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Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. I am Jane Hylan, Director of School Based Health Services for the Community Health Center, Inc. I am here today to support, with an important modification, SB 917, An Act Concerning School Based Health Centers.

School Based Health Centers provide an important venue for students to receive the care they need. We provide accessible models of quality health care to students in schools based on the needs and available accommodations of each particular school and community.

We have been running School Based Health Centers for over twenty years. Last year, we provided medical, dental and behavioral health services over to 12,500 student-patients in our schools. 2,300 of them were treated by one of our school based behavioral health clinicians – each a specialist in children and adolescent behavioral health.

Establishing a definition of school based health centers is an important goal. However, we must be careful to make sure the definition is accurate. SB 917 appears to focus only on a comprehensive model where medical and behavioral health services are both provided. Ideally such services should be available at all schools. Unfortunately, in some cases, a school can only support one service or another. SB 917 needs to include in the definition the support and the inclusion of school based behavioral health service as a standalone service. As the final report of the Sandy Hook Commission illustrates, the development and funding of behavioral health services is an important need in our state.

Currently, we provide services in over 190 schools and community locations, some are comprehensive and others are a standalone models. Each model provides needed, accessible, affordable and valuable care to students who otherwise may go without. CHC operates 21 fully comprehensive school based health centers as well as 28 behavioral health only models, in addition to our statewide mobile dental services.

With me today is Melanie Wilde, CHC Program Manager for school based health services throughout New Haven County. She will introduce you to the success of our behavioral health single service delivery model and demonstrate how this model continues to expand within in the city of Meriden.

Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Community Health Center Inc. and the School Based Health Center Programs. I am Melanie Wilde, the Program Manager for School Based Health in New Haven County. Let me provide background on SBHC's in Meriden. In 2006, we introduced mobile dental into all of the Meriden schools. In 2007, we were then asked to consider introducing behavioral health services. It wasn't until 2011 that we introduced medical services into the Meriden schools.



Serving underserved and uninsured patients at Connecticut's largest network of community health centers.

Many of the Meriden schools cannot accommodate a comprehensive model due to building and financial constraints. Instead of waiting until comprehensive services could be provided, we felt it was in the best interest to provide services to the community as resources became available.

Over the last 9 years, the need for our services in Meriden have increased from 300 mobile dental visits in 2006 to almost 20,000 total visits for 2014. With just under 10,000 students registered in the Meriden schools this shows a significant need for healthcare services inside the school. SBHC's increase access to care, keep students healthy, and keep them in school.

More recently, tragedies have befallen Meriden students and our SBHC behavioral health teams have played an intricate role, with the schools crisis response teams, in providing support to the school, staff, and students.

SB 917 is an important bill that can help schools considering school based health centers. Yet it is important that it properly define them both as comprehensive models and as standalone models so that schools can provide the services that best fit their needs and constraints.