



Good afternoon Senator Mary Abrams, Representative Pat Dillon, Senator Heather Somers, Representative Kathy Kennedy, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. I'm Alyson Cyr, Program Manager of School-Based Health Services for the Community Health Center, Inc. and I would like to thank the Appropriations Committee and the Governor for their recognition of School Based Health Care as a valued component of Connecticut's health care service delivery model. I ask that you increase the Governor's proposed 2022-2023 Budget for Health Agencies (H.B. 6439) and the line item for School Based Health Care.

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. We all want the youth of Connecticut to be healthy and thriving so School-Based Health Care helps young people with behavioral, physical, and oral health issues in order to reach this goal.

I oversee the school-based health care programs in the Meriden public schools, some of the Middlesex County schools, and two schools in New London County. In these areas alone we serve over 2,300 Connecticut



students! Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life, but this year children faced the struggles of a pandemic and the fear and uncertainty that it brought to them every day. Many children have health problems that make it difficult for them to learn and succeed, even during a typical school year.

Our School-Based Health Care staff are in the unique position to provide a safe space for students to seek care, and it teaches them to advocate and recognize their own healthcare needs as they get older. And because we're in their school, we're able to develop unique relationships with them that other providers are not. I would like to share that we recently implemented a garden program at an elementary school in Meriden. With the help of federal funding we were able to build a greenhouse, complete with a storage shed, supplies, two large raised beds and a curriculum for greenhouse learning. The students enrolled in our services at this elementary school will be able to learn different therapeutic skills and healthy eating habits while getting real-life hands on experience in a garden setting! Since kicking off the program on March 1st 2021 (yes, just yesterday), we have received 13 new enrollments



for the School-based health center! This is an incredible turn around rate for enrollments and shows just how excited students are to engage in the different services we offer them!

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. The model of providing in-person, and now telehealth services, to students allows for more systematic detection, assessment, treatment, and monitoring of student health needs regardless of a school's learning model or season of the year. 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.