

# “Oral health for all”



March 6, 2015

Appropriations Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford CT 06106

## **Re: Governor’s Proposed FY 2016 – 2017 Biennial Budget – Proposed Cuts to School-based Health Centers**

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Mary Moran Boudreau and I serve as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative. As the only non-profit in the state with the sole mission of “Oral Health for All”, I am here to address the impact that the Governor’s budget and the proposed budget cuts would have on the Connecticut children if the proposed budget cuts are made to the School-based Health Centers. That reduction will reduce critical health services to vulnerable children.

You will be hearing from many others about the negative impact this will have on the children from the medical and mental health perspective. I am here to spotlight, specifically, the adverse impact these cut will have on oral health.

### **Dental disease left untreated can adversely affect speech, nutrition, growth and function, social development and quality of life.**

- Dental caries (decay) remains the most common chronic disease among children ages 6 – 18 years.
- Dental and oral disease have been linked with ear and sinus infections, weakened immune systems, diabetes, heart and lung disease, and other heart conditions.
- Dental disease is associated with missing school and poor school performance.

### **Dental care access at School-based Health Centers (SBHC) increases access to care.**

- Budget cuts will result in reduced clinical staff hours, potential staff layoffs, early closures, and the health of vulnerable children will be comprised.
- State funding allows SBHCs to operate in 92 schools in 22 communities, which only a number of them have dental clinics, which should be expanded to all, not cut. There is no federal funding stream to support SBHC operations.
- SBHCs bill HUSKY and private insurance whenever possible, yet reimbursements support only a percentage of operations. There are many barriers associated with billing for services that include: preventive and care coordination services that are not covered by insurance; high deductibles that must be met before services are reimbursed; limited visits on parent’s insurance plan; many services are confidential; and difficulty obtaining accurate insurance information.
- A fewer number of children are covered by dental insurance as opposed to medical coverage, with these clinics providing the care, both preventive and treatment, for these students.

The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative asks you to restore funding for School-based Health Centers in the budget.

“Oral health for all”



If we can be of any assistance, please contact the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative. Thank you for your time and your commitment to the health of all Connecticut residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Moran Boudreau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Moran Boudreau

Executive Director

**Connecticut Oral Health Initiative**

175 Main Street

Hartford, CT 06106

860-246-2644

[maryb@ctoralhealth.org](mailto:maryb@ctoralhealth.org)