

SCHA-MI S.B. 481 Supportive Testimony

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Thank you Chair Senator Marleau, committee members, colleagues, friends, and partners. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support for Senate Bill 481, on behalf of our policy committee at the School Community Health Alliance of Michigan and as a Family Nurse Practitioner, practicing for 11 years in Michigan.

The School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan (SCHA-MI) is a collaboration of individuals and organizations that represent and support school-based and school-linked health centers and programs. Through our actions, commitment and passion, we support the belief that all Michigan children and youth have a basic fundamental right to access and receive comprehensive primary health care and prevention services. SCHA-MI provides technical assistance, educational opportunities and advocacy on behalf of all efforts that promote the CAHC program and others' initiatives that enhance and protect the health of Michigan's future. Housed in the K-12 budget, financial and legislative support continues for this program overseen by the Michigan Department of Community Health.

Michigan's school-based and school linked health center programs, known as the Child and Adolescent Health Care Center Program (known as CAHC's) have proven to be a valuable asset in promoting health for youth in our state, particularly those students who are most at-risk. This program has consistently received bipartisan support from the Michigan Legislature and serves as a vital support for Michigan's communities of greatest need.

Integral and key to promoting healthy youth in Michigan under this program, is dedicated, talented staff. Physicians, physician assistants, nurses, therapists, and nurse practitioners provide quality, accessible care to students in school based and school linked settings. Nurse Practitioners are supervised by a medical director but are respected as highly skilled partners in the care of this vulnerable population. By far, most of the primary and preventive medical services in CAHC programs are provided by nurse practitioners throughout the state. At least 85% of CAHC centers have a nurse practitioner on staff. As you have heard today, nurse practitioners provide exemplary care, with particular attention to helping the underserved.

Please remember these facts:

- Nurse Practitioners provide cost-effective, quality care with excellent rates of patient satisfaction
- Primary care provider shortages, particularly physician shortages, is imminent
- Nurse practitioners are eligible Medicaid providers for EHR incentives and meaningful use
- Nurse Practitioners will serve a vital role in providing health care now and in the future.