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**Raised Bill 5618, An Act Concerning the Establishment of a Council to Promote Enhanced Communication Between State and Local Public Health Officials**

March 2, 2011

Senators Stillman and Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee:

The Board of Health of the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) is submitting testimony in support of Raised Bill 5618. This bill would establish an advisory committee to promote enhanced communication and collaboration between the Department of Public Health, municipal health departments and local health districts. We are a regional public health department serving nearly 95,000 people in our member towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield.

Critical components of this legislation address the allocation of public health resources among the Department and local health departments/districts (LHDs), the implementation of state and federal policies affecting LHDs, and policy changes proposed by the Department or LHDs. It also provides a role for an Advisory Committee to collaborate on grants that the Department submits for federal funding.

Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and LHDs bear the responsibility for implementation and enforcement of statutes, regulations, programs and policies at the local level. Despite this shared responsibility for the public's health, there is no requirement for shared decision-making.

There are numerous examples of how such a partnership between state and local governmental public health would benefit our residents and government.

- LHDs are the implementers of the essential public health services and should contribute to deliberations on the feasibility of proposed initiatives, regarding both achievability and fiscal impact.
- In our current economic state, budget cuts necessitate an inclusive process to maintain efficiency and effectiveness of state and federal grants and funds to protect the health of our people.
- Thoughtful collaboration between state and local public health will produce greater accountability to the state, municipalities and people we serve.

The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) have provided funding for public health emergency preparedness programs for over 10 years. These funds are distributed to the state and local health departments. CDC requires that all applications for these funds demonstrate consensus, approval, or concurrence between state and local officials.

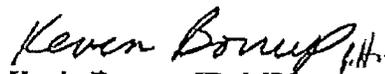
The Department is in the process of developing several applications for federal funding that will affect people or require enforcement at the local level. These include initiatives for "Healthy Homes" that

may involve regulations related to "healthy" new and existing housing, as well as chronic disease initiatives that would involve cross-cutting approaches to diseases and conditions with similar risk factors that can be prevented or modified through more integrated strategies. These applications can only be strengthened by collaboration between local and state public health, and may result in greater success in obtaining federal funding to sustain ensuring the good health, public health protections, and effective delivery of services for our residents.

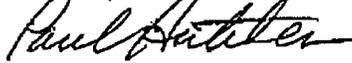
Recently Utah passed legislation establishing a process to ensure mandatory consultation between state and local public health entities (Utah Code 26-1-4). The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) has provided a copy of this statute to the committee. This law may serve as a model for a comparable statute for Connecticut.

The legislation designates the committee composition as five members appointed by the Commissioner of Health and five appointed by the Executive Director of CADH. Our Board recommends that one of these members should be a representative of a local board of health.

Sincerely,

  
Kevin Borup, JD, MPA  
Chairman, Board of Health  
(representing Newington, CT)

Sincerely,

  
Paul Hutcheon, MPH, RS  
District Director of Health

CCHD Board of Health Members and Appointing Towns:

Patricia Checko, Dr PH, Vice-chair	(Berlin, CT)
Dianne Doot, MD	(Wethersfield, CT)
Grant Golub, MD	(Wethersfield, CT)
Raymond Jarema, PE	(Berlin, CT)
Nancy Merrill Klatt, RPh	(Wethersfield, CT)
Enzo Pistrutto	(Newington, CT)
Judith A. Sartucci, MSN, RN	(Rocky Hill, CT)
Carolyn Wysocki, MA, MHSA	(Berlin, CT)
Arthur P. Yoaps, RS	(Rocky Hill, CT)

Cc: Sen. Paul Doyle  
Sen. John Fonfara  
Sen. Terry Gerratana  
Rep. Catherine Abercrombie  
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Rep. Anthony Guerrero  
Rep. Russ Morin  
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