



# Characterization of Los Angeles Unified School District Wellness Centers before and during COVID-19



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## Background

- Wellness Centers (WCs) are school-based health centers in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) serving students and community members in high-need neighborhoods.
- Surrounding WC communities experience high levels of health disparities and poor access to healthcare, which were likely exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- School-based health centers are thought to decrease access barriers and reduce health disparities when schools are open.
- Studies suggest large declines in primary care and urgent care encounters in other clinical settings during the pandemic but it is unknown how the pandemic and related school closures affected school-based health center utilization.

## Specific Aims

- Characterize the utilization of LAUSD WCs by students and community members before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

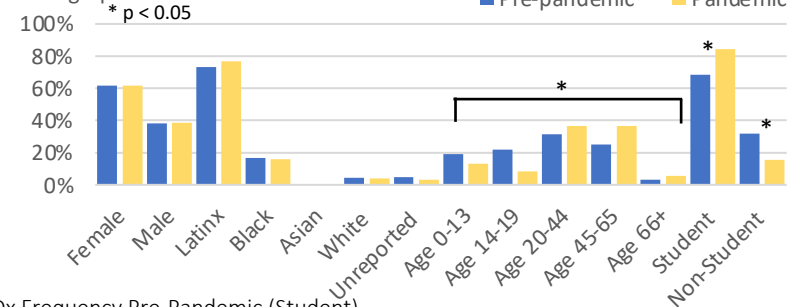
## Methods

- Secondary analysis of deidentified encounter data from 11 WCs from 7/1/15 to 3/31/2021
- Pandemic is defined as  $\geq$  or equal to 03/01/2020 to account for monthly billing schedules and align with COVID-19 school closures.
- Chi-Square Tests, accounting for clustering within clinics compare patient and encounter characteristics before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

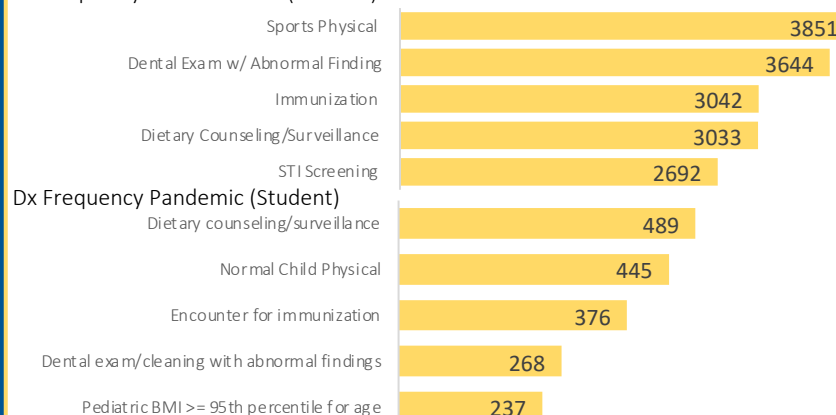
## Results

	Pre-pandemic (7/1/2-15-2/29/2020)	Pandemic (3/1/2020 – 3/31/2021)
Total patients	58,500	10,071
Total encounters	547,726	97,789
Students (aged 6-19)	124,061	11,017
Non-students (aged 20+)	423,665	86,722
Encounters per month	9,959	7,522
Students	2256	847
Non-students	7,703	6,671

Demographics for Encounter Level Data



Dx Frequency Pre-Pandemic (Student)



## Conclusion

- WCs maintained, on average, 75% of their pre-pandemic volume and served 1,575 students at over 11,000 encounters despite pandemic-related school closures.
- The proportion of adolescent patients accessing WCs declined during the pandemic.
- Fewer students accessing the WCs for sexual health services may indicate greater unmet health needs for high-risk students because it is generally understood student seek sexual health services at WCs.

## Future Directions

- Conduct mixed effects models to test whether time is associated with increased odds of presenting for pandemic-related health concerns.
- Present results to LAUSD, The L.A. Trust for Children's Health and WCs to inform investments in school-based healthcare and help clinicians tailor services for the changing needs of patients.
- Work with LAUSD to promote the year-round availability of services to students and their families.

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