

Administrative:

635 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860.347.6971

Locations:

CHC of Bristol

395 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010
860.585.5000

CHC of Clinton

114 East Main Street
Clinton, CT 06413
860.664.0787

CHC of Danbury

8 Delay Street
Danbury, CT 06810
203.797.8330

CHC of Enfield

5 North Main Street
Enfield, CT 06082
860.253.9024

CHC of Groton

481 Gold Star Highway
Groton, CT 06340
860.446.8858

CHC of Meriden

134 State Street
Meriden, CT 06450
203.237.2229

CHC of Middletown

675 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860.347.6971

CHC of New Britain

85 Lafayette Street
New Britain, CT 06051
860.224.3642

CHC of New London

One Shaw's Cove
New London, CT 06320
860.447.8304

CHC of Old Saybrook

263 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860.388.4433

CHC of Waterbury

51 North Elm Street
Waterbury, CT 06702
203.574.4000

Day Street CHC

49 Day Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
203.854.9292

Franklin Street CHC

141 Franklin Street
Stamford, CT 06901
203.969.0802

www.chc1.com

Facebook/CHCInc

Twitter@CHCConnecticut)

Testimony by

Dr. J. Nwando Olayiwola, MD, MPH, FAAFP,
Jane Hylan, and Alison Cleary Urban, LCSW,
of Community Health Center, Inc.

To the Mental Health Services Working Group

Concerning School Based Health Centers' Role in Addressing
Mental Health Problems in Our School Age Population

Nwando: Sen. Harp, Rep. Wood, members of the Mental Health Services Working Group, good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. I am Dr. Nwando Olayiwola, Chief Medical Officer for Community Health Center, Inc. I am joined today by Jane Hylan, Director of School Based Health Services and Alison Urban, clinical social worker at CHC's school based health center at Smalley Academy, an elementary school of seven hundred students in New Britain.

We are here today to talk about the real and serious issue of mental health problems in our school age population, how CHC's program responds early and upstream, and we will offer recommendations for you to consider. Jane will give you details on the specifics of our school-based mental health services; Alison will give you first-hand testimony, and I will wrap up with recommendations about early enrollment and the use of psychiatric telemedicine.



Jane: Good afternoon. CHC's expertise in providing mental health services in schools dates back twenty years, when we opened our first SBHC at the McDonough School in Middletown. Since then, schools across the state have asked CHC to provide mental health service in their schools. Today, CHC has mental health providers, mostly clinical social workers, in 36 schools. In 2012, they cared for one thousand, six hundred students from kindergarten to high school seniors. In total, CHC saw over five thousand students for all school based services across the state.

Research is clear: students are more likely to participate in mental health treatment in school based settings than they are outside the school walls. We remove waits and delays, eliminate the barriers of access, and respond to requests from teachers and school administrators for help. Alison Urban, from our school based health center at Smalley Academy in New Britain offers an example.

Alison: Good afternoon. I am honored to share with you today the story of one child whom I will always remember. When Kevin, not his real name, started kindergarten he said that he wanted to kill himself, shouted that he would kill everyone in the class, and even drew a picture of a murder, which he showed to another child and exclaimed, "Look! My dad is killing your dad!" Kevin's history included many losses, including the death of his mother while

he was in foster care. Kevin suffered from separation anxiety, grief, and a variety of trauma symptoms. His father's demanding work schedule made it difficult for him to participate in Kevin's treatment.

During therapy, Kevin's play depicted gun violence over and over. During one shooting scene I commented, "I wonder if anyone was around to see that."

Kevin answered, "Somebody saw...but he's hiding because he's scared." "It's okay to feel scared," I said. In a later session, Kevin asked if some of the army soldiers "wanted to kill each other." I answered that I didn't know. Then Kevin said, "Once I saw a teenager kill another guy....when I was a baby and I lived with my mom."

After this disclosure, Kevin continued to use play therapy to process his mother's death, his separation anxiety, and the trauma of the murder. Within six weeks, Kevin's aggressive language and behavior in the classroom had stopped. By the spring, even his play during therapy sessions were no longer violent. Kevin is just one example of the many hundreds of suffering children that I and my colleagues treat—early in their lives—when we can make a big difference in the outcome.

Nwando: Thank you, Alison. As a family physician, I know that early recognition of problems and prompt treatment is essential. Having a mental health professional right in the school is effective and efficient. We urge you to

support the inclusion of school based behavioral health services, whether as part of a comprehensive school based health center, or as a stand alone service. We operate both models, based on each community's wishes. We also ask you to consider automatic enrollment with a provision for "opt out" by parents, to further reduce barriers as well as improved notification of parents about school based health center services. Finally, we know that some children will require additional care from a psychiatrist or psychiatric APRN. We ask you to consider adding coverage for psychiatry services delivered via telemedicine when a school based mental health provider needs to get such services for a child. This has been demonstrated to be effective in forty states. Working together, we can do a better job of identifying, treating, and helping school children with mental health issues. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. J. Nwando Olayiwola, MD, MPH, FAAFP,
Chief Medical Officer,
(860) 852-0809, Nwando@chc1.com

Jane Hylan,
Director of School Based Health Services,
(860) 347-6971 ext. 3720, HylanJ@chc1.com

Alison Cleary Urban, LCSW,
Social Worker/Behavioral Health Clinician
(860) 224-3642 ext. 3763, UrbanA@chc1.com