



March 11, 2011

*Testimony of Justin LeDuc, on behalf of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association, in Support of HB 6549: "AAC the Department Of Public Health's Oversight Responsibilities Relating to Scope Of Practice Determinations for Health Care Professions."*

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Justin LeDuc. I am the Head Athletic Trainer at Trinity College, and the Chair of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association Governmental Affairs Committee. I am here today to testify on behalf of the association in support of HB 6549. This bill would provide a formal process, under the oversight of the Department of Public Health, by which health care professions seeking a change in their scope of practice could make such requests. This would relieve the legislature, principally this committee, of being in the position of having to make decisions about scope of practice, which many members often feel less than knowledgeable to make, particularly when there is disagreement among professions about the requested changes. This bill would provide a formal mechanism for resolving such conflicts, and would make the process much more equitable for emerging professions and those without deep pockets – both of which describe the athletic training profession. Athletic training is a relatively young profession with many fewer members and a significantly lower budget than the professions who traditionally choose to protect their "turf" and oppose us. The current process allows requests for scope of practice changes to become political, in that some professions protect their "turf" through the lobbying process. Professions with large memberships and budgets are at a decided advantage when facing smaller groups, as there are more members to mobilize to lobby legislators and more funds with which to hire lobbyists. Instead of allowing for an objective examination of the impact on both patients and the public good a requested scope of practice change might have, the current process unfortunately can result in a political football game over professional "turf."

The proposed process in HB 6549 would allow for scope requests to be evaluated in a more objective fashion by members of multiple health care professions and a member



of the public, while allowing both the profession requesting the change and others who oppose the change to be heard in a formal manner. By requiring the issues between professions that invariably arise when there are scope of practice change requests to be resolved prior to these requests reaching the legislature, the onus for resolving such conflicts is taken off legislators, many of whom have expressed feeling unqualified to have to make these decisions anyway. The proposed process should also help to streamline the scope change process, instead of the current process which sees such requests drag on from session to session, often slowed purposefully by opposing professions.

It is imperative that all health care professionals be able to practice to the fullest extent of their education and training, particularly in light of health care reform. Students who graduate from colleges and universities in Connecticut should be able to find opportunities to practice to the fullest extent of their education and training without having to leave the state. When professional practice evolves, and practice standards change, the statutes must also change to keep up. Providing a formal mechanism to evaluate requests for scope of practice changes would be beneficial to all involved. We urge you to support HB 6549. Thank you.