



TESTIMONY OF  
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MEMBER, AFT CONNECTICUT HEALTHCARE COUNCIL

Public Health Committee  
February 20, 2013

***HB 5299 AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZING THE USE OF ANTIEPILEPTIC MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOLS***

Good Day to the Co-Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Verna Bernard-Jones and I am a school nurse at West Middle School in Hartford. I'm also President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals, a local union representing 65 school nurses and health professionals employed in the Hartford school district. I am writing testimony in opposition to HB 5299.

There are several medications used for treatment of epilepsy in school aged children. Medications are usually given at home twice daily. The medication that is often prescribed for emergency use in the school setting is Diastat (Valium).

As you will hear from the testimony of many nurses, Diastat is one of those medications you hope never to have to give.

Diastat is given rectally and therefore requires removing the student's clothing. The nurse must prepare the proper dosage prescribed and make sure the medication is retained in the cavity. The student's heart rate, respiration, blood pressure and mentation must be monitored. After having a seizure the patient often goes into what is called a post-ictal phase (somnolent, drowsy and lethargic) and must be monitored for vomiting and the possible need for suctioning to prevent aspiration.

These are not skills that I as a school nurse of 18 years would delegate to an unlicensed person. Furthermore, as the President of the Association of School Nurses of Connecticut and a National Certified School Nurse I have had many conversations with school nurses statewide and nationally and I can assure this committee that there is almost total agreement that the administration of antiepileptic medications should not be delegated to unlicensed staff in the school setting. For these reasons, I urge you to reject HB 5299.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 5299. Should you have any questions or require more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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