



February 18, 2016

Bridgeport Sites

46 Albion Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 330-6000

968 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 330-6000

1046 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 330-6054

510 Clinton Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 366-4000

743 South Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
(203) 330-6010

**School Based Health Centers**  
Bassick High School  
Cesar Batalla  
Central High School  
Curiale School  
Blackham School  
Read School  
Roosevelt School

**WIC Site**  
1020 Fairfield Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

**Homeless Shelters**  
*Bridgeport Sites*  
CASA  
Helping Hand  
Pivot Ministries  
Prospect House  
Harrison Apartments  
*Fairfield Site*  
Operation Hope

**Testimony to the Appropriations Committee  
Impact of the Governor’s Proposed Budget Cuts**

Southwest Community Health Center (SWCHC), located in Bridgeport, provides comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health services to **over 21,000** persons from 5 main sites, 7 school-based health centers, and 6 homeless shelter clinics. The majority of clients reside in census tracts designated as Medically Underserved Areas and Health Professional Shortage Areas and **98% of all clients have incomes at below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. In 2015, 60% of all clients were enrolled in Medicaid.**

Department of Public Health (DPH) Primary Care grant dollars directly supported salaries of medical, dental, and OB/GYN providers. DPH funding cuts since 2012 have eroded support for delivery of primary health care to our medically needy City residents:

DPH Community Health line item cuts to SWCHC:

- \*as of 6/30/12 = \$256,138
- \*as of 6/30/14= \$248,741
- \*\*as of 6/30/15 = \$225,034. (Line Item money moved to DSS).
- \*as of 7/1/15 = \$21,922
- \*\*Proposed 2/16= \$0

In 6/15 the Legislature approved transfer of the Community Health Center line item funds to DSS. The intended purpose was to allow DSS to obtain Federal match in Medicaid funds; distribute funds to FQHCs on a cost, volume, quality basis; and to hold each health center harmless-- so SWCHC would have received @\$225,000. To date, SWCHC has received NO FUNDS from DSS. With the proposed elimination of the line item in the Governor’s budget, SWCHC has lost \$225,000 used to support access to core services.

Since 2009, SWCHC has provided medical, dental, and behavioral health services in 7 Bridgeport Schools. A DPH School-Based Health Center (SBHC) grant has supported 50% of the cost for delivery of primary care in 5 out of its 7 SBHC sites. Sites include 2 High Schools (Bassick and Central), and 5 pre-K-8 Schools. DPH support is critical as SWCHC cannot bill uninsured students for services at SBHCs and some schools have uninsured rates: 28% at Bassick High and 30% at Blackham School. These uninsured children must have access to the comprehensive care offered through the SBHCs.





DPH SBHC dollars have been cut over the past two years:

\*as of 6/30/13= \$599,186

\*as of 6/30/15 = \$565,401

\*\* Proposed cut of 10% line item (\$1.2M) = a loss of \$56,000.

\*\* Proposed further agency cuts = ???

Further, if DPH is authorized to cut an additional \$3.8M from its agency budget—without legislative oversight— the SBHCs could receive a massive cut that will may render service levels unsustainable. In October 2015, SWCHC had to decrease 2 days a week of APRN time at Read SBHC to offset the \$33,785 grant cut. With the Governor's proposed 10% line item cut, 4 days of APRN or mental health therapist time will have to be eliminated, prior to any other budget reductions. Often students come into the SBHC complaining of medical issues; but, their problem has mental health origins. If early identification of behavioral health issues in children is one of the Governor's stated priorities for CT, then cutting SBHC funding erodes this intent and will diminish SWCHC's capacity to identify anti-social behaviors, trauma exposure, violence, depression, substance abuse, and suicide ideation.

*Proposed budget cuts within the DPH and lack of DSS appropriated funds will severely hinder SWCHC's ability to offer accessible care to our Medicaid, Medicare and uninsured population; retain primary care providers; and sustain existing hours of operation.*

*I urge the Legislators to reject these detrimental cuts to CT's most vulnerable residents- poor children and families.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katherine S. Yacavone'.

Katherine S. Yacavone  
President/CEO