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Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, Inc.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

- 1) **Raised Bill No. 5705 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS**
- 2) **Raised Bill No. 459 - AN ACT PROMOTING THE EARLY DETECTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF LUNG CANCER, BREAST CANCER AND CERVICAL CANCER**
- 3) **Raised Bill No. 496 - AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS**

SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

By CT Association of Directors of Health, Inc. (CADH)

March 3, 2008

Dear Senator Mary Ann Handley, Representative Peggy Sayers and Members of the Public Health Committee:

CADH supports **Bills No. 5705- AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS** and **459 - AN ACT PROMOTING THE EARLY DETECTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF LUNG CANCER, BREAST CANCER AND CERVICAL CANCER** which address prevention, detection and treatment of chronic diseases. Chronic diseases, many of which have common and multiple risk factors, are the most significant threat to public health and are draining our current health care resources. We need to reverse this trend by investing in **PREVENTION!** These bills would provide desperately needed resources to support community-based prevention efforts. Local health departments and districts, working with their public health system partners at the community level are the appropriate vehicle for this critical work. As governmental entities, LHDs can coordinate the efforts of multiple partners in the public health system to ensure that resources are maximized and the diverse needs of Connecticut citizens are met. Aside from occasional sporadic, competitive funding, resources for these activities are very limited. We have evidence that a significant proportion of chronic disease is preventable, therefore state funding for prevention, detection and treatment can reduce the impact chronic disease has on health care costs and quality of life.

In addition, local health departments and districts are actively engaged in emergency preparedness planning and response, therefore we also support **SB 496 -AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS** as a means to prioritize resources during an emergency period. The responsibilities of local health departments have increased significantly in recent years as they play a key role with emerging

infectious diseases like SARS and other biological threats.

There is a grave need for the local public health system to be restructured, funded at appropriate levels, and services to be standardized to help strengthen the local infrastructure. Compared to the rest of the country, Connecticut ranks very low in terms of state support funding. Each of our towns vary in vast degree by level of income, poverty, education, and resources. Each LHD varies dramatically with respect to the programs and services offered, staffing levels, staffing expertise, and resources. Some are large municipal health departments addressing both health and social service needs with a staff of over 100 employees; others are districts serving 2-18 towns, often spread over a wide geographic area. Some departments have minimal personnel. There is no standard prototype or model that exists in CT. These differences have become increasingly apparent as Connecticut struggles with building public health response capacity on a weak and fragmented system. The allocation of additional resources to support local public health efforts is an endorsement that strengthens our citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Please contact CADH at (860) 727-9874 should you have any questions or if there is any assistance that CADH can provide.