

DATE

Dear Editor:

One in seven teens has no health insurance and private health insurance plans frequently place restrictions on services for teens. School health centers fill the gap for many vulnerable students by providing access to health care on school grounds. Last year, there were over 117,985 visits made by Illinois students, including [X] **NUMBER OF STUDENTS** at the [X] **NAME OF LOCAL SCHOOL HEALTH CENTER**.

INSERT LOCAL STORY HERE

These centers are saving lives by preventing and treating chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma and sexually transmitted diseases; and providing critical mental health services, like grief therapy, crisis intervention (including bullying prevention), and suicide prevention. National and local studies have shown that school health centers decrease school absenteeism, reduce emergency room visits and reduce unhealthy behaviors in students that compromise academic success.

The tragedy is current state funding is limited and the stability of existing school health centers is threatened. An increase to the school health center program will support existing school health centers and allow for the expansion of new school health centers across the state. While there are 52 school health centers in the state of Illinois, there are over 60 Illinois communities that desire to have a school health center built in one of their schools. However, inadequate state funding cannot meet this need.

The physical and mental health of our students is immeasurable; SHCs need stable funding to ensure the well-being of our youth. It makes financial sense; it makes medical sense; it makes collective sense.

Sincerely,

**NAME OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDER, PARENT, PRINCIPAL, ETC. & TITLE
ORGANIZATION
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SIGNEES**