



## CITY OF DANBURY

155 DEER HILL AVENUE

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

SCHOOL - BASED HEALTH CENTER (SBHC)  
BROADVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL  
72 HOSPITAL AVENUE  
DANBURY, CT 06810

(203) 731-8272  
FAX (203) 731-8275

### Testimony in Reference to HB No. 7366 concerning School Based Health Centers and Community Health Centers

Representative Peggy Sayers, Representative Mary Ann Handley and the Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Christine Bulmash. I am the Clinical Social Worker at the School Based Health Center in Danbury, CT.

It is well known that racial and ethnic minority adolescents are a large group of the uninsured or underinsured in our country<sup>1</sup>. A remarkably large proportion of Hispanic and Black adolescents with moderate to severe emotional problems have not received any mental health treatment in the past year.<sup>2</sup> Fewer mental health clinicians will accept patients with Medicaid or Husky as the only source of insurance.

I would like to share with you some case studies that illustrate the efficacy of the SBHC with this population.

Orlando is an 11-year-old boy from Ecuador. He was referred to me because he was failing 6<sup>th</sup> grade. His teachers called a meeting with Orlando and his mother that I was invited to. Because I am based in the school, I can collaborate with teachers and support staff and attend pertinent meetings for my clients. As his teachers and guidance counselor described this boy as lazy, unwilling to pay attention, and as ill prepared for class, I looked at Orlando and saw that he was quietly crying. As a clinical social worker it was evident that this child was suffering from ADHD. Following the cluster meeting I met with Orlando and his mother and completed a clinical assessment. I explained to them about the disorder of ADHD. I assured them that if Orlando took medication for his ADHD, he would be able to pay attention in class and do well academically. Orlando

<sup>1</sup> Harriette Fox, Margaret A. McManus, Matthew Zarit, Gerry Fairbrother, Amy E. Cassidy, Christine D. Bethell, and Debra Read. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Adolescent Health and Access to Care. Fact Sheet - No. 1. Incenter Strategies. January, 2007: pg.1.

<sup>2</sup> Harriette Fox, Margaret A. McManus, Matthew Zarit, Gerry Fairbrother, Amy E. Cassidy, Christine D. Bethell, and Debra Read. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Adolescent Health and Access to Care. Fact Sheet - No. 1. Incenter Strategies. January, 2007: pg.4.

looked at me tearfully and said that if this were to happen, it would be the first time ever for him. I found a neurologist in the community that would accept Husky Insurance. Orlando was prescribed Adderral and put on a behavior plan. One month later, his teachers were happy to announce that Orlando's grades had gone from F to C. He had handed in all his homework and projects; was focused and participating in class. They said he was a totally different student since beginning medication. Orlando finished out the school year getting C's for the first time in his life. It was a proud day for Orlando and his mother when he passed to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Shantie is a 12-year-old girl who was referred to my Children of Substance Abusers Group. She lives with her grandmother because her mother is in jail for dealing heroin and crack and being an accessory to a murder. At first Shantie was unwilling to talk about her ordeal until other group members revealed that their parents were also in jail for dealing heroin and other drugs. These students were also living with their grandparents. Today's generation of grandparents is often overwhelmed with raising many of their grandchildren. They are either unwilling or unable to find a clinician to deal with the difficult mental health problems of their charges. In the safety and kinship of the group, Shantie began to reveal for the first time that, after being left alone (so mother could buy drugs), her mother's boyfriend came into their apartment and raped her. She had contracted a sexually transmitted disease from him. She was four years old. Through this group, healing has finally begun for Shantie.

School Based Health Centers guarantee mental health care for impoverished minority adolescents and their families. I urge you to make more facilities available to our schools in Connecticut through your funding. Thank you.

Christine Bulmash, LCSW  
Broadview Middle School  
School Based Health Center  
72 Hospital Avenue  
Danbury, CT. 06810  
(203) 731-8274