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SB 1052 – An Act Concerning the Practice of Acupuncture

Testimony of Heather Finn, L.Ac. Public Health Committee Public Hearing March 2nd, 2011

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing as a Licensed Acupuncturist in the state of Connecticut, where I have worked since earning my Masters of Acupuncture (M.Ac.) from the New England School of Acupuncture in Watertown, Massachusetts in 2000. (My undergraduate degree is from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts).

I work for these non-profit organizations:

1. The **Department of Integrative Medicine, Hartford Hospital**, at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center in Avon.
2. The **Department of Integrated Health Services, Windham Hospital** in Willimantic.
3. **Eastern Connecticut Health Network's (ECHN) Women's Center for Wellness** in South Windsor.
4. The **Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective**.

I want to thank the Committee for raising SB 1052 ('AAC The Practice of Acupuncture'), and not only urge you to approve it in Committee but also to support and advocate for this bill on the Senate and House floors.

At the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center in Avon, I treat cancer patients with acupuncture for the side effects they experience from chemotherapy and radiation. As you know, chemotherapy and radiation are life-saving therapies, but they can be highly toxic to patients. Receiving acupuncture enables patients to better tolerate these therapies, which means they are less likely to drop out of their cancer treatment, and they are able to experience a better quality of life during their cancer treatment. Many patients arrive at their acupuncture appointment immediately after receiving chemotherapy or radiation just down the hall.

I'd like to address the issue of the word "diagnosis." **Clearly, I am not diagnosing anyone with cancer.** Oncologists and/or Oncology Nurses refer their patients to me once they make that diagnosis and their patients start traditional cancer therapies. **I am able to best serve these patients by making a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) diagnosis** – so I can tailor each treatment to each patient. SB 1052 is important because it accurately reflects acupuncture as it is practiced in Connecticut today.

Thank you very much for raising this important bill and considering my experience.