



Good afternoon Senator Abrams, Representative Dillon, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Shannon Hanson, I'm a Program Manager for School-Based Health Care at the Community Health Center, 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 CT'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.

CHC provides healthcare to close to 180 community and school locations, and specifically provided behavioral, physical, and oral healthcare to over 18,000 children during the last school year.

I'd like to share some data from a student satisfaction survey from the 2019-2020 school year. Over 1,100 students from grades 6-12 responded to our survey. When asked how their care was at their last visit, 100% of the



students surveyed rated their care as good or excellent. When asked what they would have done if the SBH services weren't there, 21% of them said they would have done nothing. That's about 230 students that would have let their problem persist without getting help. If we expand that to the entire student population enrolled in CHC's School-Based programs, we'd have about 3,700 students with mental, physical, or oral health problems not being addressed. **Imagine all of the students in CT that don't have access to this kind of care that are living with unresolved issues.**

On a more positive note, I'd like to read you some of the comments that students left for us in the survey.

"I've learned to drink more water and that a little bit of nasal spray and some medicen will help. The staff was very helpful kind and gave me helpful tips overall just well caring people."

"Respectful and supportive over me becoming healthy."

"Giving me great advice and helping me understand what making a difference on my lifestyle could do for me!"



“They were understanding of my sexuality and my problems as a whole.”

“Natasha 11/10 Very good at her job.”

“They do a very good job. They make u feel welcome and makes you feel you belong here.”

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 for their own healthcare needs. And because we’re in their school, we’re able to develop unique relationships with them that other providers aren’t. I’d like to share a story from one of our Medical Assistants at one of the high schools where we provide services. She told me about a student enrolled in the School-Based Health programs that would often skip class and was on the brink of failing that year. Our Medical Assistant told this student on one of her visits to the clinic that she was happy to care for her, but that she didn’t want to see her coming to our clinic for more than four years. She told the student she wanted her to come to school every day so she could graduate on time. A few days later, as our MA came out of the exam room from another visit, she



found a note on her desk from the student that said, “Maria, I just wanted to let you know I came to school today.”

School-Based Health Care eliminates barriers to care including location, cost, and the social stigma that prevents many of our youth from accessing the care they need. CHC seeks reimbursement for the services provided but relies on state funding to support the uninsured and underinsured. Please increase funding to School-Based Health Care in our state so young people can avoid living with health issues due to lack of access to care. This is critical to their future, and it is critical to our state’s future.

Thank you for supporting School-Based Health Care.