



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery Calls On Governor To Maintain Funding For School-Based Health Centers

Velmanette Montgomery

October 6, 2009

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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.

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

To please click the PDF link below to view The letter to the Governor.....