



# Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers

*A project of the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition*

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Dear School Health Center Friend:

**March 2009 marks Illinois School Health Center Awareness Month.** Now is the time, to ensure that our schools, communities and state leaders understand the importance of supporting existing and new school health centers. The Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers (ICSHC) is working to increase awareness for school health centers by holding in-district meetings with state elected officials, preparing for Advocacy Day and presenting the Illinois school health center Power Point presentation to various community groups. This year's awareness month comes at a critical time as we work to expand funding the for school health program.

Last year was a successful year in which ICSHC members and partners established and cultivated relationships with key governing organizations and officials. For these reasons, activities for this year's campaign focus on further strengthening these relationships while continuing to increase school health center awareness across the state. Awareness Month provides an opportunity to advance our policy priorities to sustain school health centers (SHCs) and to build and expand relationships with our partners in our communities. Now is the time to build momentum from last year, by reaching out to elected officials, state and local leaders, and the general public about SHCs importance to Illinois' families.

This year's Awareness Month will focus on 3 key activities: 1) Communicating the importance of increasing state funding to state legislators, 2) Presenting the PowerPoint and School Health Center Report Card FY08 to key leaders and organizations 3) Preparing for Advocacy Day on April 1<sup>st</sup> in Springfield. ICSHC has created resources to help you plan and implement each of these activities. The toolkits are available to download online at <http://www.ilmaternal.org/ICSHC.index.htm>. Please call ICSHC if you would like a hardcopy sent to you. ICSHC staff and volunteers are also available to assist you in planning activities. ***Using materials in the toolkit as a guide, here are some things that you can do to promote Illinois School Health Center Awareness month:***

- **Contact your state legislator about supporting a capitol bill that includes new funding for school health centers**
- **Contact your state legislator and invite them to visit your school health center.**
- **Make a presentation to your teachers, school nurses, or school board, local school council, PTA/PTO about school health centers. *(Updated presentation and video clips are available by contacting ICSHC. There are shorter, 15- minute versions available to present to students, school nurses and educators )***
- **Attend Advocacy Day in Springfield on April 1st and bring a group of students, parents, school staff and others to the capital to speak with their elected officials.**
- **And there's more! See the toolkit for other ideas to build awareness about YOUR SHC!**

Materials to get you started are included in the online toolkit. We also ask that you keep us informed about activities, events and media coverage. We would like to document all of your hard work and we ask that you complete the evaluation form online or by faxing it to ICSHC.

Thank you for participating in Awareness Month!!