

Bonhomme, Penny

From: Denise Smith [dsmith@centraltahec.org]
Sent: Friday, March 23, 2012 1:50 PM
To: PHC Testimony
Subject: HB 5527 Health Reform Workgroup -Central AHEC testimony

Please find below testimony prepared by Central AHEC, Inc. in support of the Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee HB 5527.

Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee: my name is Denise Smith. I am the Director of Career and Education Initiatives and Coordinator of the Heart Strong: Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention program for Central Area Health Education Center, Inc. Central AHEC, Inc. strongly supports H.B. 5527: An Act Concerning a Working Group to Study Healthcare Reform. The scope of the working group “to make recommendations concerning...funding to strengthen community health programs... incentives for wellness initiatives...changes to health care delivery systems and issues relating to chronic disease” [1] is an important step towards a improving access to care, elimination of health disparities and improving health equity for all CT residents, but particularly those who experience our state’s poorest health outcomes.

Black and Hispanics represent just over 23% of Connecticut’s population [2] but continue to lead the state in the prevalence of most chronic health illnesses. They are more likely to be low-income, have lower employer coverage rates, more likely to be unemployed, and when employed, they are more likely to work low-wage jobs, which are less likely to offer coverage [3]. Fifteen percent of Blacks and 22% of Hispanics experience cost as a barrier to accessing health care. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of Blacks and 41.5% of Hispanics do not have a personal doctor or “medical home” where comprehensive care is received [4].

African American and Hispanic residents experience CT’s highest age adjusted heart disease morbidity and mortality, and experience higher rates of diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol [5]. Infant mortality among people of color in CT is more than 3 times that of other residents. A focus on the prevention of chronic disease is the key to controlling health care costs...ensuring the well-being of all our residents and helping residents lead healthier lifestyles, especially among population groups at greatest risk [6].

According to the RWJF study of AMA primary care and pediatric physicians, “Today’s health care system and its focus on treating medical conditions neglects the significant role that social needs – such as nutritious food, transportation, adequate housing and employment status – play in the health of Americans, especially the most vulnerable among us [7]. The study and recommendations of the HB 5527 Work Group can further our statewide understanding and discourse to include the achievement of “health equity, the elimination of disparities and the improvement of health for all groups” as championed in the goals of Healthy People 2020 [8].

Since 1988, the mission of Central AHEC, Inc. has been the elimination of health disparities achieved through the development and coordination of health careers exploration and training programs, health education initiatives and health care service for Connecticut’s medically underserved. In collaboration with state agencies, health providers, faith and community based organizations we empower current and future health care providers and community members to address and respond to issues of health equity, access to care and cultural competency through the Department of Health Resources and Services Administration performance based measures and evidenced based interventions.

We support HB 5527: An Act Concerning a Working Group to Study Healthcare Reform and welcome the opportunity to contribute our diverse knowledge and unique experiences to future work group discussions on healthcare reform which we believe will lead to improved public health for all Connecticut residents.

Sincerely,

Denise O. Smith
Director of Career and Education Initiatives Heart Strong Coordinator Central Area Health Education Center, Inc.
20-28 Sargeant Street, first Floor
Hartford, CT 06105
T: 860-920-5149
E: dsmith@centralctahec.org
W: www.centralctahec.org
F: 860-920-5136

References

[1] State of Connecticut. Raised Bill 5527: An Act Concerning a Working Group to Study Health Care Reform.

[2] CT Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau (updated Jan 2012). Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/09000.html>

[3] Health Reform and Communities of Color: How might it affect racial and ethnic health disparities (2009)? Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

[4] A Health Status Report on African Americans in Connecticut (2007) The Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches Health Committee

[5] Burden of Cardiovascular Disease (2011). State of CT Department of Public Health

[6] DPH Commissioner Dr. Jewel Mullen (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?Q=487586&A=3987>

[7] Health Care's Blind Side: the Overlooked Connection between Social Needs and Good Health (2011). Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

[8] Healthy People 2020 Disparities (2010). Retrieved at: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/disparitiesAbout.aspx>

Denise Smith
Heart Strong Coordinator
Central Area Health Education Center, Inc.
www.centraltahec.org
T: 860-920-5149 x 114
E: dsmith@centraltahec.org
F: 860-920-5136

From: Traugh, Kathi [kathi.traugh@yale.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2012 9:20 AM
To: Denise Smith
Cc: Meredith Ferraro; Joan Lane; Patricia Harrity; Catherine Wagner; clark-dufner@uchc.org; gould@uchc.org; Elizabeth Lorensen; Noele Kidney
Subject: Re: AHEC testimony

Denise I am tied up in training but have asked Some folks to get back to you

Kathi Traugh

On Mar 21, 2012, at 8:43 AM, "Denise Smith" <dsmith@centraltahec.org> wrote:

> What time is the hearing?
>
> Denise Smith
> Director of Career and Education Initiatives Heart Strong Coordinator
> Central Area Health Education Center, Inc.
> www.centraltahec.org
> T: 860-920-5149 x 114
> E: dsmith@centraltahec.org
> F: 860-920-5136
>
>

> From: Meredith Ferraro [mferraro@swctahec.org]
> Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 3:23 PM
> To: Joan Lane; Patricia Harrity; Denise Smith; Catherine Wagner;
> clark-dufner@uchc.org; gould@uchc.org; Elizabeth Lorensen; Kathi
> Traugh
> Subject: Fwd: AHEC testimony
>
> Hi all-
> Is anyone able to help out with this? If so, please let Kathi know. Unfortunately I will be @ a family
> commitment.
> Best,
>
> Meredith
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>

> From: "Traugh, Kathi"
> <kathi.traugh@yale.edu<mailto:kathi.traugh@yale.edu>>
> Date: March 20, 2012 2:46:34 PM EDT
> To: Meredith Ferraro
> <mferraro@swctahec.org<mailto:mferraro@swctahec.org>>
> Subject: AHEC testimony
>
> Meredith
>
> See attached bill we (CPHA) just found out about. Hearing is tomorrow. Any chance that AHEC
> (maybe the CT office) might testify? I was not sure if this was the kind of policy you guys would weigh
> in on. Can share our testimony if that helps.
>
> Kathi Traugh, MPH
> Asst Director, CT-RI Public Health Training Center Public Health
> Professional Development Coordinator Yale School of Public Health,
> Office of Community Health
> 135 College Street, Suite 200
> New Haven, CT 06510
> T-203-785-2868
> F-203-757-4591
>
>
>
> MailShield Message Security: Check
> Authenticity<[http://www.exchangedefender.com/verify.asp?id=q2KJNoVU014](http://www.exchangedefender.com/verify.asp?id=q2KJNoVU014982&from=mferraro@swctahec.org)
> 982&from=mferraro@swctahec.org>
>