

TESTIMONY

To the Public Health Committee

HB 6618: An Act Concerning Various Revisions to Public Health Related Statutes

March 23, 2011

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Abby Beale. I am here today representing Homeopathy for Connecticut, a group of individuals committed to improving access to homeopathy by affecting a change in the law to allow nationally certified homeopaths to practice in Connecticut.

The purpose of my testimony is to request that you include recognition of nationally certified homeopaths as part of Raised Bill 6618: An Act Concerning Various Revisions to Public Health Related Statutes.

The practice of homeopathy is restricted in Connecticut. Ours is only one of three states (the others being Arizona and Nevada) that require a license to practice homeopathy, and only medical doctors may apply for this license. This is a result of a law enacted in 1893 – 118 years ago! In contrast, the vast majority of homeopaths in the United States are independent practitioners in their own right and are not medical doctors.

Although the practice of homeopathy is licensed in Connecticut, homeopathic remedies are sold over the counter and anyone is free to purchase and use them for self-care at home. Also, naturopathic physicians in Connecticut may prescribe homeopathic remedies as part of their scope of practice but cannot call themselves homeopaths.

The issue here is that well trained and nationally certified professional homeopaths cannot practice in Connecticut. This has limited the availability of homeopaths in the state. Currently there are 10 licensed homeopathic medical doctors in the state and most practice homeopathy on a limited basis, if at all. Consequently, consumer access to homeopathic care is very restricted here in Connecticut – perhaps more than any other state.

It is important to note that homeopaths and doctors are two distinct professions with very different educations and training requirements. Homeopathy is a discipline unto itself. Regardless of whether a homeopath also has a degree in medicine, nursing, chiropractic, acupuncture or anything else, *a homeopath prescribes homeopathic remedies, selected from the law of similars*. That is all a homeopath does. Unlike a medical doctor, a homeopath does not diagnose diseases, administer or dispense legend drugs or controlled substances, engage in surgery or any in practices that invade the human body by puncture of the skin, or set fractures.

What we are proposing is to allow nationally certified homeopaths the ability to practice in Connecticut – these are individuals who have successfully passed the national certification exam and earn the designation of Certified Classical Homeopath (CCH).

The national Council for Homeopathic Certification examines and certifies homeopaths and has offered to verify certification and achievement of annual continuing education requirements for the State of Connecticut, making this a no cost proposal for the State.

Certification is a rigorous process. To qualify as a nationally certified homeopath the Council on Homeopathic Certification requires that a person have: (1) 500 hours of homeopathic training, (2) college level courses in anatomy, physiology and pathology, (3) 250

hours of clinical experience including 10 supervised cases; (4) passed the three-part national certification exam; and (5) presented five cases taken without supervision. To maintain this certification, practitioners must complete a minimum of 14 continuing education units each calendar year.

Recognition of certified homeopaths assures the public of a high level of competence among practitioners. It will also attract more qualified homeopaths to Connecticut and improve consumer access. Allowing more homeopaths to practice in Connecticut allows growth of a system of natural health care that is safe, effective and green and is recognized throughout the world.

We offer the following statutory language be included in Raised Bill XX:

(A) "Certified Homeopath" means an individual who has successfully passed the requirements and examination provided by the National Council for Homeopathic Certification.

(B) A Certified Homeopath may prescribe homeopathic remedies, selected from the law of similars, excluding a legend drug or controlled substance.

(C) The commissioner of public health shall obtain from the National Council for Homeopathic Certification a listing of all state residents maintained on said organization's registry of certified homeopaths. The commissioner shall make such listing available for public inspection.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and would be happy to answer any questions you might have at this time, or you may contact me at 203-530-3367 with any questions.

COUNCIL FOR HOMEOPATHIC CERTIFICATION

TOGETHER WE'RE DEFINING THE PROFESSION

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March 2, 2010

Dear Ms. Wolf and Ms. Beale:

The CHC understands that a group of homeopaths and consumers are working together in Connecticut to change the laws to allow the practice of homeopathy by highly qualified homeopaths, specifically those with the CCH designation.

We understand that this model of certification relies on the Council for Homeopathic Certification to set the prerequisite requirements for certification, administer the exam, and communicate with the Connecticut Department of Public Health when needed to verify certification in place of the State of Connecticut setting the standard for professional homeopaths.

The CHC supports Ms. Beale's and Wolf's statement that the standards for the profession of homeopathy "are best set and maintained by the profession itself rather than by state government." As Ms. Beale and Ms. Wolf have noted "this approach has two strong advantages. It allows the standards of practice to evolve with the profession and remain relevant. It also offers a model of regulation for the state that does not require establishing a mechanism for setting standards and administering an exam. Succeeding in this effort would be breaking new ground in the practice of homeopathy in the United States."

While the CHC is solely a certifying body, and does not engage in either PAC or legislative issues, the CHC supports Ms. Beale and Wolf's efforts and proposal to change the Connecticut state law to allow homeopaths who have achieved the distinction of Certified Classical Homeopath (CCH) to fully practice homeopathy and call themselves Homeopaths.

Sincerely,

Jacki Fox
Executive Director