**  
NY School-Based Health Alliance**

***2019 Legislative Priorities***

**Thank Assembly members for adding $3.823 million in the final State Budget last year (2018-19)** for School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs).

**Ask Senate and Assembly members to support and maintain $17,098,000** in non-Medicaid grant funding appropriated in Governor Cuomo’s 2019-20 proposed State Budget for SBHCs.

**Ask Senate and Assembly members to support $5 million in new funds to fully restore cuts** to SBHCs whose non-Medicaid grants funds were disproportionately reduced in 2017 due to the combination of: 1) a 20% across the board cut in the final 2017-18 State budget; and 2) an administrative action taken by the Department of Health to impose additional cuts on some SBHCs ranging from 25% to 70% of total non-Medicaid grant funds.

The New York School-Based Health Alliance strongly urges the adoption of these priorities. State grant funding for SBHC for core primary, preventive, mental and dental health care services has been reduced by over 25%, ($5 million), since 2013. These cuts represent the largest reductions in the 40-year history of the program.

The State’s 255 SBHCs provide services to over 200,000 children in medically underserved neighborhoods including primary, dental, mental, and reproductive health care services, as well as preventative, chronic and other types of care to underserved populations on-site in schools. They are required to provide access to care to every child who enters their door regardless of insurance status- a feature that is central to the success of the program and makes SBHCs a critical part of the safety net.

Currently 12% of patients served statewide by SBHCs are uninsured- a number that could increase due to federal proposals to cut Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, and Child Health Plus.

SBHCs are a powerful tool for reducing racial and ethnic disparities. According to the State Department of Health, 44% served are Hispanic or Latino and 31% are Black or African American. They are safety-net providers for children who are undocumented and/or uninsured and are a critical point of care for immigrant children.

Many of the young people that we serve live in communities with a high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Fourteen percent live in rural areas where geography and shortages of health and mental health providers make access to services extremely difficult. For some youth SBHCs are their **only** source for counseling, health screenings, reproductive care and immunizations.

**Repeated studies have shown that SBHCs improve the health and mental health of children and save the State money**. SBHCs prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, reduce emergency room visits, improve school attendance and avoid lost workdays for parents. For example, one study shows that SBHCs reduce ER use and hospitalizations by half for asthmatic students.

**Please support this vital health safety net for children!**