

Immunization Program Provider Spotlight December 2023

Hartford High School's School Based Health Center – "The Body Shop"

Affectionately known as "The Body Shop", the school-based health center housed in Hartford High School has taken the reins on student vaccination and overall health. This center has created a model to offer episodic care, mental health resources, dental services, sports and school entry physicals, health education, and complete vaccination services in their clinic. Their team consists of a mental health clinician, a physician assistant, a medical assistant, a clinic dental hygienist, and nurse Dana. As a small team of five, these clinicians have centered wellness, trust, and happiness in their work to serve hundreds of students. "The level of trust we've been able to build with our students, especially in an ever-changing culture, is one of our biggest successes," says Dana. "We are able to provide a safe and comfortable environment to really find out what their individual needs are." With many of the staff being Hartford natives, serving their community holds a special place in their hearts. Hartford High School is home to an incredibly diverse student population from many areas; the staff starts reviewing records as early as possible to make sure every student can enter the school year on time. One of their top priorities is to not delay school start, students should have access to the classroom immediately. They accomplish this by ensuring students are up-to-date on all vaccinations required for school entry or implementing a catch-up schedule if behind. Often, students are local to the Hartford area, but the school also welcomes many migrant students every year from other areas outside of the U.S. At all times, the clinic is ready to administer ACIP recommended vaccines and create plans of care for other specific needs. The Body Shop serves as a critical access point of care for many families, "Our parents are so appreciative of the access students have within the clinic, because mom and dad are able to stay at work and not have to leave for doctors' appointments," says Dana. In addition to direct access and an array of services for students, they have also built a network of providers to refer students to when specialists may be needed or when school is closed. Their team is dedicated to creating and keeping continuity of care for their students in equitable spaces.

Vaccination can often be one of the first halts to school start. Hartford High School's school-based health center has made it their mission to combat this while addressing other care concerns for their students and other students within the district. Though the center may not be a long-term medical home, it has become home to many students that will stop in just to say hello, talk about Friday night's game, or write papers on healthcare topics with staff help. The Body Shop has taken a prominent role not only in vaccination, but in providing total care for their students.



Photo on left (left to right): Patricia Parlante, LPC (clinic mental health clinician), Dana Henry RN, Emily Ruegg, PA-C, (clinic Physician assistant).
Photo on right: Antonella Dellaripa, the clinic dental hygienist
Not pictured: Medical Assistant, Carmen Amaro