



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 3, 2008

Richard Edmonds, Chief, Public Health Initiatives Branch 509-7655

Senate/House Bill 5702 - An Act Concerning the Use of Asthmatic Inhalers by Students

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 5702.

Respiratory care practitioners provide services to patients under the direction of a physician and in accordance with written protocols developed by said physician. Respiratory care practitioners may transcribe and implement written and verbal orders for respiratory care issued by a physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse. This bill does not appear to allow the physician, physician's assistant or advanced practice registered nurse who prescribed the inhaler to provide the written certification necessary to permit the child to carry the inhaler at school.

The Department of Public Health believes that it may be more appropriate to amend the section of the education statutes that pertains to medication administration (C.G.S. 10-212a) rather than the current proposed location regarding the health assessment form.

The Department of Public Health asks the Committee to consider requiring school boards to develop or adopt a self-carry policy that will meet the needs of all students. The current regulations permit this but do not require it. At present, only four states do not require a self-administration policy. Three states have no self-administration policy: Louisiana, South Dakota, and Vermont. Connecticut is the only state with a policy that does not mandate all school boards to adopt a self-administration policy. A standardized policy could be developed as a guide for adoption by those school boards that do not already have a policy in place which will ensure all children deemed capable by their medical provider have access to an asthma inhaler when needed.

Also, should the new language move forward, DPH recommends that once the health assessment records have been modified to capture the information about self-carry certification the DPH Asthma Program strongly recommends an additional check box be added for the presence of a written asthma treatment plan and that schools report data from both check boxes to the Asthma Program. School nurses are currently required to report asthma data to the Department of Public Health, including information from the Health Assessment Record. The additional suggested reporting elements could be added to Health Assessment Record and the current defined school nurse reporting elements such as age, race, gender and ethnicity. This would improve the Asthma Program's ability to evaluate asthma control in school children.

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

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