



Public Health Committee
Testimony prepared by Dr. Alice Pritchard
March 16, 2009

Good morning. My name is Alice Pritchard and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF). CWEALF is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. I am testifying today to raise concerns about *HB 6674: An Act Concerning Workforce Development And Improved Access To Health Care Services*.

As you may know, through the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, I serve as consultant to the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board. I have also been an advocate for nearly two decades on workforce development for women and girls in the state.

The Connecticut Allied Health Workforce Policy Board (AHWPB) was established in Public Act 04-220 (*An Act Concerning Allied Health Workforce Needs*) to conduct research and planning activities related to the allied health workforce. The Board began meeting in March 2005 and issued its first report to the legislature in February 2006. Throughout its tenure, the Board has met regularly to discuss current initiatives in allied health in the state, gaps in workforce data, issues related to educational programming, and recruitment and retention of the workforce, as well as researching and developing solutions to allied health workforce shortages.

Given its past work on allied health and nursing careers, I do not believe that a new group is needed but rather that the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board should continue to monitor the workforce supply and demand for nurse educators as well as best practices for promoting recruitment and retention of these workers. The Allied Health Workforce Policy Board has called for the creation of a Scholarship-for-Service model which has been used successfully in government and the armed forces to produce employees for areas of need. Through the *Health and Education Initiative*, the Connecticut Departments of Higher Education and Public Health and the Office for Workforce Competitiveness have invested in this type of support for nursing educators. With continued investment in the *Health and Education Initiative*, the state can undertake the kind of initiatives envisioned in this legislation.

With your support, the Board can continue to play a key role in convening stakeholders who are conducting a variety of initiatives. We have learned a great deal over the last several years and with implementation of our legislative recommendations the state can impact health care workforce shortages.

The experiences of key stakeholders and our commissioned research are highlighted in the *Allied Health Workforce Policy Board's Annual Legislative Report*. Copies of legislative report were sent to your office in early February.

I thank you for your time and am always available to answer any questions or provide additional information.