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by MICHAEL NEVRAUKIS, Ph.D.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) is expanding its “**health promoting schools**” initiative worldwide, citing **flagging vaccination rates** and the need to provide medical services to **underprivileged children** and combat alleged **misinformation**.

The **COVID-19** pandemic is behind the latest push to expand its “Making Every School a Health Promoting School” program, the WHO said, citing “the largest **disruption of education systems** in history” and “the **health effects of mass school closures**” and other pandemic-related disruptions.

The agency said the initiative aims to “serve over 2.3 billion school-age children” worldwide.

But critics say that behind the WHO’s noble-sounding plan to expand health-promoting schools — also known as school-based health centers (SBHCs) — is an attempt to gain “a **foothold in our schools**,” to bypass parental consent and expand vaccination, data collection and surveillance.

Laura Sextro, CEO and chief operating officer of **The Unity Project**, a California-based health freedom and parental rights nonprofit, told **The Defender** that SBHCs are “very, very agenda-driven organizations within the school system.”

Sextro said SBHCs “will cover everything from sex education [to] radical gender ideology. They’ll be talking about driving vaccines ... That is something that frankly parents should have the autonomy” over.

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“School-based health centers have no place in public schools,” said Sheila Matthews, co-founder of **AbleChild: Parents for Label and Drug Free Education**. Matthews alleged the centers allow “**Big Pharma** access to our children, who are a captive audience.”

Nigel Utton, a board member of the **World Freedom Alliance** and coordinator of its **Education Charter**, said the WHO can't be trusted to support the health of young people. “If it did, no child in the world would live in unsanitary conditions, or be subjected to trafficking, poor nutrition or emotional intimidation within school systems,” he said.

“Instead, the WHO wastes enormous resources on forcing vaccination programs — injecting children with dangerous chemicals including animal proteins, heavy metals and other unspecified ingredients,” Utton added.

Critics also question the involvement of **private interests in SBHCs**, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation — and **Bill and Melinda Gates** themselves — in promoting SBHCs and funding the WHO's reports on the subject.

School-based health centers give 'Big Pharma access to our children'

SBHCs aren't new — the concept **dates back to the 1970s**. The **WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF** have actively promoted such programs since 1995.

SBHCs are intended to offer “primary care, mental health care, and **other health services in schools**,” particularly in underserved communities. This includes **services such as immunizations** and “well-child care.”

A 2020 paper in Health Promotion Perspectives, whose lead author, Manuela Pulimeno, Ph.D., is UNESCO's chair on health education and sustainable development, said **health-promoting schools** help “integrate health educational goals in a holistic perspective at school” and have shown positive outcomes.

In the U.S., the School-Based Health Alliance **promotes SBHCs**. According to the alliance, about **3,900 SBHCs operate nationally**, up from around **1,900 in 2012**. A September 2023 study in **JAMA Network Open** called for “additional SBHC expansion.”

In 2022, the Biden administration issued \$75 million in **grants to states to expand SBHCs**, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention incorporated SBHCs into its “**Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child**” model.

On a global level, “work is currently underway with early adopter countries such as Egypt, Kenya, North Macedonia and Paraguay to support governments in building a **new generation of school health programmes**,” the WHO said in a May 26 report.

WHO’s global standards for SBHCs include censorship and surveillance

In their report, the WHO developed **eight “global standards” for SBHCs** (page 3), in which school health services represent just one such standard. Other standards include school and government policies, school governance and leadership, school and community partnerships, schools social-emotional and physical environments and curriculum.

These are accompanied by **13 “implementation areas,”** (page 17) calling for reinforcement of “intersectoral government and multi-stakeholder coordination,” strengthening “school and community partnerships,” curriculum development, “teacher training and professional learning” and monitoring and evaluation.

Critics say these proposals allow schools to implement vaccine programs. For instance, SBHCs have been linked to higher human papillomavirus (**HPV vaccination rates**), according to a 2022 report.

Merck, the maker of the **Gardasil HPV vaccine**, is a **funder** of the **School-Based Health Alliance**, whose board includes several members with ties to Big Pharma and **vaccine-promoting organizations**.

The Gardasil HPV vaccine is often administered to teenagers as part of school vaccination programs. In October 2023, a **12-year-old boy in France died** days after collapsing and injuring himself minutes after HPV vaccination at his school.

Utton pointed out that “schools have been used to coerce and manipulate children into taking vaccinations against the will of their parents. Teachers have been indoctrinated, and those who have questioned the manipulative agenda have been ostracized.”

Borek said the “psychological pressure” a child experiences when a school authority figure recommends any kind of medical care creates a “fertile ground for pushing policy.”



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SBHCs ‘will certainly be a tool to collect data’

Included among the WHO’s global standards for SBHCs are interventions in school curriculums and proposals to “embed school health content” in training for educators.

The 2020 **Health Promotion Perspectives** paper said the WHO calls for the incorporation of “health literacy” in “the core curriculum as children enter school.”

Critics told The Defender that changes like these could lead to the inclusion of non-health-related topics in school curricula under the guise of health education.

Virginie de Araujo-Recchia, a French lawyer and member of **ONEST**, France’s National Organization of Ethics, Health and Transparency, told The Defender that SBHCs may be “favored by the political powers in an attempt to achieve a fusion between education, citizenship and environmental causes.”

The WHO's global standards also contain provisions for increased data collection and surveillance in schools, with the 13th "implementation area" calling on schools to "Design, develop and share practices for collecting, storing and analysing data."

This is linked to calls to provide "capacity-building in evaluation (e.g. data collection and analysis)" and investments "in feasible ... interoperable systems for collecting and storing data from monitoring at all levels of the education and/or health system."

According to Stand for Health Freedom, SBHCs are "**completely unregulated**" in the U.S.

For instance, it is unclear how HIPAA (the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996**) and the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** will be applied to SBHCs and students' health information.

SBHCs "will certainly be a tool to collect data on anything from vaccine status to sexual preference," Sextro said.

Children can become 'health trainers of their parents'

The WHO claims SBHCs involve "all stakeholders, and particularly **students, parents and caregivers.**" The agency's global standards call for "opportunities for parents ... to participate meaningfully in the governance, design, implementation and evaluation" of SBHCs and their inclusion on "design teams" and governance boards.

But the WHO appears to contradict itself, excluding parents from the "system of global standards for health-promoting schools" and noting that the "target readership" of its SBHC-related documents is "mainly people in government."

According to **Nemours KidsHealth**, the centers "only provide care to children with parents' written permission." However, the organization notes that this "permission" usually consists of "the option to sign a permission form at the beginning of each school year."

"Parents need to be front and center in their child's medical care," Borek said. "These centers are cleaving that relationship by promoting medical assessments and treatment without the presence of a parent."

A **proposed bill in New Hampshire** (SB 343) would require parents to be present when services are provided at an SBHC.

"Schools are clearly not the place to introduce school health centers," de Araujo-Recchia said. "Our children are neither guinea pigs for mass medical experimentation nor beings to be sacrificed."

Notably, UNESCO suggests SBHCs can help children "educate" their parents on health matters. According to the 2020 Health Promotion Perspectives paper, SBHCs can help children "become **health trainers of their parents**, relatives and friends, impacting positively the entire society."

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Gates 'has a direct financial benefit' from SBHCs

Earlier this year, **Melinda French Gates** announced a \$23 million investment in the School-Based Health Alliance, alongside fellow billionaire MacKenzie Scott, ex-wife of Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos.

Sextro said Gates "has a direct financial benefit and interest in promoting these school-based health centers, because they will directly promote everything from the pharmaceutical to the vaccine interest that he and the Gates Foundation have."

The WHO's global standards for SBHCs include calls for the delivery of "comprehensive school health services based on a formal agreement between schools (or local education departments) and health service providers."

According to the School-Based Health Alliance, 21% of **funding for SBHCs** in the U.S. came from private foundations in 2022, while **according to the AAP**, "local hospitals [may] provide ... financial support for SBHCs."

The WHO "is mainly financed by **private funds** from companies or foundations owning **pharmaceutical labs**," de Araujo-Recchia said. "The capital links between the mainstream media, digital giants, American financial giants and the WHO demonstrate real collusion."



Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D.

Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D., based in Athens, Greece, is a senior reporter for The Defender and part of the rotation of hosts for CHD.TV's "Good Morning CHD."

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