



University of Connecticut Health Center
John Dempsey Hospital

TESTIMONY

**SB 970 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND
RESPONSE IN HEALTH CARE SETTINGS**

**Public Health Committee
February 23, 2011**

Senator Stillman, Representative Ritter, members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of SB 970 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IN HEALTH CARE SETTINGS. I am Dr. Mike Summerer, Director of John Dempsey Hospital at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

The growing concern over workplace violence in healthcare settings becomes magnified as examples occur across the nation and in our own state. At our institution, the dual mission of education and healthcare co-located within the same buildings and campus requires balancing our commitment to provide our employees with a safe and secure work environment, our students with a safe learning environment and our patients with a safe environment of care. Towards this end, we have developed committee structures to review security management risks, and are reinvigorating our workplace violence threat assessment team that includes our Clinical Safety Committee, Public Safety and Human Resources Departments. We have also developed a training program for staff to build skills to “de-escalate” behaviors of patients and visitors. All of this is considered best practice and is consistent with the expectations of the Joint Commission, which accredits healthcare institutions nationally, including John Dempsey Hospital. Passage of this bill will enhance the work we are already engaged in.

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, and a significant number of patients with psychiatric disorders. The medical care we provide includes in-patient, out-patient and emergency room services. While we support Section 1(f) of the bill in principle, we have some concerns with the language as drafted. We would very much like the opportunity to work with you and the proponents of the bill to redraft this section so that we can adequately balance the medical needs of our patients while also protecting the safety of our staff.

I urge your support of SB 970 with a modification to Section 1(f). Thank you for your attention and for your consideration.

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