



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
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**Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Before The Public Health Committee
Regarding Proposed Bill No. 5740, AN ACT CONCERNING UNIFORM STANDARDS AND THE
PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS**

Submitted by: James D. McGaughey
Executive Director
March 8, 2013

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to comment on Proposed Bill No. 5740. This bill would establish statutory recognition of the important role that School-Based Health Centers can play in ensuring the availability of mental health services in Connecticut's public schools. Our Office supports this measure.

Where they exist, School-Based Health Centers have been providing much needed health services to students, including mental health supports in the form of assessments, counseling, appropriate referrals and coordination with families and community providers. Their physical presence in schools and the expertise they bring also benefit school communities. As their numbers increase, however, and they become an ever more important part of our State's effort to meet the growing need for health support services for children, and particularly mental health support services, the necessity of uniformly defining the scope and depth of the services they provide, and more formally recognizing their relationship with school systems is becoming apparent. This bill proposes to do just that. I urge you to develop it further and take favorable action on it.