



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH March 7, 2012

Jewel Mullen MD, MPH, MPA, Commissioner, (860) 509-7101

Senate Bill 186 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE LICENSING, INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES FOR PHYSICIANS AND NURSES.

The Department of Public Health supports Senate Bill 186 and thanks the Public Health Committee for raising the Department's bill.

The Department has performed an internal review of various aspects of the physician licensing and disciplinary processes and is seeking to initiate major structural and procedural modifications to these processes. Three of the changes the Department is seeking to implement include: (1) allowing members of the Connecticut Medical Examining Board (CMEB) to be more active in the investigation and review of cases; (2) achieving representation of particular specialties among the physician members of the CMEB and medical hearing panelists; and (3) recruiting more volunteer physician consultants to assist the Department in timely investigation and prosecution of complaints against physicians.

Section 1 of the bill expands the membership of the CMEB from fifteen to twenty one members and expands the membership of available medical hearing panelists from twenty-four to thirty-six members. The increased membership of both bodies will allow Board members and panelists to take on the additional responsibility of assisting the Department in triaging and reviewing cases. Section 1 also requires that several physician board members and medical hearing panelists represent certain medical specialties to ensure that both bodies will have the requisite expertise to adjudicate the types of cases brought before them.

Section 2 of the bill increases the mandatory continuing medical education requirements for physicians from fifty (50) contact hours per year to sixty (60) contact hours, and permits the Department to waive ten (10) contact hours for a physician who serves as a member of the CMEB, a hearing panelist, or a volunteer consultant. The Department anticipates that this change will encourage more physicians to volunteer as consultants and improve the timeliness of the investigation process.

Section 3 of the bill mandates on-line license renewal for physicians, dentists and nurses. In July 2009, the Department implemented a new on-line renewal system for physicians, dentists, and nurses. One of the key elements in implementing this system was the capacity to collect valuable work force data that is currently unavailable but necessary to identify and address health care work force shortage issues. Although the percentage of licensees who utilize the on-line renewal system continues to increase, mandatory on-line renewal will allow the Department to capture this data from all licensees.

Section 4 of the bill amends the composition of the Connecticut State Board of Examiners for Nursing by changing the professional requirements for certain members of the Board.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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