



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE Public Health Committee
March 12, 2010**

Meg Hooper, Branch Chief, Planning Branch 860-509-7218

Senate/House Bill 401 - An Act Concerning An Initiative to Increase and Improve the State's Health Care Workforce

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 401.

The proposal requires DPH, in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, Higher Education, Labor, and educational institutions, to develop an initiative to address the state's health care workforce shortages through the offering of expanded educational programs at public institutions of higher education.

DPH recognizes the importance of and the vital role we play in assuring an adequate health care workforce. The agency has worked closely with the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board created by Public Act 04-220 to identify issues and develop recommendations for nursing and other allied health professions. For the past three years, we have worked with the Department of Higher Education and Office of Workforce Competitiveness to build on that work and provide guidance and funding to educational institutions for programs that address teaching, nursing and allied health shortages. These collaborations and the AHWPB itself, has contributed to an in-depth assessment of current initiatives, identification of educational programming and recruitment/retention issues, regular dialogue among a large constituency, and more coordinated planning and program development.

Therefore, creating a new and separate initiative at DPH for the health care workforce would overlap and be counterproductive both fiscally and programmatically. In order for the Department to participate in this initiative we would require additional resources beyond what we already dedicate to the Allied Health Workforce Policy Board. As funding for this program is not available within the Governor's budget, the Department cannot support the bill at this time. We recommend that future planning and program development related to health care workforce shortages build on and utilize the established infrastructure of the AHWPB for consistency and efficiency.

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

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