



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
516 West Lookerman St., Dover, DE 19904
302-739-4553 (voice) 302-739-6126 (fax) <http://www.gacec.delaware.gov>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2016

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Robert D. Overmiller, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **House Bill No. 234 (School-based Health Centers)**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **House Bill No. 234**, which will require all public secondary schools (excluding charters) to have a health center and authorize State funding for "start-up" costs for the three high schools currently lacking a center. The GACEC **endorses** the proposed legislation.

As background, school-based health centers currently operate in connection with 29 Delaware public high schools. Consistent with Division of Public Health (DPH) regulations (16 DE Reg. 4102), the centers offer the following services:

3.1 School-based health centers (SBHC) are designed to reduce risk behaviors and improve health among children and adolescents through health promotion and education, early intervention, and preventive care. These service include physical examinations, treatment of minor acute medical conditions, counseling and community referrals. ...

Other sections (4.0) note that the centers offer immunizations, healthy eating and weight management, and individual and group mental health counseling.

In 2012, legislation (House Bill No. 303) was enacted to require State-regulated health insurers to reimburse centers for services rendered as if those services were provided by a network provider. This has facilitated funding for center operations from the private sector. The preamble to House Bill No. 303 observed that students accessing centers were less likely to be hospitalized for acute illnesses and more likely to seek assistance for conditions such as depression and obesity.

The legislation would enhance student access to diagnostic screening, preventative and remedial health care, and health education for all public high school students, including students with disabilities; therefore it merits the support of the Council.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our observations. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss should you have any questions.