**[Letterhead Here]**

[SUBMIT VIA EMAIL TO: Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 at Andrea.Margolis@asm.ca.gov **AND** Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3 at Scott.Ogus@sen.ca.gov. PLEASE EMAIL A COPY TO jcalcagno@schoolhealthcenters.org **AND** Natalia.Garcia@asm.ca.gov BY May 19, 2023]

MONTH XX, 2023

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins The Honorable Anthony Rendon

President pro Tempore, California State Senate Speaker, California State Assembly

1021 O Street, Suite 8518 1021 O Street, Suite 8330

Sacramento, CA 95814 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner The Honorable Phil Ting

Chair, Senate Budget Committee Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

1021 O Street, Suite 8630 1021 O Street, Suite 8230

Sacramento, CA 95814 Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar The Honorable Joaquin Arambula

Chair, Budget Subcommittee No. 3 Chair, Budget Subcommittee No. 1

1021 O Street, Suite 6720 1021 O Street, Suite 8130

Sacramento, CA 95814 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Budget Request for $50 Million to Increase K-12 Students’ Access to Physical and Mental**

**Health Services**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, and Chairs Skinner, Ting, Menjivar, and Arambula:

On behalf of [Organization(s)], [I/we] respectfully request a funding reallocation of $50 million from the $235.3 million in annual savings associated with two prison closures to provide facilities, startup, expansion, and sustainability grants to School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) that offer physical and mental health services to children on school sites.

Children across California struggle with their mental health every day and lack critical health services. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, studies showed that 1 in 5 children between the ages of 3 to 17 years reported mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorders. The pandemic further exacerbated youth mental health.

Factors such as being uninsured or underinsured, the absence of providers within close proximity, or inflexible work schedules that conflict with providers' hours of operation prevents many from accessing vital healthcare services.

Barriers to vital healthcare services include being uninsured or underinsured, absence of providers within close proximity, or inflexible work schedules that conflict with providers’ hours of operation. As such, the state must maximize innovative ways to increase children's access to physical and mental healthcare. One significant effort to improve and enhance children's physical and mental healthcare is by expanding SBHCs. Located on school sites, these centers offer students healthcare services while decreasing financial, geographical, and cultural barriers. SBHCs provide a healthcare safety net for children who otherwise may not access these critical services, such as primary care and mental health services.

We must further expand the accessibility and affordability of physical and mental health services for youth through SBHCs. Studies have shown SBHCs’ success, as they increase preventive health services, improve access to reproductive healthcare services, reduce mental illness among youth, provide better outcomes for chronic conditions, and improve overall school performance.

With the Legislative Analyst’s Office estimating $235.3 million in annual savings from the proposed closure of two prisons in the 2023-24 state budget, the resulting savings must be reinvested into effective, early intervention strategies proven to better overall outcomes and provide critical support to children. Research shows that children with unresolved trauma and those who have lived through Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are later affected by several problems in adulthood, such as substance abuse, mental illness, and chronic health problems. Reallocating a portion of these funds to expand SBHCs would help ensure that children, especially those who have lived through ACEs, receive critical physical and mental health services.

It is of the utmost importance that children across California have adequate access to healthcare. As such, [Organization(s) am/are] requesting funding to expand SBHCs to provide children with physical and mental health services on school sites.

Thank you for your consideration of this budget request.

Sincerely,

[Signature

Name

Address

Contact Information]