



**Written Testimony**  
**by Chancellor David Carter**  
Connecticut State University System  
Before the Public Health Committee  
March 12, 2010

Good morning, Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. Due to previous commitments, I am unable to appear before you today, but I wanted to submit comments for your consideration in support of Senate Bill 401, *"An Act Concerning an Initiative to Increase and Improve the State's Health Care Workforce."*

The bill requires the Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) and others, to develop an "initiative to address the state's health care workforce shortage." The goal is to increase the number of health care workers through expanding and enhancing programs at the State's public colleges and universities.

I applaud your efforts and stand ready to work with you on this critically important initiative. Given the growing and increasingly more complex needs of our citizenry, as well as the fiscal constraints that exist, it is more important than ever that a strategic plan reflect an efficient and effective use of the collective resources of the State. The nursing shortage, which is particularly acute in Connecticut, has a significant impact on the healthcare and safety of all Connecticut residents.

By way of background, the CSUS includes Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) and Western Connecticut State University (WCSU). The CSUS has graduated the most nurses with Bachelors' Degrees in the State of Connecticut during the past five years and is a critical pipeline feeding the State's severe nursing workforce shortage. While many nursing programs have developed short-term action plans, I share your interest in systemic, sustaining strategies to address this issue. Nursing programs in Connecticut must begin this process now, to provide a competent nursing workforce to meet present and future healthcare demands of the State.

CCSU currently offers two programs leading to a BSN – an RN to BSN program for Registered Nurses and a generic BSN program. The RN to BSN program has continued to significantly increase in numbers, and has a satellite cohort at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London.

SCSU, which recently marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Nursing Department, continues to offer a variety of educational programs in the field. The generic undergraduate nursing program continues to be in high demand. The addition of the Accelerated Career Entry (ACE) program for second-degree students in 2007 has been instrumental to our efforts to graduate a larger number of students in order to help address the state's nursing shortage.

This 12 month program has enabled the department to increase its overall number of baccalaureate prepared individuals by 40% over just the last two years. The Department of Nursing also offers a program for Registered Nurses seeking a baccalaureate degree. The program is delivered in an online format designed for working adult learners. The Master of Science in Nursing program continues to offer tracks in Nursing Education, Family Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Leader.

WCSU continues to respond to the educational needs of the healthcare workforce. WCSU offers a bachelor's degree in nursing and graduates approximately 45 students annually. This year they have been focusing resources on improving student retention through one-on-one tutoring, peer mentoring and utilizing open simulation laboratories. Students with an associate's degree in nursing from any of Connecticut's Community Colleges have been seamlessly enrolled in WCSU's RN to BS in Nursing. This year, they have a new cohort of students at Danbury Hospital while the cohort at the Waterbury Campus has almost doubled in number. The program is aligned with the articulation agreements between WCSU and our community college partners. WCSU also offers a master's degree in nursing with specializations in Adult Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Specialist. The enrollment in the master's degree program has doubled, and the university is now partnering with SCSU in developing a collaborative nurse educator program.

While ECSU does not offer a nursing program, in 2008 in cooperation with the University of Connecticut (UConn) and SCSU, they developed plans of study for students who wish to pursue UConn's MbEIN and the SCSU ACE nursing programs. These plans of study ensure that ECSU students are prepared to enter the UConn and Southern programs immediately upon graduation, enabling them to obtain nursing credentials approximately one year after receiving their bachelor's degree.

As you know, the Committee recently passed House Bill 5024, "An Act Concerning an Education Doctoral Degree Program in Nursing Education," which allows the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) to offer an Ed.D. Program in nursing education. As mentioned above, Southern and Western are developing a collaborative doctoral degree in nursing education. This initiative is integral to the state's collective effort to respond to the shortage of nurses and nurse educators to assure that health care delivery is not impeded for our citizens. The aim is to prepare at the doctoral level, specifically in nursing education, up to 80 new faculty over the next ten years. We anticipate that these same faculty members will prepare 2,000 new nurses by 2024.

Again, I wholeheartedly support your efforts and our universities stand ready to work with you in this effort. Please feel free to contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/Communications, should you require any additional information or have any questions regarding these matters.