Good afternoon Chairs Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Jane Hylan, Director of School-Based Health Services for the Community Health Center, Inc. and I am submitting in opposition to H.B. 7148 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2021, and Making Appropriations therefore.

I am writing to you today because the Governor is proposing to cut yet another $200,000 this year and this is on top of cuts made in previous budget years from School-Based Health Centers.

CHC is providing care in over 180 community and school locations and specifically, close to 19,000 children during the last school year. Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life. But many children have health problems that make it difficult for them to learn and succeed. We all want young people in CT to be healthy and thriving. School-Based Health Centers help young people with their behavioral health problems, their physical health problems, or their oral health problems. I am going to focus on some data specific to behavioral health and CT high schoolers.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):

- 27% of CT high school aged students completing the 2018 standard youth survey reported they felt sad and hopeless for 2 or more weeks in a row and because of these feelings, stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months prior to the survey.
13% of these same students reported they had at least 1 major depressive episode during the 12 months prior to the survey.

14% of the high school students who reported had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

I hope all these students have a School Based Health Center at their school. Statistics alone don’t tell the story. Many of my colleagues are here today and sharing the patient stories of CT youth who receive treatment at one of our CHC SBHCs. Not every case is a “success” story but so many young lives are turned around when they are engaged with a familiar and trusting school based clinical provider. This is a place where students are comfortable sharing their feelings and the most confidential information. For this vulnerable population – there is nothing else like it!

School-Based Health Centers eliminate barriers to care – particularly behavioral health care – including location, cost, and the social stigma that prevents many adolescents from accessing the care they need. Providers are trained to meet the unique needs of children and adolescents. The model providing treatment in the school allows for more systematic detection, assessment, treatment, and monitoring of student health. CHC provided behavioral health care to over 4000 CT students in the last school year - many from low income families and most facing some type of trauma. CHC seeks reimbursement for the services provided at school but relies on state funding.
to support the uninsured and underinsured. Please maintain funding to School-Based Health Centers in our state so young people can continue to thrive and stay in school. This is critical to their future. This is critical to our state’s future.

Thank you for supporting School-Based Health Centers.