



377 Research Parkway, Suite 2-D
Meriden, CT 06450-7160
203-238-1207

**TESTIMONY RE: SENATE BILL No. 1202, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE
MARCH 23, 2011**

Good Morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Welsh, Representative Perillo and members of the Public Health Committee. Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut.

I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University. I have practiced nursing for over 45 years and have been educating nurses in Connecticut in both the public and private sector for over 35 years. The Connecticut Nurses Association speaks in support of the initiatives outlined in S.B. 1202, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.

Nurse educators are aware of the growing nursing shortage of providers across all settings and educators to prepare nurses as the profession ages this concern deepens, especially in Connecticut where the workforce is slightly older. Peter Buerhaus predicts that by 2025 we will need 260,000 professional nurses as patient's age and present with complicated multisystem failure. The shortage will become a growing issue as nurses retire over the next decade. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts 581, 500 new RN positions equating to a 22% increase by 2018.

So some would say all we need to do is to educate more nurses and mobilize the ones already in nursing. That's the sticky wicket. We do not have enough space in our programs currently to move significant numbers of individuals into nursing.

We do not have enough faculty or enough faculty positions and we do not have sufficient clinical space to move large numbers into the clinical laboratory. However, we have a clear mandate from several organizations that have been studying the "Future of Nursing" and the role of nursing in the provision of health care across the continuum.

So what should we do, Connecticut is in a unique position. We are a small state and we all talk to each other. I believe it is time for all of us, educators, administrators, nurses, to think globally and proactively to address this proposed legislation and design a model for the state that is of high quality and cost effective.

We need to heed the recommendations of The Robert Wood Johnson Study on the Future of Nursing, the Institute of Medicine Report and the Josiah Macy Foundation that recommends

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
- Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health care professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
- Effective workforce planning and policy making requires better data collection and information infrastructure. (IOM)

It is our recommendation that a task force be established to address the issues outlined in this proposed legislation. Our goal should be to develop statewide infrastructure to address ongoing ever-changing issues related to professional education and mobility. Before we can effectively address each issue outlined in this proposed

legislation, the leadership in the health professions must come to the table and assess what are our actual workforce needs, what is the most appropriate level of education for quality, safe care and how do we in Connecticut best address the outlined issues in view of the current economic environment.

This proposed legislation provides us with a huge opportunity, at a very significant time in our professional evolution, to create a model to address our state work force needs and to create viable solutions for nurses who seek to continue their education. The model must be based on sound educational principles in order to prepare high quality health professionals through Doctoral education. This model should emphasize statewide partnerships to capitalize on current resources and maximize outcomes.

We need to be progressive and proactive. We need to develop a high quality cost effective model that takes into consideration the needs of the individuals we intend to educate, working adult learners. This is an opportunity to prevent a crisis in health care. In order to provide care for the citizens of Connecticut we need to seize the moment and move forward in an organized fashion as we create a seamless mechanism for mobility across all levels of nursing education that is built on sound workforce data.

Thank you