



Community Health Center Association of Connecticut

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Testimony of

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In Support of

*House Bill 5218: An Act Concerning Minimum Quality Standards for
School Based Health Centers and Expanded School Health Sites*
Public Health Committee

February 28, 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5218: An Act Concerning Minimum Quality Standards for School Based Health Centers and Expanded School Health Sites.

On behalf of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), and its sixteen member federally-qualified health centers, I want to thank the Committee for raising this bill and for its ongoing support of school-based health centers.

As you may know, most federally-qualified health centers in Connecticut 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.

School-based health centers represent a success in our state. Currently, approximately 96 school-based health centers in Connecticut receive grants from the Department of Public Health 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.

One challenge for some organizations, however, has been the lack of a set of clear clinical, administrative and operational guidelines for licensure through the Department of Public Health.

CHCACT supports this bill, which would require the Department of Public Health to establish standards to ensure consistent quality in school-based health centers and expanded school health sites. It would codify standards for the administration, facility requirements, staffing, program

operations, lead sponsoring agency, licensure requirements, and core program elements that are the standard of care for school-based health centers and expanded school health sites. These clarified guidelines would assist school-based health centers' sponsoring organizations in developing new sites, as well as in ensuring high standards of care.

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