

MOM'S CLINIC
A SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER AT HAMDEN HIGH SCHOOL
OPERATED BY Quinnipiack Valley Health District, 1151 Hartford Turnpike, North Haven CT 06473
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Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Deborah Culligan, and I am the School Based Health Center (SBHC) Director for Mom's Clinic, a school based health center at Hamden High School.

I am providing this testimony in response to HB 6350, *An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2015*, which proposes nearly a half-million dollars in cuts each year in baseline operational funding for SBHCs, in addition to the proposed complete elimination of funding for new or expanded Centers in the educational Alliance Districts. Just this past December 2012, the Governor rescinded more than a half-million dollars from School Based Health Centers as part of his deficit reduction plan. The half-million dollars was taken from the 1.3 million dollars that had just been allocated by the Legislature for the new/expanded sites. Since the entire allocation for new or expanded health centers has been proposed to be eliminated in the FY2014 and FY2015 budget proposal, the additional continued reduction is being taken from operational funding to existing school based health centers.

Mom's Clinic has been in operation for 17 years. Over the lifetime of the Mom's Clinic, medical and mental health care services have been provided to over 3,000 students who made over 15,000 visits. This has been particularly critical for those in need of mental health services, which are almost non-existent in the community for adolescents, despite their insurance status. Mom's Clinic has been primarily funded through state grants. At an average of \$110,000.00 per grant year times 17 years, divided by 15,000 visits, the cost per visit has been about \$7.33 per visit. I do not know where else quality medical and mental health care can be delivered for this dollar amount.

Through careful fiscal management and the donation of in-kind services, we have been able to operate the SBHC, albeit, at less hours of operation than we would like to have. But in order to continue to provide comprehensive medical and mental health services to the students at Hamden High School, we need, at a minimum, to maintain our current level funding. Each year the cost of operation increases; salary requirements, medical and office supplies, laboratory tests and medication costs do not remain static, yet our funding has.

In a past legislative session, the legislature worked to have SBHC's recognized in order to qualify for reimbursement from commercial insurance companies for the services they provide to commercial clients. This action has been very important in helping us to maintain services. However, the amount of dollars obtained through this channel are not adequate to fill the gap between the current state grant and the cost of providing services, especially if SBHC's sustain cuts in the FY2014 and FY2015 budgets.

You as legislators have difficult choices to make regarding the allocation of our state funds. When you consider SBHC funding, I would ask that you look at how much health care is provided to the children of CT through SBHCs for a relatively small dollar investment. I would argue that there is not a single place in CT where a child's medical or mental health visit could be provided at such a low cost. Furthermore, access to services is a critical feature of SBHCs and allows students to remain in school, especially with regards to mental health care. For Mom's Clinic, if there are funding cuts to the FY2014 and FY2015 budgets, mental health services are the likely place to sustain cuts to our budget because for every one mental health visit, six medical visits can be made.

Last, I emphasize the term "comprehensive." We know the whole child, because we are part of the school environment, working closely with school nurses, teachers and administrators to help each child achieve their full potential. We are part of "their world" and the students come to know us as advocates for their health.

Thank you for your time.