

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**

*In Support of Raised Bill 6305: An Act Concerning Implementation of the Sustinet Plan*

To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the

Insurance and Real Estate, Public Health, and Human Services Committees

February 14, 2011

Good afternoon, distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate, Public Health, and Human Services Committees. My name is Steve Huleatt, and I am a board member of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, or "CADH," and Director of the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District.

CADH supports *Raised Bill 6305: An Act Concerning Implementation of the Sustinet Plan*. We do however, urge you to consider changes in the bill that support a role for public health as a key partner in statewide health reform. Specifically:

- Section 3(b), which sets forth the composition of the Sustinet Plan Authority's board of directors (the "Board"), should be amended to include representation from local and state governmental public health. Public health promotes health programs and policies that support good health; prevents disease outbreaks and conditions that give rise to poor health; and protects people from health threats. As such, public health is a critical to ensuring cost containment in statewide health reform by addressing health at a population level, often well before individual problems become acute.
- Section 11(a) of the bill provides that the Sustinet Plan will be administered "to slow the growth of health care costs, improve the quality of health care services and improve members' health outcomes." Its charge should also state that the Sustinet Plan will be administered to promote quality and cost-saving public health initiatives and population-based health services.
- Section 11(c)(3) provides that the Sustinet Plan Authority will "provide community-based preventive care services, including, but not limited to, immunizations, simple tests and health care screenings at locations such as job sites, schools or other community locations." The bill language should recognize the critical role that local health departments already play in providing community-based preventive care services.

CADH also looks forward to working as a part of or in partnership with the Board to further its work in the following areas:

- "Develop[ing] recommendations for public education and outreach campaigns to ensure that state residents are informed about the Sustinet Plan and are encouraged to enroll in the plan," as provided in Section 11(c)(5). As well-established and trusted sources of health information for community residents, local health departments are well-positioned to engage in such education and outreach.
- Ensuring improvements in "effective prevention and management of chronic illness, and reducing racial and ethnic health disparities involving health care and health outcomes," as provided in Section 11(c)(8). Local health departments perform these functions and have the expertise to be a provider of these services within the context of Sustinet.
- Serving on standing committees to address "methods to prevent and control chronic illnesses and significant health risks, including diabetes, hypertension, tobacco use and obesity," as provided in Section 11(e)(2). Local health departments have significant experience in these and other areas, including lead prevention and control, ensuring food safety, and addressing indoor air quality problems.

CADH supports *Raised Bill 6305*, subject to potential changes outlined above that recognize public health as a key partner in implementing Sustinet. Thank you for your consideration.