



## New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA)

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

**RE: NYSPHA recommends the Governor sign A9288/S8447 (Gottfried/Rivera) amending the Social Services Law relating to the provision of services by school-based health centers.**

Dear Governor Hochul,

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) is pleased to provide our recommendations to you on these bills, which have passed both houses of the legislature. NYSPHA is the New York affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and serves as the statewide organization for members from all disciplines across the spectrum of public health professionals, organizations, academia, and students pursuing careers in public health. Our mission is to improve the public's health through advocacy, education, networking, and professional development.

Background on the issue

New York's school-based health centers provide vital services to children in New York State. NYS Department of Health data (<https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/school/skfacts.htm>) show that the 266 SBHCs in New York served almost 200,000 children in 2021. SBHCs provide safety-net services and improve access for children particularly in the areas of oral health, reproductive health, and behavioral health. SBHCs address health equity; 27% of students served are Black or African American and 44% are Hispanic. There are also 45 SBHCs located in rural areas, providing convenient and vital access to children there. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis found that "SBHCs increase access to health services for children, families, and communities, which ultimately leads to positive short- and long-term outcomes in service of a broad range of stakeholders" (Arenson et al.).

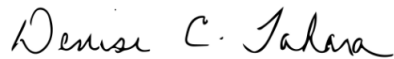
Despite being important safety-net providers, SBHCs have struggled with reduced funding in recent years. They have been carved out of the Medicaid managed care system and paid on a fee-for-service basis for many years despite repeated mandates from the state Medicaid program to end this arrangement. The administrative burden of SBHCs having to contract with all Medicaid managed care plans serving children in their schools as well as the data and other reporting requirements have proven to be insurmountable, and the state has repeatedly extended the deadline to end the carve out. While there would be benefits of better integrating SBHCs with Medicaid managed care, forcing the integration would threaten the SBHCs existence by further reducing the funding available to them

and threatening their existence. Another approach is going to be needed to support SBHCs and achieve the benefits of better-coordinated care. Until then, efforts to end the carve-out are counterproductive. It is time to end the repeated extensions of the carve out and to make it permanent. We cannot risk losing these vital, safety-net providers.

**NYSPPHA's Recommendation.**

We respectfully recommend that the Governor sign A9288/S8447 making permanent the carve out of school-based health centers from Medicaid managed care.

Sincerely,



Denise C. Tahara, PhD

President

New York State Public Health Association

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*CC: Elizabeth Fine, Counsel to the Governor*

*Dr. Mary Bassett, Commissioner, New York State of Department of Health*

*Angela Profetta, Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services, Executive Chamber*

*Tina Kim, Assistant Secretary for Health (Rachel Baker)*

*Kristin M. Proud, Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

*Dr. Ann Sullivan, Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health*

*Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez, Commissioner, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports*

Reference. Arenson A, Hudson PJ, Lee N, Lai B. The Evidence on School-Based Health Centers: A Review. *Glob Pediatr Health*. 2019; 6: Published online 2019 Feb 19.