

March 1, 2021

**Testimony for H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

**SUBJECT MATTER: Governor's Proposed 2022-2023 Budget for Health Agencies**

Dear Senator Abrams, Representative Dillon and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Karen Reilley, I am speaking to you today as Pediatric Nurse Practitioner from my office in Branford High School in the School Based Health Center (SBHC). I have been in this position a little over 1 year and have witnessed the effect of the pandemic in this setting. I am writing and speaking to you **today on behalf of ALL of Connecticut's school aged children to ask for your continued support to fund and increase funding for School Based Health Centers.**

Unlike many schools this year, we have been fortunate since September 2020 to have had our doors, and classrooms open to students in a hybrid model. Given all of the challenges that have affected this school year I am grateful that I have been able to connect with students in so many important ways. I cannot say enough about the SBHC model featuring the student as a partner in the wrap around services including administrators, educators, support staff, social workers and school nurses. A team based approach is a very unique and fortunate opportunity deliver care to a student.

**Impactful moments from this school year.**

-Fielding a phone calls from parents when a student has been sent home from isolation room at the school concerning a possible COVID case/exposure being able to facilitate ordering a COVID screening test and offering them the support, education with close follow up in order to bring them back to the school community safely.

-I have been able to do countless sports physicals in order to get students back to playing the sports that they love, competing and getting the physical activity that they crave and need.

-I have welcomed students from foreign countries, eager to learn in an American classroom. I offer them the emotional support, a friendly face; help them address health concerns, give them vaccines that they are in need of, teach them the importance of advocating for their own health and wellness

-This past Fall our SBHC staff offered a curbside influenza vaccination clinic as a way to increase connectivity with families while providing essential health services.

-For some students I have been the open door in which they are able to share their emotional struggles and hardships.

It is for these and MANY OTHER unsaid moments that **I am grateful for the funding received to keep SBHCs open this past year. I am in favor of supporting H.B. No. 6439 increase funding in order to continue to offering physical and mental health services and dental care to all students across the state of Connecticut especially in densely urban settings and far reaches of the Northeastern and Northwestern parts of our state. All student deserve these services.**

Thank you all so much for your consideration and the opportunity to share my position.

Respectfully,

Karen Reilley, C-PNP