



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE March 11, 2011

Jennifer L. Filippone, Health Care Systems Branch, (860) 509-7590

House Bill 6549 - An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Oversight Responsibilities Relating to Scope of Practice Determinations for Health Care Professions

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 6549.

Although the Department does not believe that there are significant deficiencies in the outcomes of the existing scope of practice determination process, we do recognize the potential benefits of a more formal process that is focused on public health and safety and based on standardized criteria, and that can also be used to gather, analyze and evaluate information from stakeholders. House Bill 6549 mandates a formal process for the submission and review of requests submitted by health care professions seeking to revise existing scope of practice language or to establish a new scope of practice. Scope of practice review committees would review and evaluate scope of practice requests and provide written assessments of the requests to the Public Health Committee, including any legislative recommendations. The Department of Public Health would be responsible for receiving scope of practice requests and for establishing and providing support to each of the scope of practice review committees.

The Department supports the development of specific criteria that would provide common standards to be applied in submitting a scope of practice request to the legislature and establishing time frames for the submission of such requests as well as any statements of opposition. However, although the Department is willing to continue to informally meet with professions to discuss scope of practice issues, we do not have the necessary resources to support the recommended scope of practice review committee model. In addition to overseeing the process and participating in committee meetings as an ex-officio member, the Department would clearly be responsible for providing administrative direction and support to the scope of practice review committees. The Department cannot absorb the costs associated with this process within our current budget allotment.

Department staff shares the frustration of health care practitioners and members of the Public Health Committee that the scope of practice review process is complex, resource-intensive and time consuming, and acknowledges that there is currently no formal structure for dialogue between professions when differences occur. While a more structured process may be beneficial, the proposed model does not appear to encourage opposing parties to find common areas of agreement which can provide a solid foundation for scope of practice discussions. The scope of practice review committee model shifts the burden of determining which stakeholder has the most credible argument from the legislature to an outside panel. Should this proposal move forward, the Department would welcome the opportunity to provide more specific comments concerning the proposed scope of practice review committee process and structure for your review and consideration.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

*Phone: (860) 509-7269, Fax: (860) 509-7100
Telephone Device for the Deaf (860) 509-7191
410 Capitol Avenue - MS # 13GRE
P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134
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