



NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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WILLIAM H. BLITZ, M.P.H., M.U.P., R.S.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and Members of the Appropriations Committee

My name is Bill Blitz and I am the Public Health Director of the largest population district in Connecticut serving 162,000 people in eight towns. Our department is also one of the lowest cost to towns department in the state based in part on economy of scale and hopefully also because of good management. I taught Local Health Agency Management at Yale for ten years and have been doing the same every other year at UCONN Farmington for approximately the last ten years. Many of our current health directors have gone through one of those programs and are excellent managers.

I applaud the Governor's proposal to encourage regional health departments, but find that something went radically wrong from the proposal to the proposed legislation. Instead of encouraging regionalization, the proposal does the opposite and discourages regionalization because of the proposed radical cut in funding to districts.

The \$2.08 we currently receive is one of the lowest levels of funding to health departments in the United States, putting us around 42nd of all states and with more recent information, I would tend to believe closer to 49th.

One of the reasons for this is that most states are funded through State and County monies and of course Connecticut does not have county government, placing the county burden on local towns.

If this proposed reduction goes through, we certainly could not afford to take in any new towns and question whether we can continue to serve our existing towns with the constantly expanding mandates that the State Health Department and the legislature continue to place on us.

Having said that.....I believe that every citizen in Connecticut is entitled to some equal level of protection wherever they live. Prevention and health education alone have the effect of reducing chronic disease. Our presence, although quiet and unnoticed most times, prevents costly disease outbreaks and the spread of diseases, as well; all of which translate to a huge savings on the part of the state for medical curative care.

I feel that big cities such as Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and the like have unique needs and complex departments that have not been considered in this regional approach. They should remain independent health departments and not be placed in districts or regions.

In summary, I ask that you restore the state per capita share to at least \$2.08 for districts so that we can survive and certainly would advocate a higher figure if finances someday allow.

Serving the towns of: East Windsor*Ellington*Enfield*Stafford*Suffield*Vernon*Windham*Windsor Locks