



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 12, 2010

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House Bill 5452- An Act Concerning the Provision of Volunteer Health Care Services on a Temporary Basis

The Department of Public Health provides the following information and would like to share our concerns regarding House Bill 5452.

The Department applauds the efforts of health care practitioners in providing care and services to patients in Connecticut at no cost.

The provisions of this bill would authorize the Commissioner of Public Health to temporarily suspend licensing requirements to allow licensed practitioners from other states to provide volunteer care and services at free clinics or other similar events that provide health care services to Connecticut residents at no cost and at the Special Olympics or similar athletic competitions, without having to obtain a Connecticut license. The bill provides that such temporary practice cannot exceed the scope of practice permitted in Connecticut. It also allows the Department to adopt temporary policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of persons receiving such services, which shall be provided to the event organizer and posted on the DPH website not later than seven days prior to the start date of the event.

The bill does not require any group seeking a temporary suspension of licensing requirements to submit an application or any specific information regarding the event to the Department nor does it provide a time frame within which such requests must be submitted.

Where similar provisions already exist in statute, additional requirements are in place to ensure that out-of-state practitioners are held to substantially similar standards as practitioners who are licensed in Connecticut. The Department respectfully requests that instead of requiring the Commissioner to suspend licensing requirements during such events and adopting temporary policies and procedures, the statutes be amended to provide for a statutory exemption as follows:

No provisions of the general statutes shall be construed to prohibit an out-of-state practitioner who holds a current, unrestricted license or certificate in another state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia, from providing uncompensated care and services during free clinics or other similar events that provide health care services to Connecticut residents at no cost or at the Special Olympics or similar athletic competitions for persons with disabilities, provided such practitioner (A) does not represent himself or herself to be a Connecticut licensed practitioner; (B) only provides care and services to clients who are participating in the event; (C) maintains professional liability insurance or other indemnity against liability for professional malpractice equal to or greater than that required for practitioners who are licensed in Connecticut; and (C) only provides care and services authorized within the Connecticut statutes under the supervision of a Connecticut licensed practitioner within the same professional category. The organization sponsoring the event shall verify that each participating practitioner holds the required license and maintains the required professional liability insurance if applicable.

The language also needs to be modified to include professions that were omitted from the bill and to remove professions that would not be eligible to provide care and services during these types of events. Should this proposal move forward, the Department would be glad to identify those chapters of the general statutes that should be specifically included within the bill.

The Department of Public Health has worked with interested stakeholders concerning similar proposals in the past and would be pleased to continue to do in the future.

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

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