness Month in February.

Tracy Mendez, executive director of the [California School-Based Health Alliance](#), stressed the impact of school-based health centers (SBHCs) during COVID-19, as students and communities face pandemic stressors, including isolation and anxiety.

“Our SBHCs and Wellness Centers are more critical than ever,” said Maryjane Puffer, executive director of The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health. “Supporting these centers has been a core part of our mission since our founding, and it's important we redouble our efforts during this incredibly challenging time.”

There are 75 SBHCs in Los Angeles County serving schools with more than 83,000 students, more school-based clinics than any other California county. The total includes 17 Wellness Centers, with two more on the way. “Since the first Wellness Center opened in 2012, more than 550,000 patient visits have taken place, a key accomplishment for the consortium of organizations for which The L.A. Trust serves as the backbone,” Puffer said.

#### **Stepping up**

“During the pandemic, school-based health centers are stepping up to provide students with behavioral health services via telehealth, and they continue to provide immunizations for students,” Mendez said. “School-based health centers have always provided healthcare access to students who would otherwise go without, but now the need is so much greater.”

[more]

There are 17 Wellness Centers serving Los Angeles Unified's under-resourced communities and dozens of other school-based healthcare facilities operated directly by the district. Wellness Centers serve Belmont High School, Carson High School, Crenshaw High School, Elizabeth Learning Center, Fremont High School, Gage Middle School, Garfield High School, Hollywood High School, Jefferson High School, Jordan High School, Locke Early Education Center, Maclay Middle School (under construction), Manual Arts High School, Maywood Center for Enriched Studies, James Monroe High School, Santee Education Complex, and Washington Prep High School. Most are operated by Federally Qualified Health Centers.

### **Advocacy is key**

"School-based health providers have performed heroic work to keep students connected to care during this pandemic," Mendez said. "This is a month to advocate for the funds, personnel, equipment and vaccines our school-based health clinics need to serve their students and families. We are pleased that the Governor, state legislators, and state departments of health and education are recognizing the critical value of school health services and have endorsed plans to invest much more in them."

Puffer quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman." She said, "School-based health is the path to greater health equality and we cannot let down our kids and teens in the hour of their greatest need."