*Please put on your letterhead.*

*Feel free incorporate information about your organization and your reasons for supporting.*

*Email a copy to Chelsea Lee at* *Chelsea.Lee@sen.ca.gov* *and Lisa Eisenberg at* *leisenberg@schoolhealthcenters.org**.*

*<Today's Date>*

The Honorable Carol Liu

State Capitol, Room 5097

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 118 (Liu) School-Based Health and Education Partnership Program -- SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Liu,

On behalf of [your organization’s name], I am writing in support of *Senate Bill 118 (Liu): School-Based Health and Education Partnership Program*. SB 118 updates the existing school-based health center (SBHC) grant program to reflect the changing health care and education landscape in California. The Public School Health Center Support Program has existed in statute for eight years yet has never been implemented due to a lack of funding. It is time for this program to be updated and funded to address the state’s goals to improve educational outcomes and improve health outcomes at a reduced cost.

Children come to school every day suffering from mental health issues, poor nutrition, asthma, diabetes, and other conditions that seriously impact their ability to succeed. Even though about 9 out of 10 California children have health insurance, almost 20% of them did not have a recommended annual preventive medical visit in 2011.

SBHCs are an innovative model that delivers:

1. *Improved Access* – SBHCs offer enhanced access to services by virtue of their convenient location, referral systems, personal relationships, and patient-friendly care.

2. *Prevention and Population Health* – SBHCs extend care outside clinic walls through group and classroom education, school wide prevention, and community outreach.

3. *Integrated and Individualized Support* – SBHCs meet students and families where they are and provide integrated behavioral health, case management, enabling services to students with the greatest health, social or behavioral challenges.

4. *Partnership between Health and Education* – SBHCs are true partners with the school in promoting academic success through youth development, leadership and career pathway opportunities.

Research shows that SBHC users are more likely to have yearly dental and medical check-ups and are less likely to go to the Emergency Room or be hospitalized. Students enrolled in an SBHC are absent three times less often than those students not utilizing an SBHC. Additionally, many SBHCs are located in schools serving some of the state’s most vulnerable children. On campuses with SBHCs, about 70% of students receive free or reduced price meals.

The Public School Health Center Support Program will ensure that available resources are used efficiently so that California’s SBHCs may continue to serve the children and youth most in need. Thank you for your introduction of SB 118 and we support this bill and the work of SBHCs across the state.

Sincerely,

<Signature, Title of Individual Authorized to Represent Organization>