



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### **TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE Public Health Committee March 3, 2008**

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

### **House Bill 5701 - An Act Concerning Revisions To Statutes Pertaining To The Department Of Public Health**

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 5701.

Section 1 and 2 of the bill provide clarification to the vital records statutes. The revised language in section 1 makes it clear that C.G.S. § 7-48a pertains to births that are subject to a gestational agreement. Without this revision, it is difficult to interpret this statute.

Section 2 concerning sexton's duties merely clarifies existing language and deletes an obsolete provision regarding books furnished by the Department.

Section 3 modifies the existing statute regarding mechanisms to report diseases on the Commissioner's lists of reportable diseases and laboratory findings. In addition to the current means of filing a report in writing or by telephone, it enables electronic reporting in a format specified by the Commissioner. In essence, this codifies efforts to make all disease reporting electronic to reduce the time it takes to receive reports that would otherwise be mailed to reduce the labor involved in manually completing forms and entering them into a computer, something that has already begun.

Section 4 is supported by DPH and seeks to make technical changes to legislation adopted in 2007 regarding subsurface sewage systems. The proposed language eliminates problems with the existing legislation, which includes possible appeals to Superior Court, and unnecessary notifications to all abutting property owners.

Section 5, Subsection (a) affects Food Protection. Sec 5(a)(1): reads "and the permitting required from local health departments or districts to operate said establishments." We recommend the committee consider the following changes: "and the required permitting by the local health jurisdictions of said establishments to operate." The intent was to allow regulations to require that all food establishments be permitted. Current proposed language does not accomplish this. If the recommended substitute language is adopted, it will require a regulatory amendment. Additionally this bill would require the approximately 18 local health jurisdictions without licensing requirements, to license food establishments.

Section 6 expands the authority of the Commissioner to issue summary orders to all healthcare institutions under the jurisdiction of the Department. This summary order power will allow the Commissioner to quickly protect the public health and safety when the situation dictates at a particular institution.

Section 7, 8 and 9 make technical revisions



Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191  
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # \_\_\_\_\_  
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134  
*Affirmative Action / An Equal Opportunity Employer*

**Section 10 clarifies the intent of the language amended in Public Act 07-252 with regard to what food can be sold at farmer's markets and is language that has been drafted in consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Protection.**

**Section 11 enhances current practices in home health care agencies to protect individuals who may experience anaphylaxes due to vaccinations for flu and pneumonia.**

**Section 12 eliminates the statute passed in 1991, 19a-7g, that established a childhood immunization advisory committee made up of legislatively appointed representatives of different groups and state agencies with an interest in childhood immunizations. While this advisory group played an important sounding-board role in providing input to the DPH Immunization Program in the 1990s, it has become more burdensome than help in recent years. It has been difficult to get members appointed and certain appointees have never shown up to meetings. More importantly, DPH has formed an additional advisory group with a more relevant composition (a broad spectrum of vaccine providers) to address the most pressing immunization issues in recent years. Most of the members of the childhood immunization advisory committee are included in this group, which meets as often as needed (3-4 times per year), rather than by mandate whether a meeting is needed or not.**

**Section 13 also repeals several sections of the general statutes, including Section 20-13i which requires the Department to submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the number of petitions received, number of hearings held and actions taken against physicians. The Department would like to amend the language to Section 19a-127I (c)(1) to read as follows: "There is established a Quality of Care Advisory Committee which shall advise the Department of Public Health on the issues set forth in subdivision (1) to (12), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section. The advisory committee shall meet at least [quarterly] biennially."**

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