



HB0047 - State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health - Maryland School-Based Health Center Standards - Revision

Presented to Hon. Shane E. Pendergrass and
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee
February 6, 2019 2:00 pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the Health and Government Operations Committee for a favorable report on HB0047** – State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Health - Maryland School-Based Health Center Standards – Revision. Expansion of practitioners and healthcare personnel in school based health centers is essential to increasing access to timely healthcare of students across Maryland.

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As such, we support programs and institutions aimed at providing individuals with the knowledge and power they need to make more informed healthcare decisions. School-based health centers (SBHCs) have become an increasingly important source of sexual and reproductive healthcare for youth across the state, particularly where it is difficult for low-income families and disenfranchised youth to access such services.¹ To improve health and education outcomes, students who are sexually active or thinking of becoming sexually active should have access to proper services so they can make informed health and wellness decisions.

HB0047 repeals the requirement for school-based health centers to staff a medical director who is a physician and a physician’s consultant to discuss clinical issues. By changing SBHC standards to allow for a physician licensed under Title 14, or a nurse practitioner licensed under Title 8 to serve as a clinical director or a clinical consultant, more practitioners become available to staff and serve students. This increases access and availability of care for students seeking assistance from SBHCs.

We believe that our public high school students want and deserve more healthcare support. HB0047 seeks to expand and create more opportunities to positively impact adolescent health. We are hopeful that this measure will also result in opening more SBHCs in our high schools. **For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB0047.**

¹ For more information about the importance of SBHCs in improving both healthcare and education outcomes, see our report “Could We Do More? The Argument for Inclusive Sexual and reproductive Healthcare in Maryland School-Based Health Centers” September 2018 <https://maryland.prochoiceamericaaffiliates.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2018/10/SBHC-Policy-dr12.pdf>
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