



Good Day Senator, Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Anwar, Senator Kushner, Representative Gilcrest, Senator Hwang, Senator Somers, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee: My name is Alyson Cyr, I am writing to you as Program Manager for School Based Health Center sites in Meriden public schools, Middlesex and New London Counties. All operated by the Community Health Center, Inc. a Federally Qualified Health Center. I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony on *SB1: An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic.*

Community Health Center, Inc. provides healthcare to close to 180 community and school locations, and specifically provided care to over 18,000 children during the last school year. The School-Based Health Care Program, allows our staff the unique opportunity to provide a safe space for students to be seen, either in-person or via telehealth. Being a part of a school-based health care programs teaches students to advocate for themselves and recognize their own healthcare needs as they transition to adulthood. I would like to take this time to share a story on behalf of one the nurse practitioneras at a



high school in Meriden. This provider had a student present to the clinic not feeling very well. After explaining her symptoms to the provider it was determined a pregnancy test was needed. The nurse practitioner was able to provide the student with education and support after the test came back positive. She also referred the student to our mental health services at the school if she needed them. The student acknowledged how helpful and supported she felt after receiving the “shocking and life changing news”. The same provider assisted another female student who came down to the clinic needing an STD screen. The practitioner was able to diagnose and treat the student very quickly. Both students had mentioned that they would have felt lost and not known what to do or even sought out care if it wasn’t for their School-Based Health Center! Stories like these prove that the resource of being in the school with the students can provide vital information on a broad range of health topics. Ultimately, creating a safer and more educated school building.

In closing, School-Based Health Care eliminates barriers to care including location, cost, and the social stigma that prevents many children and



adolescents from accessing the care they need. Community Health Center, Inc. seeks reimbursement for the services provided but relies on state funding to support the uninsured and underinsured students. Please increase funding to School-Based Health Care in our state so young people can continue to thrive and learn. This is critical to their future and our state's future!

Thank you for supporting School-Based Health Care.