On Governor’s proposed Biennial Budget FY2020-21

H.B. 7148 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNium ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFORE

03/01/2019

Meghan Petitti, PA-C

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

My name is Meghan Petitti, PA-C and I am a registered voter in Watertown, CT. I am writing today in my role as a Physician Assistant in a Hartford School Based Health Center.

I am writing 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.

We provide the most cost effective efficient care to children in our community. One example is of a 5 year old with asthma I am taking care of today. She has been hospitalized multiple times in the past for her asthma. She is new to our community and to school based health centers. Her mother was relieved to learn that she did not have to leave her job to endure a long wait at the Emergency Department, a visit which would result in thousands of dollars of charges. I have been able to initiate nebulizer treatments and administer steroids for a fraction of the cost to the state. She will not miss school today, she will not cost the state thousands of dollars. Because I was able to initiate treatment in such a timely fashion, we will likely save her from an admission to the hospital, and her mother did not have to leave work unexpectedly and risk being penalized.

Furthermore, I was taking care of a 7 year old yesterday with a sore throat. I was able to examine the child and run a quick rapid strep test which was negative. I gave the child some Motrin to help relieve his symptoms, and he was able to stay in school. When I followed up with the student today, their sore throat was improved. I spoke to the mother on the phone and she was so relieved that she wouldn’t have to take him to the Emergency Dept to be seen, as she could not get in to see her PCP for 2 weeks. Again, preventing unneeded charges to the state and keeping another child in school.

These are just two examples of children I have cared for today. Every day I keep kids in school and out of the Emergency Department. We are here to serve the community, keep kids in school, keep parents working and decrease expenses for the state. Every dollar spent on a School Based Health Center provides exponential savings.

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

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