

CONNECTICUT CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER TASIK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONNECTICUT CHAPTER OF THE
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
ON H.B. No. 6375 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE
SYSTEM OF VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

March 3, 2011

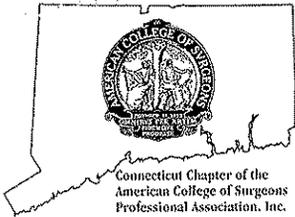
Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony today on the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act. Dr. Campbell did an excellent job explaining the role of those who developed this legislation, the principal objectives of the act and how the legislation expands upon, modifies and clarifies existing Connecticut law. I would like to speak briefly about why this Act is so important to Connecticut.

I have the privilege of working with some of the most dedicated professionals on the face of the earth, surgeons. It is because of their unwavering dedication to proving quality patient care and safety that the hundreds of surgeons represented by the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons Professional Association, Inc. ("CTACSPA") is committed to this legislation. We are here on their behalf, asking you to join in our commitment and vote this Bill into law.

Connecticut has been fortunate in that we have not had a major disaster along the lines of Hurricanes Katrina or Andrew or 9/11 but had things been different, the Kleen Energy plan explosion last February had the potential to be much worse. While February 7, 2010 saw 5 lives tragically lost and 12 people injured at a plant that was under construction there was ample capacity in Connecticut's trauma system to rapidly mobilize and address the situation.

However, if we roll the clock ahead almost one year, to today, the plant would be fully open and operating at capacity. It's a weekday when staffing levels are at their peak, there might be a class of school children or more in the plant learning about energy generation, there are

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vendors and consultants on site and the same explosion rocks the plant. The numbers of dead and wounded would be significantly higher, perhaps so high that it stretches beyond the limit of our trauma system. We would require volunteers as soon as possible to help supplement our existing resources. While a tragedy of this scale is something we never want to think about, it is something we for which need to be prepared. The UEHVPA is the legislation we need in place to protect Connecticut residents for the day when the unthinkable happens.

This is also an opportunity for CT to take the lead in New England and be the first state in our region to adopt this legislation. Once passed here, perhaps our neighbors will see the importance of the UEHVPA and join the compact so that we can assist each other when we are at our most vulnerable.

My written testimony includes from a letter written by Drs. James and Melanie Korndorffer of Tulane University School of Medicine detailing their first-hand experience and frustrations attempting to assist after Katrina hit in 2005. Ultimately, the lack of a Uniform system prevented them from volunteering their services to help provide relief to surgeons who had worked for 96 continuous hours without rest.

I have also included a copy of the American College of Surgeons Statement Supporting the *Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act*.

I encourage you to read the Korndorffer's as it tells a story that none of us who are testifying today has experienced. Their story is one of hundreds that have been related since Katrina and one we hope is never repeated should tragedy strike Connecticut.

Most importantly, the UEHVPA helps protect that which is most important, our families, friends and neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. The CTACSPA looks forward to celebrating the passage of this bill, with your support, in 2011.

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PMB 275 - 65 High Ridge Road - Stamford, CT 06905
Tel: 203-674-0747 - Fax: 203-674-0765 - E-mail: info@ctacs.org