



# Community Health Center Association of Connecticut

1484 Highland Avenue, Suite 2 • Cheshire, CT 06410  
860.667.7820 • Fax 203.250.0040 • www.chcact.org

Testimony of

Deb Polun

Senior Director for Policy & Outreach  
Community Health Center Association of CT

*Regarding the Health Provisions  
of Governor Malloy's Budget Proposal*  
Appropriations Committee

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Health provisions of Governor Malloy's budget proposal. On behalf of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), and its sixteen member federally-qualified health centers, I offer comments on the following:

***Reduction in Funding to School-Based Health Centers:*** CHCACT thanks the Legislature for its ongoing support of school-based health centers and opposes the governor's proposed cut to these critical providers of medical, behavioral and oral health care in school settings. In Connecticut, most federally-qualified health centers also operate School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs), bringing integrated, innovative care to children in schools across the state – where it is convenient for them to receive it. The benefit to this specific model of care is that children are then connected in with the federally-qualified health center for all of their health care needs, both in and out of the school setting.

Over the past couple of years, through budget reductions and rescissions, state support of school-based health centers has been reduced by over \$2 million. Governor Malloy now proposes to reduce funding yet again, by more than \$1 million. If the proposed budget cuts go through, funding for school-based health centers will have been reduced from \$12.6 million in 2015 to \$9.98 million, representing a 20% reduction in funding over the last few years.

School-based health centers receive revenue from billable visits (i.e., when students have HUSKY or commercial insurance); however, many students are uninsured or have copays, which are not collected. Therefore, the parent organization – either a federally-qualified health center or other nonprofit organization – subsidizes the school-based health center with other funds. These grants from DPH are a critical component to keeping SBHCs operating. A reduction in these grants will translate directly into fewer hours of operation and/or fewer services provided – restricting access to care that keeps children healthy and able to learn. Without access to school-based health centers during the school day, unfortunately, many parents may choose to bring

their children to more expensive – and less appropriate – care at the emergency room, because those could be the only facilities available to them once parents are done work for the day.

School-based health centers represent a success in our state. Currently, approximately 96 school-based health centers in Connecticut receive grants from DPH and serve approximately 40,000 students. Research supports their effectiveness in providing health care, specifically mental health care, the use of which has been increasing each year. As stated in the CT Health Foundation Policy Brief “*School-Based Health Centers: Critical to Health Reform and Improved Outcomes for Students*,” SBHCs help to improve academic performance, increase attendance and reduce dropout rates. Reducing support to school-based health centers would be a step backwards for Connecticut, impeding academic progress and overall student success.

Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of Connecticut residents.