



June 21, 2011

Testimony to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee
submitted by the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers

Senator Fonfarra, Representative Rowe, and members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. The Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, Inc. (CASBHC) is an advocacy and networking organization committed to increasing access to quality health care for all children and adolescents in Connecticut schools. As the official voice of the 78 school based health centers (SBHCs) located in nineteen communities across the state, more than 40,000 children are served annually in 131,000 visits. Connecticut's school based health centers have been delivering comprehensive health care to students in elementary, middle, and high schools for more than 25 years. With written parental permission, all children have full access to the medical, behavioral, and oral health services provided at the school based health centers.

Most SBHCs are located in priority school districts, helping to ensure that these children have the best opportunity to maximize their education by keeping them physically and emotionally healthy. In a CASBHC 2009 survey of 1,000 middle and high school students that used SBHCs, 18% of them said that they would have gone home or stayed out of school if it wasn't for the health center. Children and adolescents that use the services repeatedly emphasize their sense of safety and trust with SBHC staff. The students report a sense of security knowing that they can get help with their problems when they visit the SBHC, whether it is a visit for a medical problem or treatment for a mental health issue. The benefits of SBHCs include:

- SBHCs provide barrier-free access to care at a low cost
- SBHCs keep students healthy and in school
- SBHCs provide early identification of physical and mental health issues
- SBHCs reduce inappropriate emergency room use
- Students are served regardless of insurance status.

CASBHC is pleased that the Program Review and Investigations Committee has undertaken an Adolescent Health Study. While adolescents remain the most underserved population, studies have shown that adolescents are ten times more likely to use school based health centers than other community-based settings for their health care. The safety, trust, expertise and convenience of SBHC services contribute to positive health and educational outcomes for our young people.

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Healthy Kids Make Better Learners

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