



**American  
Red Cross**

Connecticut Blood Services Region

209 Farmington Avenue  
Farmington, Connecticut 06032  
Tel 860-678-2700  
Fax 860-676-8093  
www.bloodct.org

Testimony of Paul Sullivan 02-09-2011

Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Paul Sullivan. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross Connecticut Blood Services Region, which supplies a wide range of blood components and transfusion services to Connecticut's acute care hospitals. The health and safety of the blood supply is the essence of our mission. Ensuring the safety of our generous donors, patient recipients, volunteers and employees is our top priority. The fact is the American Red Cross blood supply is safer today than ever before.

Our Region has a staff of over 350 employees that are Connecticut based. I hope to keep those jobs in Connecticut and create new jobs by working to increase blood donors in our state; reduce blood imports from out of state, and achieve self sufficiency in Connecticut's blood supply, benefitting patients. As CEO and as a resident of this state, keeping jobs in Connecticut matters to me! However, I fear with the continued erosion of the Red Cross in Connecticut, my vision for growth in our Region is being severely threatened. In November, 2009 eighteen positions were eliminated in the Connecticut Blood Region due to the suspension of the Double Red Cell Program in Connecticut.

The requirement now proposed in Bill #6277 to have a nurse on site for the entire duration of every blood drive in Connecticut would further erode our ability to operate in the state and is not necessary for donor safety. We already have many layers of safety in place and highly trained staff fulfilling all regulatory requirements.

According to Public Health records, Connecticut is ranked as #7 in the country in nursing shortage estimates with a deficit of 11,100 nurses, and is estimated to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> worst nursing shortage in the nation by 2015. The inability to hire nurses to meet the requirements of this proposed legislation would lead us to base the number of blood drives on the number of available nurses.

This requirement would also increase costs, reduce our competitiveness with blood banks in other states, and ultimately cost Connecticut more jobs. Adding a minimum of ten RNs/LPN's, which we would be forced to do would cost the Red Cross an additional \$700,000. Our costs are passed on to Connecticut hospitals who are striving to fill their blood needs in a cost effective way. In October, 2009 St. Rafael's Hospital in New Haven made a decision to acquire blood products from a non-union blood center out of state, to reduce their costs. As a result, our distributions were reduced by 10,000 units of blood. These units are now collected by staff outside of Connecticut.

Finally, in Section Two of Bill #6277, we oppose legislation that impacts how we compensate employees which would place unnecessary constraints on us and interfere with our ability to operate efficiently as an employer.

Bill #6277 would make it extremely difficult to operate a viable blood collection program in Connecticut. Having a healthy and sustainable blood program matters. I believe that retaining jobs in Connecticut matters. This year, the American Red Cross Blood Services continues to celebrate 60 years proudly serving Connecticut hospitals. Please support us in our efforts to continue this good work.