



Good afternoon, Senator, Abrams, Representative Steinberg,
and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee:

I'm Janet Manthey , Program Manager of School-Based Health Services for the
Community Health Center, Inc. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony
on *SB1 An Act Equalizing Comprehensive Access
to Mental, Behavioral and Physical Health Care in Response to the Pandemic.*

I will be reading a testimony from a high school student about the value of
having behavioral health services in schools.

Two years ago, I walked into the Social Workers office in the School Based Health
Centers, sticking to not talking and getting out as fast as I could.

I did not want to be there, my physical health was bad enough, I wanted to keep
my

mental health in line at least. "She said hey I know a little bit of what's been going
on. So tell me, how are you feeling? What's going on inside your head right
now?" I don't know.

Those were the only words that I could form into a sentence, I knew I couldn't tell
this

stranger what was wrong with me. I thought maybe if I acted like everything was



okay and that I wasn't dying on the inside then maybe just maybe she would go away. She said" I know about last year, I know about your mom and the hot line. I also know, I can't work miracles and make it all better in the blink of an eye. But what I can do is fight for you, I can only fight if you talk to me."

Ever since that day she has fought for me and with me, and I couldn't be more grateful.

I spoke with her for 45 minutes, after establishing that her room smelled like strawberries, she made the thunder of my own rainstorm stop. She kept reminding me that I

wasn't alone and that she would always be in my corner, she helped me believe that I am NOT

doing anything wrong that it's just the people around me. She doesn't know this but. she saved my life. Every Day she saves my life.

Back then I had no idea how on earth I would get through another day

I didn't know how I would finish school because, frankly, I

didn't know if I would make it. I was in a very dark spot where I traveled in circles looking for an exit

I am happy to say that my social worker has helped me find an exit, and I can't



wait to finish school.

I am not sure if I will be able to walk across a stage but at this point it won't matter. What will matter is that she got me to this point.

quite honestly, I'm not sure I would still be on earth let alone the school system.

Whenever you talk to anyone about an issue the common response is, "I'm here for you if

you need anything", we all know that more commonly than not it is an empty sentence. My social worker is the only person that I have met that has stuck by that, she has made me feel like a warm summer

day, while others left me cold in the winter. Whenever a problem arose little or big, she was

there, she was always here for me. She reminded me of Horton the Elephant in that aspect,

"A person's a person no matter how small". She was willing to make waves for anybody that

needed it to be done. Her words are never empty, especially when she says she will always be

there for you if you need anything.

Thank you for support the great work that the School Base Health Center staff do



each day.

,