

Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health
Comments on the Governor's Proposed Budget for the Department of Public Health
To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2011

The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health ("CADH") submits these comments on the Governor's proposed budget for the Department of Public Health ("DPH"). Recognizing the fiscal realities of the State, CADH appreciates the fact that the proposed allocation to support municipal and district health departments was level funded. We urge you to maintain this funding.

Last year this line item was cut dramatically. Currently, 44 health departments and one health district serving 46 towns and 783,063 Connecticut residents, receive **NO** state per capita funding, despite the fact that these departments continue to enforce the Public Health Code, prevent disease outbreaks, promote policies that support health and protect the public from health emergencies and health risks. Those departments that still receive state per capita funding were subject to reductions but their responsibilities have not diminished. Furthermore, these cuts removed any initiative for further regionalization. Local health departments cannot sustain any additional cuts and are already significantly challenged to meet statutorily mandated functions.

We support the proposed increases in the budget to the State Laboratory (the "Lab"). Local health departments benefit tremendously from the services provided by the Lab, without which local health departments would incur significant costs.

We also support the two proposed information technology positions. DPH lags far behind in information technology. As the keeper of significant surveillance systems that inform our public health priorities, this is a critical investment.

Local health directors also urge you to support **Proposed Bill Number 5618, *An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Council to Promote Enhanced Communication Between State and Local Public Health Officials.*** (See fact sheet attached.) As Commissioner Jewel Mullen mentioned in her testimony, the State receives significant public health funding from federal grants. It is in the best interest of public health for Connecticut to establish this Council to ensure that local and state governmental public health collaborate and engage in meaningful dialogue regarding the most effective and efficient use of these funds.

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 77 local health departments and districts. Since its incorporation in 1996, CADH has and continues to convene, engage, mobilize, and support Connecticut's local health departments and districts to strengthen and assure efficient and effective delivery of public health services. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut.

If we can be of further assistance to you, please feel free to contact Jennifer Kertanis, Executive Director, at (860) 727-9874, ex. 111 or jkertanis@cadh.org, or Alyssa Norwood, Health Program Associate, at (860) 727-9874, ex. 107 or anorwood@cadh.org. Thank you for your consideration.