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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

CHAIRPERSON
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

COMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE

CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME & CORRECTION

EDUCATION

FINANCE

HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

RULES

October 1, 2009

The Honorable David A. Paterson
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber, State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

Thank you for your extraordinary support of School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). We are writing to ask you to exempt **SBHCs from any further State Budget cuts this year and in the 2010-11 State Budget**. As you know, School-Based Health Centers had their base funding reduced by over \$1.5 million in the last budget cycle. We understand that further cuts are necessary due to the current State deficit. But during these difficult financial times, underserved children and their families need more services, not less.

Many of the young people served by SBHCs live in communities with a high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. The majority of children served statewide (74%) are African American, Hispanic and Latino.

For some children, SBHCs are their only source for counseling, health screenings, reproductive care and immunizations. **SBHCs are on the front lines providing protection against H1N1 and other influenza viruses.** Additional cuts will surely result in a significant loss of services to underserved children and adolescents and the closure of some centers.

Investing in SBHCs **saves the State money** by reducing costly hospitalizations and emergency room visits. A study in the Bronx found that SBHCs reduced ER use and hospitalizations by half for asthmatic students. Last year, SBHCs saved the State \$3 million in hospital inpatient costs alone for children with asthma.

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SBHCs **keep kids healthy and in school** by providing them with primary, preventative and mental health services on site. The doctors, nurses, and mental health professionals at our centers work with teachers and parents to identify the physical and mental health needs of at-risk youth and assure early treatment and follow-up. Studies show that students in schools with SBHCs are absent less and are more likely to graduate than those who have no access to a center.

Children and families in this State are counting on their centers to be there when they need them. Please support this vital health care safety net for children by exempting School-Based Health Centers from any further State Budget cuts this year and in the 2010-11 State Budget. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Velmanette Montgomery
18th Senate District

Joseph Addabbo
15th Senate District

Thomas Duane
29th Senate District

Ruth Hassell-Thompson
36th Senate District

Hiram Monserrate
13th Senate District

George Onorato
12th Senate District

Suzi Oppenheimer
37th Senate District

Eric Schneiderman
31st Senate District

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
35th Senate District