



160 St. Francis Street, New Haven, CT 06511-2900 (203) 865-0587 FAX (203) 865-4997

**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony
in Support of
House Bill 6375 An Act Establishing an Emergency Response System of Volunteer Health
Care Practitioners
Public Safety Committee
March 3, 2011**

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety Committee, on behalf of the more than 7,000 physicians and physician-in-training members of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you today in support of **House Bill 6375 An Act Establishing an Emergency Response System of Volunteer Health Care Practitioners**. Passing this legislation will strengthen Connecticut's ability to provide the highest quality of care quickly and efficiently in times of emergency.

Although Connecticut has adopted the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), its provisions only apply to state and local employees governed by mutual aid agreements. EMAC fails to tap into the tremendous resources we have in our state through private-sector volunteers. Though disaster relief programs and entities such as the Red Cross routinely call upon such volunteers, until recently, they have been left out when considering Connecticut's emergency planning assets.

CSMS is pleased to have been a partner with the Department of Public Health in providing outreach to physicians in preparation for such emergencies. These activities, led by our Committee on Disaster Preparedness, have been successful in engaging small-practice physicians, who represent a majority of those in Connecticut, in planning for times when they may be needed.

Physicians throughout the country are seeking uniformity in Volunteer Emergency Response Laws. Volunteer Health Practitioners are typically deployed by source agencies located in multiple states and sent to host states when disasters occur. It is simply not feasible nor practical for agencies we depend on to focus their efforts on providing rapid, efficient, and quality services in disaster situations to be familiar with ever-changing licensing and certification requirements in various states. Success depends on a simple, clear and automatically implemented system for Volunteer Health Care Practitioners.

Physicians want to be a part of the emergency response system in Connecticut and to provide necessary, urgent and emergency care in times of disasters without fear of changes in licensure or law that could restrict their ability to provide assistance.

Please Support HB 6375.