

## **Health Connect in Our Schools**

HCiOS is a unique and nationally recognized partnership between The Children's Trust, Miami-Dade County Health Department, and the School Board of Miami-Dade County with nine community health and mental health providers from throughout Miami-Dade County joining forces to provide the school health and mental health teams with school nurses, school social workers and health aides. This program allocates resources in the form of health, and mental health professionals who work in teams at school sites delivering quality health and mental health services to children. Seventy two schools participated in the initial phase which began serving schools during 2006- 2007. The initiative has grown to serve 131 school sites in 2010-11.

Services at HCiOS include psycho-social assessments, medical screenings, mental health counseling, nursing assessments, primary care, and social service interventions. From November 2010 to January 2011, Health Connect in Our Schools social workers have intervened in a multitude of student psychosocial challenges involving depression, bereavement, aggression, violence, economic challenges, physical abuse, substance abuse, self-esteem issues, safety, and suicide ideation. Social workers have worked to reduce the impact of these challenges by meeting with parents and families, conducting home visits, truancy screenings and behavior assessments, referring for substance abuse counseling, assisting homeless families, facilitating KidCare access, and preparing comprehensive student services intervention plans.

For the 2010-11 school year 70,964 (unduplicated count) students were served through HCiOS health suites. In addition to individual health services, the health teams provide a total of 4,864 preventive health classes on topics such as violence prevention. Instructional benefits of HCiOS are that more students are able to return to classes following a visit to the Health Suite (83%). Lastly, as a result of HCiOS 75,000 students were referred to additional services such as Oral Health, Mental Health and Primary Care providers.

Additional information on this program may be found at <http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/hcios/index.asp>.