

February 26th 2021

Testimony for H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 13th, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

Governor's Proposed 2022-2023 Budget for Health Agencies

Dear Senator Abrams, Rep. Dillon Senator Somers, Rep. Kennedy and Members of the Health Subcommittee,

My name is Anna Goddard, PhD, APRN and I am a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, a board member of the Connecticut Association of School-Based Health Centers (CASBHC), a state and national health consultant for school-based health care, and an Assistant Professor for graduate doctoral nursing study. As a pediatric clinician dedicated to advocating for the health promotion and disease prevention for our Connecticut youth, I am an avid supporter of the work SBHCs provide in bridging care throughout the communities in which they serve. I am writing to you today **for continued and increase in funds for the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) safety-net in Connecticut. Many areas of CT are devoid of SBHC mental health services.**

The U.S. Community Preventative Services Task Force consisting of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, universities, and government agencies at federal and state level have long-since recognized SBHCs as an evidence-based intervention for achieving health equity and decrease access disparities particularly because of race, ethnicity, or income. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have recommended the ongoing sustainability and continued implementation of SBHCs as means to provide “Health for All.”

Furthermore, consensus in peer-reviewed literature and meta-analyses continue to support SBHCs demonstration for increased access to health care, improved academic achievement, reduced emergency room use, lower Medicaid costs, and rapid referral system to mental health counseling. During COVID-19, SBHCs quickly pivoted to address the unique circumstances and challenges related to the rapid transition to virtual learning. SBHCs, again, rose to the challenge in rapid-succession telehealth platforms to provide services in free or low-cost communication platforms to our Connecticut youth.

For example, on release of Governor Lamont’s re-opening plan, Child & Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut implemented the American Medical Association’s safe COVID re-opening protocols for SBHC services to offer much needed wellness physical examinations and update much-needed delayed immunizations. The pandemic highlighted the need for SBHCs across the entire nation, including in our own state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). Task force recommends school-based health centers to promote health equity. Retrieved from <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/content/task-force-recommends-school-based-health-centers-promote-health-equity>