

To: Public Health Committee

Re: Proposed Bill 374, An Act Requiring Behavioral Health Assessments

Public Hearing Date: March 8, 2013

Testimony in Opposition

I ask you to vote against Bill 374, which would require behavioral health assessments for public school students throughout junior and senior high, and for homeschooled students at various ages in their teens, without any previous indication of risk. Behavioral Health Assessments are comprehensive and invasive, including a review of physical and mental health, intelligence, school performance, employment, level of function in different domains including family situation, and behavior in the community.

Such assessments, in addition to being overly intrusive of the privacy of the family and expensive, are unnecessary in light of existing laws that provide for screening by school personnel. Homeschooled children are screened during annual pediatric exams.

If this bill is designed to prevent another Newtown tragedy, it has the wrong focus. The issue in Connecticut is not assessment – Adam Lanza had already been assessed as troubled- but rather, access. I urge you to review existing statutes to ensure that parents and children are able to timely access the help they seek.

In this difficult economy, let's not spend time looking for an answer under a street lamp simply because that is where the light is best. Rather, let's shine the light on access to the current system so that improvements can be made.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Pamela M Lucashu

Durham, CT