



University of Connecticut
*Office of the Vice President for
Human Resources and Payroll*

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TESTIMONY

February 15, 2011

Labor and Public Employees Committee

**SB 359, AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYER NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES
REGARDING MANDATORY OVERTIME**

Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to **SB 359, AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYER NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES REGARDING MANDATORY OVERTIME**. My name is Donna Munroe, Vice President, Human Resources and Payroll Services at the University of Connecticut.

The University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) provides 24 hour medical care, 365 days per year to a broad segment of the state's population, including the incarcerated through the Correctional Managed Health Care program. The medical care we provide includes in-patient, out-patient and emergency room services. While well intentioned, this proposal would adversely affect the quality of care provided by the Health Center.

UCHC carefully plans and manages its staffing within the terms of the various collective bargaining agreements governing professional and paraprofessional health care staff to ensure that our patients receive the highest quality of care. Requiring employees to work overtime is a course of last resort. Nevertheless, a variety of instances of patient care emergencies arise affecting staffing and patient care that cannot not be predicted or anticipated. The number or frequency of such events in a given pay period is also unpredictable. To require 24 hours notice before mandating over 8 hours overtime in a pay period is untenable and would risk the health and safety of the population we serve. We say this while recognizing that being required to work overtime without notice is often a hardship on our employees. But we appreciate their recognition of the paramount importance of maintaining care for our patients that necessitates, in certain circumstances, their working overtime without advance notice.

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Patient care emergencies that may require employee overtime generally fall under two categories:

- (1) Emergency Coverage: A natural disaster, weather event, transportation disaster or epidemic.
- (2) Acuity/Severity of Illness or Medical Condition: When it is not in the patients best interest to change staff assisting in a procedure or event e.g. completion of a surgical procedure or completion of a neonatal transport.

Within Correctional Managed Health Care, overtime without notice does occur in emergency situations. In order to meet minimum staffing requirements and ensure safe staffing levels, an employee may be mandated to work into the next shift or for the full shift. Such a situation occurred when a large scale accident on I-95 prevented staff from getting to one facility and staff currently at the facility needed to stay until staff were able to arrive.

While we recognize the good intentions of this proposed legislation, if enacted, it would materially interfere with the Health Center's responsibility and ability to provide our patients with the continuity of medical care required to serve our patients. In addition, the proposal would interfere with the contractual agreements with our various unions and with which we've carefully worked to ensure appropriate and only essential use of emergent overtime.

Thank you for your attention and for your consideration.