



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 Jane Hylan, Director 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 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 is providing healthcare in close to 180 community and school locations and specifically to over 18,000 children during the last school year. 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 in a typical school year.

We all want young people in CT to be healthy and thriving. School-Based Health Care helps young people with their behavioral health problems, their physical health problems, and/or their oral health problems. Our state has an urgent interest in the behavioral health of children and adolescents, now more than ever – a critical function of School-Based Health Care and the focus of my testimony. If I may share the words of Governor Lamont during an interview with CAPSS news in August of 2020:

“Addressing the trauma and disengagement experienced by so many students and teachers over the spring semester requires that our school communities are supported with the most effective instructional and behavioral practices and interventions.” (Governor Lamont – CAPSS news 8/2020).

Even before the pandemic hit, mental health problems such as depression and anxiety were on the rise in children ages 6 to 17, according to the Centers



for Disease Control and Prevention. Research shows social isolation can make these symptoms worse (NPR 11/28/2020).

These are the children and adolescents referred to CT School-Based Health for care. When the pandemic hit in March of 2020, CHC and the SBHC sites it operates, along with others around the state, quickly pivoted to telehealth care, ensuring students continued to have access to the quality care they depended on. Between March 2020 and February 2021, 97,000 visits were conducted by a licensed independent behavioral health provider on my team, and over 66,000 (70%) of those visits were by phone or video. Important data that demonstrates the impact and reach of our school-based services and the need to ensure all students in need of care have access to in-person or via telehealth. School-Based Health Care eliminates barriers to care including location, cost, and the social stigma that prevents many adolescents from accessing the care they need. Providers are trained to meet the unique needs of children and adolescents. The model of providing in-person and telehealth models of treatment to students allows for more systematic detection, assessment, treatment, and monitoring of student health regardless of a



school's learning model or season of the year. CHC provided behavioral health care to over 3,400 unique CT students in the last school year - many from low income families and most facing some type of trauma. 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 continue to thrive and learn. This is critical to their future. This is critical to our state's future.

Thank you for supporting School-Based Health Care.