



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS  
COMMITTEE  
March 12, 2008**

*J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., Commissioner 860-509-7101*

**Senate Bill 677 - An Act Concerning The Use Of State Computers On Nonstate Property**

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 677. This bill calls for state employees not to remove their state-issued computer from his or her place of employment if it contains personal or confidential information.

Mobile technologies can be particularly useful for work in public health agencies, given the variety of programs and services that take place within the community, away from access to the office PC and IT systems. Some clear applications for mobile technology in health departments relate to environmental monitoring and testing, disaster responses, and home- or community-based health screening and care. Mobile technology captures data at the point of observation, and minimize the risk of errors or omissions. Data entry can take place immediately and precludes the need for the public health professional to document data and observations on paper, and then re-enter the data into a database upon returning to a physical office. Clearly, mobile applications save time and maximize use of our scarce public health resources.

The Department of Public Health has several uses for mobile technology as follows:

**Planning Branch:**

- Training of local health and community providers
- A mobile computer lab for onsite public health training.
- For non-confidential information sharing, presentations, note-taking, data entry and analysis.

**Healthcare Systems Branch:**

- Uses laptops in their regulatory inspection process
- Our entire Federal survey process is converting to a data-driven inspection process - we now do nursing homes exclusively using the computer prompts and decision-trees in the Federal QIS software.
- Our state program and individual practitioner program staff also use their laptops in the field to promote efficiency.

**Our Local Health Administration uses their laptop computers for:**

- Presentations at a variety of state and local meetings
- Conducting seminars and classes at various colleges and public health settings
- Public Health Preparedness
- Monitoring of after hours WANS notifications Weekend and after hours grant and budget work

Finally, for public health emergencies in particular (which tend to be dynamic and unpredictable in nature), the ability to quickly exchange data between providers and public health agencies—or among providers—is crucial in detecting and responding to naturally occurring or intentional disease outbreaks.

On February 29, 2008 DPH finished encrypting all agency laptop computers - 439 in all. DoIT was the project lead for this gubernatorial mandate, which impacted all state agencies. Those that couldn't be encrypted (too old) were removed from service and are in the process of being surplus. Any new incoming laptops are being encrypted with SafeBoot software before being deployed to DPH users.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.



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