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Testimony before the Health and Government Operations Committee

In SUPPORT of

House Bill 47- State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health- Maryland School-Based Health Center Standards- Revision

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 47- State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health- Maryland School-Based Health Center Standards- Revision. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill.

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are health clinics located in schools. Services offered typically include: primary medical care, mental/behavioral health care, dental/oral health care, health education and promotion, nutrition education, substance abuse counseling, and case management¹. Depending on the model implemented at each school site, a SBHC can serve the student population exclusively or even, as seen in Community Schools across the nation, serve students, staff, families, and the community.

National research has demonstrated that full-scale implementation of SBHCs result in decreased absenteeism, an elimination of the health care coverage gap between low-income African Americans, and net cost savings for school districts over time². The report also estimated that SBHCs could save Medicaid about \$35 per student per year--\$1 million annually. In Baltimore City, a SBHC was able to take an elementary school student who was a new arrival to the United States on a Monday, provide the physical check up he needed on-site, and have him enrolled in class by Wednesday. Nationally, high schools with SBHCs see about a 50% drop in chronic absenteeism within 2 months of full-scale implementation.

Barriers to implementation of SBHCs are generally restricted to cost. Allowing a licensed physician or nurse practitioner to be eligible to serve as a SBHC's clinical director goes a long way toward driving down that operating cost and incentivizing the adoption of this effective model.

¹ Health Resources & Services Administration. "School-Based Health Centers".

² Guo, et. Al. "School-Based Health Centers: Cost-Benefit analysis and Impact on Health Care Disparities". American Journal of Public Health. September 2010.



HB 47 will allow more access to School-Based Health Centers by expanding the category of medical professional who is eligible to serve as a clinical director, while potentially decreasing operating costs. **We urge a favorable report on this bill.**

