

Testimony of David Weaver

Appropriations Committee
Regarding Governor Malloy's Budget Proposal re-Health and Hospitals

February 15, 2013

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to comment on Governor Malloy's proposal regarding funding in the Department of Public Health.

My name is David Weaver and I am an outreach worker for Community Health Services (CHS), a federally qualified health center in the north end of Hartford. CHS serves about 19,000 people every year, most of whom are extremely low income.

In my role at CHS as an outreach worker, I am on the front lines every day in Hartford, letting people know about the services offered at CHS. My work takes me to soup kitchens, homeless shelters, libraries and even community court, to talk to people who do not know that they have the right to access health care – or do not know how to do so. I let them know about the services offered at CHS, such as behavioral health care, dental care and primary care, HIV services and more. I tell them that no patient is turned away, even if they do not have health insurance. For those who might be eligible for Medicaid or SNAP, I let them know that they can come to CHS to talk to outreach workers and begin the application process for those programs. I tell them that CHS is open evenings and Saturdays and that people who work at CHS are from their neighborhoods and speak their languages.

I am concerned about the governor's proposal to cut funding through the "community health services" line item in the Department of Public Health, and I ask this Committee to reject that proposal outright. The funds that CHS receives through that grant are used to help offset the costs of treating uninsured patients. Without full funding, CHS will struggle to stay afloat and will have to make cuts to staff, programs or hours – in short, access to comprehensive, high quality health care will be compromised.

Thank you again. Please help preserve this funding.