



## **Testimony in Support of RB 299, An Act Concerning the Adoption of Regulations to Establish Minimum Standards for School Based Health Centers**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Jesse White-Fresé and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers. I am testifying today in support of RB 299, An Act Concerning the Adoption of Regulations to Establish Minimum Standards for School Based Health Centers (SBHCs). The language in this bill simply states that the Department of Public Health shall adopt regulations to establish minimum quality standards, rather than ‘may adopt regulations’ as currently codified in PA 15-59.

The legislatively-mandated School Based Health Center Advisory Committee, with representation from state agencies, SBHC organizations, the CT Association of School Based Health Centers, school nursing, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, worked on the development of these minimum quality standards for ten months. As Co-chair of this committee, I can tell you that the standards have already been written, reflect the hard work, considerable input, and consensus of all of the committee members, and provide a framework to guide both new and existing School Based Health Centers. They ensure that Connecticut has a robust School Based Health Center program.

School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) provide primary care medical services, behavioral health services, and in some sites dental services to children in preK - grade 12 settings. School Based Health Centers address a wide range of health issues that impact a child’s ability to learn and succeed in school. SBHCs provide a core social service with proven results. Children, families, schools, and communities all benefit from this essential health service.

The Department of Public Health provides funding for 96 SBHC sites. The vast majority of these sites offer comprehensive medical and behavioral health services. The minimum standards as described in this bill will ensure that all sites meet quality standards, provide a core level of consistent services from site to site, meet state and federal regulations, meet facility requirements, and are sponsored by a licensed entity. Organizations that can meet the criteria of the SBHC definition and the minimum standards can assure parents, schools, and health care partners that they are providing the highest quality care possible to children and adolescents that use the services.

The members of our Association support the language as set forth in RB 299 and urge you to adopt this bill to ensure the highest standards for Connecticut School Based Health Centers.

**Healthy Kids Make Better Learners**