



**Connecticut State Medical Society
Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Physicians
Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons
Testimony on Senate Bill 186 An Act Concerning the Licensing, Investigation and
Disciplinary Process for Physicians and Nurses.**

**Public Health Committee
March, 7, 2012**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, on behalf of the more than 8,500 members of the Connecticut State Medical Society, (CSMS) and the Connecticut Chapters of the American College of Surgeons and the American College of Physicians, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today on **Senate Bill 186 An Act Concerning the Licensing, Investigation and Disciplinary Process for Physicians and Nurses**

First, our organizations wholeheartedly support the increase in the number of physicians on the Connecticut Medical Examining Board from 5 to 14. We also continue to welcome the inclusion of non physician members on the committee who have demonstrated to be strong advocates for the delivery of quality medical care in our state. We also support the expansion of the number of members listed as able to serve on medical hearing panels. We do however question the intent of the removal of all references to the need for physicians to be practicing in the state in order to serve on the medical examining board. It is imperative that members continue to be licensed and practicing in the state of Connecticut as the original intent of the creation of the examining board was to have physicians and others engaged in the treatment and care of patients in Connecticut to monitor, review and if necessary enforce clearly articulated standards of care for Connecticut.

Further in testimony we offer additional comments on remaining sections of the proposed legislation. However, we would be remiss not to take this opportunity to reiterate a position that we have shared with this committee in the past regarding the structure and operation of the state Medical Examining Board. CSMS continues to assert that Connecticut should follow the lead of several other states as well as the Federation of State Medical Boards and establish an independent and autonomous MEB. The creation of a self sustainable, diverse, transparent and effective independent Board would serve the best interest of Connecticut residents and physicians.

CSMS must raise significant concerns regarding subsequent sections of the bill. CSMS had the honor and pleasure of working with previous members of this committee as well as the Department of Public Health (DPH) to establish comprehensive and acceptable statutes requiring physicians to participate in continuing medical education (CME). Connecticut has one of the strongest and more stringent requirements in the country tied to continuation of medical education for physicians. In addition, as recently as 2010, yet another mandated CME requirement was placed on physicians of the state. Therefore, we respectfully oppose the increase in the mandated number of CME hours required by Connecticut physicians, given the administrative and financial burden this will place on practicing physicians in Connecticut at a time where we have a clearly identified shortage of physicians.

Our CME statutes are strong and serve their purpose. We strongly support the need for physicians to continually update their skills and knowledge as healthcare treatment evolves. However, as we continue to work together to attract and retain skilled physicians, we question the need to change our current statute from an asset to what might serve as a deterrent for physicians in deciding where to practice or whether to remain in practice.

Finally, we offer comment on the requirement for on-line licensing of physicians. CSMS has and continues to support the need for an on-line license renewal system. Time and resources saved by such a system for the state and physicians may prove to be enormous. We therefore question the retention of language allowing the Department to charge up to a \$5 service fee on such transactions that were once allowed and are now mandated. With the requirement of on-line payment, that language merely serves as an increase in what are already the highest licensure fees in the county. We ask that the language be removed as it appears to simply be a way to increase licensure fees for all physicians without directly saying so in the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today.