Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Jamie Angueira and I am a registered voter in Waterbury. I am here today in my role as the Practice Manager to the StayWell Health Center’s Pediatrics Department and School Based Health Centers.

I am here to testify on the Governor’s proposed biennial budget. I am especially concerned about yet another proposed cut of almost $200,000 to the School Based Health Clinics line item in the Department of Public Health (DPH) budget.

Any cuts made to the budget of the School Based Health Centers would be detrimental to the support and services our School Based Health Center provides to the students we serve. Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life. I have been working with StayWell for 12 years and have spent my last three years working in our School Based Health Centers. During this time I have seen the good that the SBHCs can do for our families. Some parents have expressed that they have a hard time keeping medical, dental or counseling follow up appointments because they can’t missed work, have transportation issues or do not want their children to miss a day of school. When parents learn of the services we provide at our School Based Health Center they are relieved that their children have access all of the services and have expressed how much this helps them keep up with these appointments. I have an example of a parent who moved and was devastated because the school her child had to enroll into did not have a School Based Health Center. Another example that I will never forget, was when a senior came in with a toothache after his dental appointment discovered that he had 20 cavities, he was in shock and so thankful that was able to have his cavities cared for right in school. He told me that he
would have never found out if it wasn’t for the SBHC because he did not have a dentist. StayWell has three School Based Health Centers located in Waterbury, and we provide Medical, Dental and Behavioral health Services to the students who are registered at the SBHC.

School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are an effective, integrated and cost-effective way to help young people with their health challenges – including their mental health issues, their physical health concerns, or their oral health challenges. Supporting students with their health challenges where they spend most of their waking hours during the week – right in schools – also contributes to keeping them learning in classrooms, reducing absenteeism and improving graduation rates for youth.

I have seen many children benefit from our Behavioral Health Services provided at the School Based Health Center, when some of them start care they are not doing well in academically, they have a hard time expressing their feels, they feel isolated, the care that they receive at the SBHCs help them overcome many obstacles that prevent them from getting the care they need.

I urge you to protect the health and wellbeing of our youngest CT residents by supporting the essential and core services that School Based Health Centers provide. Please maintain funding for SBHCs in our state so that young people can continue to thrive and stay in school. This is critical to their future and to the future of our state.

Thank you for supporting School Based Health Centers!