



University of Connecticut Health Center

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

March 19, 2013

Public Hearing Testimony

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Robert Trestman, a Professor and Executive Director of Correctional Managed Health Care at the University of Connecticut Health Center. I am here today to thank you for raising Senate Bill 970 AN ACT EXEMPTING THE ADDRESSES OF CERTAIN UCONN HEALTH CENTER EMPLOYEES FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT and ask for your support in passing the bill out of committee.

The bill expands the categories of employees whose residential addresses are exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act to include similar staff employed by the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC). Connecticut General Statutes, Section 1-217 exempts from disclosure the residential addresses of certain categories of public employees, for example from the Department of Correction and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, who provide direct care to patients, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). To ensure the safety and security of employees at the UCHC who provide direct patient care to inmates and patients receiving mental health services, the UCHC requests the same protections afforded to other public employees who provide direct patient care to these populations and respectfully requests the exemption from disclosure of residential addresses be extended to its employees.

The UCHC is responsible for delivering the healthcare services to inmates housed in sixteen (16) DOC facilities statewide and at forty two (42) halfway houses. As of June, 2012, services were to an average of 17,590 incarcerated inmates and 1,003 inmates residing in halfway houses. This care is provided directly on site in the DOC facilities as well as at the John Dempsey Hospital, and in the clinics of the University Medical Group and University Dentists. In addition to the inmate population, the UCHC provides mental health outpatient and inpatient services to the general public. In FY12, UConn Health Center provided 17,506 outpatient psychiatry visits and had 743 inpatient psychiatric discharges. The employees who provide these services work in potentially dangerous and/or sensitive positions.

There have been instances where inmates in the custody of the DOC have requested personal information of UCHC employees providing direct care. We also know that there have been instances in the past where individuals with psychiatric disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders have obtained personal information of state employees and have used it for example to make harassing phone calls to the home of a member of their treatment team with whom they felt dissatisfied. Passage of this extension to the stated category of UCHC employees would provide a level of security to those providing care and might assist in preventing such harmful or harassing behavior from occurring.

We request your support of SB 970 and thank you for your continued support of the UConn Health Center.