Delaware Healthcare Association

March 31, 2021

Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO

The Honorable Kim Williams
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

RE: Support for HB 129, School Based Health Centers

Dear Representative Williams,

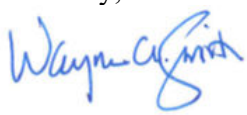
Thank you for being the sponsor of House Bill 129 to amend Title 14 of the Delaware Code relating to the Education. DHA is pleased to support this bill.

HB 129 requires high needs elementary schools, including high needs elementary charter schools, to have school-based health centers (SBHCs). Under the bill, the State will pay the start-up costs for each school-based health center at 2 high needs elementary schools per year until each high needs elementary school has a center. Delaware's hospitals and health systems are strong supporters of SBHCs and currently serve as the medical sponsors of 31 of Delaware's 32 high school SBHCs. These centers provide students with a safety net for their medical and mental health needs.

While we support HB 129, it is important to point out that existing high school SBHCs are currently underfunded. While funding from the Delaware budget is critical to the work of these SBHCs, it does not cover all the necessary costs. SBHCs are expected to bill student's/parent's health insurance and get reimbursed for services to make up the difference, but again this does not cover all the costs of operating a SBHC as many services are not reimbursed. Instead, hospitals cover the gap in funding, but this is not sustainable in the long term. As Delaware moves to expand SBHCs into elementary schools, it is critical that funding be maintained to support the existing high school SBHCs.

DHA is pleased to support HB 129, but also encourages adequate funding for all SBHCs. We look forward to working with you and the members of the General Assembly to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,



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DHA represents hospitals and health care delivery systems in Delaware and advocates for policies that create an environment enabling every Delawarean to be as healthy as they can be.