

Public Health Committee
March 14, 2007

RE: SB 1220 AAC the Birth to Three Program

Recommendation: Delete Section 2

Dear Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the Public Health Committee:

This testimony is in regards to proposed senate Bill 1220, An Act Concerning the Birth to Three Program. Specifically, our concerns center on Section 2, Subdivision 10 of section 17a-248 of the general statutes. Under the proposed bill, qualified speech language pathologists and audiologists must not only hold a license but may be required to meet such additional standards as may be established in regulations adopted pursuant to section 17a-248 as amended by this act. We urge you to disprove of this section inclusive.

Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are currently licensed to practice in the state of Connecticut by the Department of Public Health. In addition, those professionals practicing in the public schools also need certification through the Department of Education. This regulation adds another level of credentialing for professionals in a state which has a long standing shortage of providers. Many of our members have indicated that if these regulations are approved they will not pursue this credential and will no longer provide services to the state's birth to three populations. This is a critical issue, since many of these professionals are experienced with this population and provide a high quality of services. Should these regulations be approved, the children in Connecticut will lose many of the best professional services.

We ask that requiring any additional standards for providing services speech-language pathologists and audiologists be reconsidered. Our members are professionals who meet strict criteria to be licensed to work, including a national examination and for those certified by the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) obtaining continuing education credits. Our professionals have taken a significant amount of quality coursework in child development, normal language development, and other areas specific to early intervention.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We would be happy to supply any information regarding this issue, and would also be happy to meet with you should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

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