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Hundreds Rally to Capitol Hill to Support School-Based Health Care

Washington, DC, July 2, 2007 – Last Friday, the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care (NASBHC) launched an advocacy campaign to remember! At Advocacy Day, held in conjunction with the 2007 National School-Based Health Care Convention, NASBHC hosted a celebratory rally, featuring speakers renowned in the field. Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President, Children’s Defense Fund, roused the crowd with a message of hope, encouragement, and faith. Rally attendees, including providers, frontline staff, and supporters, renewed their commitment to building the school-based health care movement after Edelman shared tragic stories of children dying because they do not have access to health care. Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) lauded the work of school-based health centers (SBHCs) and emboldened the crowd to storm Capitol Hill and bring their message to all his colleagues in Congress.

Already galvanized by the three bills currently introduced in Congress: S.1669/HR 2870 *The Healthy Schools Act of 2007* and S.600 *The School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007*, supporters in bright red t-shirts advertising *A Vote for School-Based Health Care is a Vote for a Healthier America* streamed onto the hill for over 160 visits at the offices of their representatives and senators. Advocates were prepared with 13,000 signed postcards, from supporters all over the nation endorsing SBHCs, to drop off at the offices of their members.

After the rally, supporters gathered back at the convention site to debrief, to exchange stories, and to celebrate their success on the Hill. At final tally, over 80 members of Congress indicated that they were very likely to co-sponsor the pieces of legislation supporting school-based health care. And many of those senators and representatives indicated strong interest in visiting a SBHC.

John Schlitt, Executive Director, NASBHC exclaimed, “We stand tall in our campaign to assure health care access for all children. We especially appreciate the validation and acknowledgment from Congress that school health centers are a necessary delivery mechanism to provide mental and physical health care and health education to our nation’s children and youth.”

*****Broadcast-quality video available upon request*****

The National Assembly on School-Based Health Care is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to nurture interdisciplinary school-based health care.