



## SB 415: An Act Establishing Additional School Based Health Centers

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Jesse White-Fresé, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers. On behalf of the Association, we thank you for your continued and ongoing support of School Based Health Centers (SBHCs), and their ability to impact the physical health, behavioral health, and oral health of children in the school setting.

My testimony today is in support of SB 415 that seeks to establish two new SBHCs in schools in Groton and three new SBHCs in schools in East Hartford. The students that attend these schools would be afforded access to the barrier-free health care that is already available in SBHCs in other elementary, middle, and high schools in these communities, providing a continuum of care that would be extended to an additional 1700 students. Each of the schools in Groton and East Hartford have demonstrated the need for primary health care services in the school setting and would benefit from healthier students that could maximize their opportunities for learning.

As you know, the benefits of School Based Health Centers are:

- Access to health care at a low cost per student
- Students remain healthy and in school
- SBHCs increase early identification of physical and mental health issues
- Students are served regardless of insurance status
- SBHCs reduce unnecessary emergency department care for conditions that can best be managed in the primary care setting.

The availability of school based health services has been associated with decreased school absenteeism and reduced school dropout rates. By providing adequate health care for children and youth in schools, SBHCs are helping to close the critical gap between the health of our children and their academic success.

We urge you to establish these new SBHC sites in Groton and East Hartford so that students in pre-K through twelfth grade can improve their health, well-being, and ultimately, their academic success.

Thank you.

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**Healthy Kids Make Better Learners**

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