



Testimony of Allison Blake, Chief Executive Officer
Child & Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut
H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR
Re: School Based Health Clinics- Department of Public Health
Appropriations Subcommittee on Health, March 2, 2021

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony regarding HB 6439- An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.

I am writing today to urge you to support continued funding for the School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in Connecticut. Child and Family Agency of SECT operates 13 of School Based Health Centers in New London, Groton, Waterford, and Stonington. This includes the health center at Mary Morrison School for which we thank the administration for the appropriate transfer of funds for the continuation of those services. In 2019, 2974 children and youth utilized our centers during over 15,400 visits. Over 6,600 visits were for physical health care while the remaining 8700 were for mental health care.

School-Based Health Centers provide integrated, effective medical and mental health care, removing the barriers to access care. Being embedded in the school allows for easier follow-ups and for a trusted student/school staff/parent/provider relationship, which we know increases compliance with treatment recommendations. SBHCs allow students to be healthy and in their classrooms, while their parents can remain at work, and their teachers can focus on their students' educational needs.

It is especially important to note that these centers provide barrier-free access to care for children and eliminate challenges presented by transportation, appointment times, and parent work schedules. Additionally, they have been shown to contribute to decreased school absenteeism by providing medical and mental health care for our children in their schools.

The centers are particularly important for those who may not have the resources available to seek out medical care or navigate our health-care system without our support. We are making a difference in the lives of children every day, not only in helping them manage chronic conditions like asthma, but in providing care to new families without health insurance, vaccines to the under-immunized, and those in need of both immediate and long-term mental health

services. Taking funding away from such a crucial program would be detrimental to the future health and success of these children in Connecticut.

I can appreciate the hard choices you have to make in regard to the fiscal implications that will ensue in the upcoming years. I know you will hear testimony regarding the need, the want, and the services we provide for children, adolescents, and families throughout Connecticut SBHCs.

Thank you for your consideration.

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