

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
Senate Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2011 Labor-Health and Human Services appropriations bill we respectfully request that you include \$50 million to fund the recently enacted School Based Health Centers (SBHC) program under Section 399 Z-1 of the Public Health Service Act. These funds would fill the gap for hundreds of SBHCs many of which are struggling to keep their doors open in the current economy. New funds are critical to retaining staff and providing care for our nation's youth.

There are nearly 2,000 SBHCs across the country. They provide high quality, comprehensive medical care, mental health services, preventive care, social services, and youth development to roughly 1.7 million children and adolescents in 44 states and the District of Columbia. These services are provided in a location that meets children and adolescents where they are: at school. Students who are not healthy have a harder time focusing on school, so SBHCs not only keep kids healthy, they also contribute to the students' academic achievements. And it is important to remember that the law requires that federally funded SBHCs comply with parental consent laws and not provide abortion services.

Yet in the current economic climate, many SBHCs are at risk of cutting services or even closing. Faced with their own spending pressures and decreased revenues, state and local governments have slashed funding to SBHCs. Moreover, insufficient reimbursement for patient services makes it hard for SBHCs to make ends meet. Funding the SBHC program would allow threatened centers to retain the nurses, pediatricians, and physician assistants who provide care to our youth.

We appreciate your willingness to consider this request and look forward to working with you to support this important program to increase the access of children to essential health care services.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
U.S. Senator



DEBBIE STABENOW
U.S. Senator



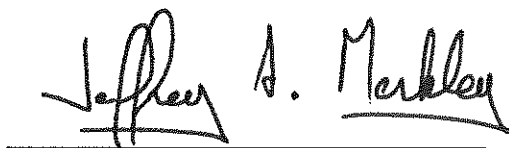
AL FRANKEN
U.S. Senator



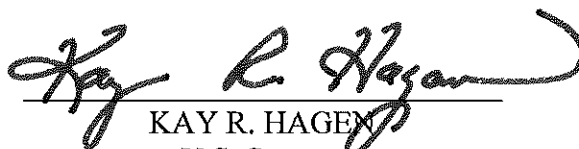
RON WYDEN
U.S. Senator



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U.S. Senator



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U.S. Senator