



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

ALBANY OFFICE

ROOM 903
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
PHONE (518) 455-3451
FAX (518) 426-6854

DISTRICT OFFICE

30 THIRD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11217
PHONE (718) 643-6140
FAX (718) 237-4137

E-MAIL: MONTGOME@NYSenate.GOV

WEBSITE: MONTGOMERY.NYSenate.GOV

December 7, 2017

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: S6012/A7866 – Create permanent Medicaid carve-out for School Based Health Centers

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I write in support of S6012/A7866 and urge you to sign this legislation to save School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in New York State. Our state is home to 252 SBHCs, the largest number in the country. Across the nation, providers and legislators look to us as an example of how to provide comprehensive medical care to children.

Since 1985, School-Based Health Centers have been "carved-out" of the Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) program, enabling them to receive reimbursement directly from the New York State Department of Health. If this carve-out is allowed to end, MMC health plans will become the middlemen. **Forcing SBHCs to negotiate directly with insurance companies would create numerous complications for reimbursement. It is estimated to cost SBHCs another \$16.2 million on top of the budget cuts they suffered earlier this year.**

SBHCs were cut by 20% in this year's budget. At the same time, the methodology to determine how these funds are distributed was changed. This has had a devastating impact on clinics across the state. Many SBHC sponsors have experienced cuts ranging anywhere from 25% to 70% and has resulted in real consequences. SUNY Downstate immediately announced the closure of four centers this year because of the funding cut. Fortunately, the closures were postponed. **The SBHC that serves the Francis Scott Key Campus operated by the Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center, will close at the end of the year, leaving hundreds of children without services.**

The children served by SBHCs are:

- primarily of color (44% served are Hispanic or Latino & 31% are Black or African American)
- often from low-income households
- many are undocumented
- many are uninsured

The State's 252 SBHCs provide services to over 200,000 children regardless of insurance or immigration status such as:

- primary and preventative care in an environment that is convenient and familiar to them, over 60% of SBHCs have fulltime mental health services, many provide dental and vision services.
- chronic conditions such as asthma & type one diabetes are better managed
- medical emergencies can often be handled on site

SBHCs have made positive impacts on student:

- academic performance
- attendance
- graduation rates
- health outcomes such as higher vaccination rates and fewer unplanned pregnancies
- children with chronic conditions are hospitalized less and experience fewer complications

On the federal level, health care is being dismantled brick by brick which includes funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and community health centers. Our SBHCS are already struggling to provide services after this year's 20% cut and the shift in funding methodology. Requiring SBHCs to negotiate with MMC health plans threatens the future of healthcare for children throughout New York State.

New York must continue its visionary leadership, this is not the time to inflict additional financial burdens on those who serve our most vulnerable. I respectfully urge you to save our children and sign this critical piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Senator Velmanette Montgomery
25th Senate District