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**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL 5038, AN ACT AN ACT IMPLEMENTING  
THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOSPITAL TASK FORCE**

Public Health Committee Hearing

March 3, 2008

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut. I am Polly Barey, a member of CNA and recently retired as the executive director. I have practiced nursing for over 40 years and recently had the privilege of representing CNA on the Governor's Hospital System Strategic Task Force and served on the Workforce Issues sub-committee. I am providing testimony in support of Raised Bill. No. RAISED BILL 5038, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOSPITAL TASK FORCE.

I would like to first commend Commissioners Robert Genuario and Christine Vogel and staff for their leadership in bringing the Hospital System Strategic Task Force members together on behalf of Governor Rell. The group had broad representation, heard numerous presentations and worked in a short period of time to create the recommendations that were finalized in a report that is available on OHCA's web site.

One common thread that came through in a number of the meetings and in the final recommendations is the need for data and health planning in order to ensure that our policy makers have the information they need to make good decisions about our health care system not just for our hospitals. For years in our health care workforce planning

we've either used national data and extrapolated Connecticut's, had outdated data or none to predict with better accuracy who is practicing, when will they consider retiring, how long they being retained in their fields, what their education and specialties are, where they work, what educational programs are needed and where they should be located, and does our makeup of the workforce reflect the diversity of our population. With a crisis in shortages in nursing and allied health workers we cannot begin to do justice to making decisions without data. And, that the data becomes foundational for the planning that needs to follow.

The same holds true for the other areas that have recommendations- system-wide utilization / planning and financing the system – both require accurate and timely data to use for planning. We cannot know what we'll need without having the basis for these decisions.

We encourage the committee to act favorably on this bill which will turn the Task Force recommendations into reality.