



# Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

## Parents' Perceptions of Minneapolis School Based Clinics

Research Brief, October 2008

### School Based Clinic services

School Based Clinics provide a variety of services to high school students in Minneapolis, including medical care, counseling, health education, prescriptions, and laboratory services. Parents are provided with information about the clinics and are asked to return a form indicating whether they consent to the use of clinic services by their child. They may choose one of three options:

- To grant consent for the use of any of the health services available;
- To grant consent for the use of any service except birth control counseling and prescriptions; or
- To refuse to grant consent for the use of clinic services.

In an ongoing effort to elicit parents' perspectives, a brief survey was provided to them to return to the clinic. The survey asked whether they had talked with their teens about clinic services and whether they encouraged them to use the services. It also listed potential benefits of the clinics for students and for parents and asked parents to select which they believed were most important. The survey also asked about the best way for clinic staff to provide descriptive information to parents and requested that they offer recommendations to improve services.

Between September 2007 and May 2008, 2,108 surveys were completed by parents of students from Edison, Henry, South, Washburn and Roosevelt high schools. This brief report summarizes their responses.

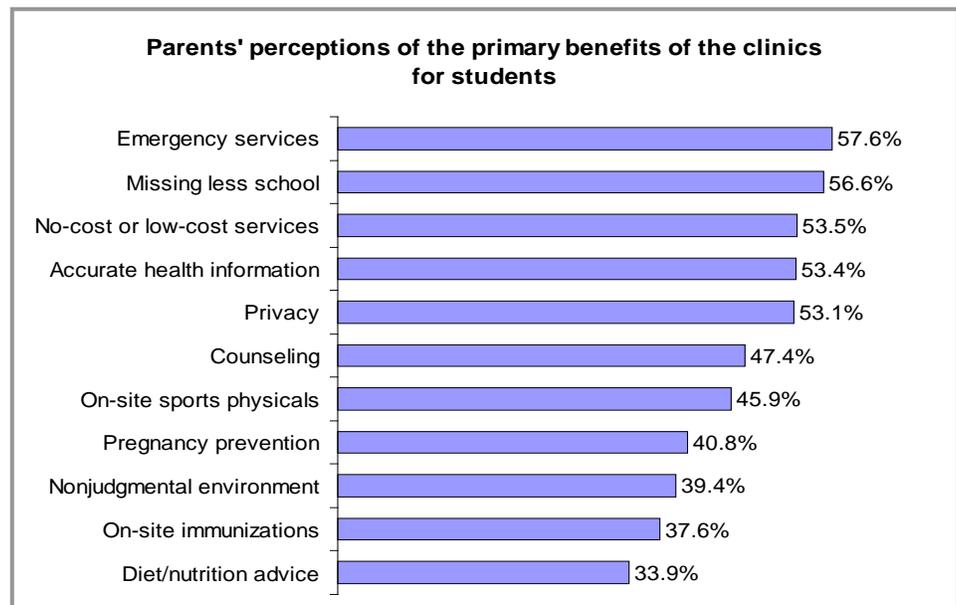
### Parents' discussion with students about school-based clinic services

Three of five (61.8%) parents who responded said they had discussed the school-based clinic services with their teen and a similar percentage (61.9%) said they encouraged their teen to use the services.

### Parents' perceptions of how the clinics benefit students

Parents who responded to the survey selected an average of 5 of the 11 options of the primary ways the School Based Clinics can benefit students. The most commonly perceived major benefits, perceived by at least half the parents who responded are the accessibility of emergency health services, missing less school, low-cost health care services, having the clinics available as a source of accurate health information, and the amount of privacy students receive while being treated. Other benefits identified by at least 2 of 5 parents include the availability of counseling for teens, on-site sports physicals, and pregnancy prevention services. Benefits identified by a third of parents include a nonjudgmental environment provided by the staff on-site immunizations, and advice on diet and nutrition.

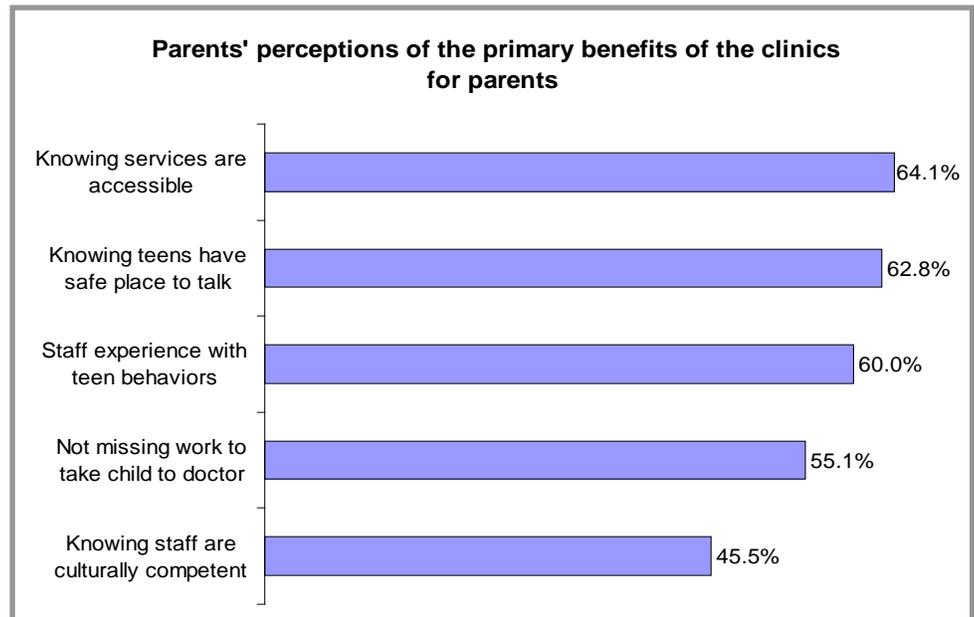
Parents' opinions reveal that they appreciate both the practical benefits of clinic services, in terms of accessibility and cost, as well as their sensitivity to the needs of teens.



## Parents' perceptions of how the clinics benefit parents

Parents who responded to the survey typically selected 3 benefits that the clinics provide for parents. The most commonly reported benefits were knowing that the services are easily accessible to their children, knowing that teens have a safe place to talk, and knowing that clinic staff have a great deal of experience talking to teens about health issues such as sex and preventing pregnancy, drug use, and other high risk behaviors. At least 60% of the parents selected each of these benefits.

A key practical advantage was noted as well. More than half of the parents appreciated the benefit of not having to miss work to take their child to a doctor. Almost half acknowledged the benefit of knowing staff members are skilled at serving teens from different cultural backgrounds.



## Parents' suggestions for the best ways to provide them with clinic information

More than two-thirds of parents (69.3%) believe that the brochure the clinics send home with the consent form is the best way for clinic staff to give them information about the clinics. A minority (31.6 percent) thought open houses for parents were the best way, and fewer than one-fourth (18.8 percent) thought that evening informational sessions would be best. Some parents selected two of these methods. It appears that most parents were satisfied with the information they currently receive.

## Parents' recommendations and comments

In response to an open ended question about how to improve the school-based clinics, parents offered a variety of suggestions. Many stressed the importance of a welcoming and comfortable environment for teens, and having male health care providers available to serve young men and female health care providers to serve young women. Parents emphasized the importance of education and support for prevention of pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. While most put a high premium on privacy in order to facilitate students' accessing clinic services, others wanted to be involved more in their child's health care decisions. Many parents highlighted the importance of supportive, nonjudgmental attitudes on the part of health care providers.

## Conclusions

Overall, parents continue to show strong support for the school based clinics. Parents remarked on the "wonderful job" the clinics do and that they are "a great way to serve the community." Parents urged clinic staff to "keep up the good work" and "keep doing what you're doing and let [the students] know you're there!"

For more information about the school-based clinics or this study, please call Donna Amidon, 612/673-5305 or e-mail [donna.amidon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:donna.amidon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us). If you need this document in an alternative format, please call 612/ 673-2301 or TTY (612/673-2157 General City Information). Please allow a reasonable amount of time for special needs accommodation.