



April 24, 2018

House Law and Justice Committee
RE: House Bills 5785 and 5791

Dear Chair Kesto and committee members,

The Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health (MCMCH) and the Michigan School Health Coordinators' Association (MiSHCA) support the comprehensive effort on the part of the Legislature to address the issue of sexual assault and abuse.

We wish to offer specific comments HBs 5785 and 5791 intended to engage and inform K-12 students on these important issues. Evidence shows primary prevention efforts such as classroom education can have a significant impact on helping children form healthy relationships, identify warning signs and incidents of abuse, and reduce the stigma of reporting and seeking help in an abusive situation. We applaud these efforts and our members look forward to helping implement them when passed.

Because Michigan has been a long-time leader in health education we do not have to "reinvent the wheel" in order to meet the requirements outlined in the bills. Michigan is the birthplace of the *Michigan Model for Health™ (MMH)*, an evidence-based comprehensive K-12 health education curriculum. It was developed in 1985 and has seen a number of revisions as funding has become available for the necessary process. The MMH, while not mandated, is widely used across the state, reaching more than five out of every six public schools and at least 746,975 students during the 2015-2016 academic year.

In addition to its broad utilization, the MMH has secured placement on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). We are also privileged to have a statewide network of experts already in place to train teachers, staff and administrators in the MMH. MiSHCA represents the 22 Regional School Health Coordinators who promote the health and safety of students, families and school staff using research-based approaches that improve students' academic and health outcomes.

We support **HB 4785** and the requirement to provide instruction to students. We do offer some items for consideration to strengthen the bill:

- The bill amends MCL 380.1507b where several other statutory provisions regarding HIV/AIDS and sexual education exist. This presents two challenges:
 - 1) Districts may chose to NOT offer sexual education in any form per MCL 380.1507 so entire student bodies would not have exposure to the materials created ;
 - 2) Students can be exempted by a parent or guardian from any lessons taught within a sex education curriculum through language in MCL 380.1507a, meaning any student could miss these very important lessons.

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Beaumont Children's Hospital

Children's Hospital of
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Henry Ford Health System

Hurley Medical Center

University of Michigan C S. Mott
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Calhoun County Public Health
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Health Department of Northwest
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Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan

Michigan Association for Infant
Mental Health

Michigan School Health
Coordinators' Association

Michigan State Medical Society

School-Community Health
Alliance of Michigan

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GENERAL MEMBERS

Maternal-Newborn Nurse
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Michigan Association of School
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Michigan Section, Association of
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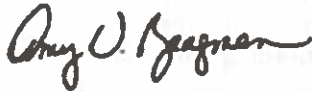
- The bill calls for pupils in grades 11 and 12 to receive this instruction yet evidence shows that age-appropriate lessons about safety and healthy relationships should be taught earlier and periodically to primary and secondary students to be most effective.

We support **HB 5791** to ensure that age-appropriate sexual assault and sexual harassment information is made available to all school districts in the state and we agree with mandating that districts disseminate the materials to students in a number of forms. We further support the language that encourages districts to work with domestic and sexual violence prevention experts to develop and then provide professional development for educators and school personnel.

We hope that when both bills are enacted the Department of Education will work quickly and in tandem with experts and school health coordinators to update the MMH and distribute a model program of instruction to all districts so we can be sure that ALL students receive the same quality, comprehensive materials and, ideally, may hear the same messages repeatedly.

Thank you for this opportunity to support HBs 5785 and 5791. We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to children's health and safety by addressing sexual abuse and violence prevention early and often.

Sincerely,



Amy Zaagman
Executive Director



Lisa Jo Gagliardi
MiSHCA President