



In Support of Raised Bill No. 6590: An Act Concerning Licensing of Tattoo Technicians

To Co-Chairwomen Terry B. Gerratana and Susan M. Johnson
and Members of the Public Health Committee

March 20, 2013

Madam Chairwomen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Raised Bill 6590: AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSING OF TATTOO TECHNICIANS.

My name is Leslie Balch and I am the Director of Health at the Quinnipiack Valley Health District, serving the towns of Bethany, Hamden, North Haven and Woodbridge.

The popularity and frequency of tattooing has grown significantly over the years and with this comes the chance of seeing more disease and infection. Body art is now sought by every age, occupation and social class. My own daughter has flirted with the desire over the last few years, but became hesitant when I informed her that in CT the artists were not licensed and, in fact, there was no standardized oversight of the establishments or operations. The only guidance I could give her was: choose carefully based on what you see and their reputation.

The procedure of tattooing involves multiple skin-punctures and the intra-dermal injection of coloring agents that pose the risk for: the transmission to both artists and clients of bloodborne pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C; bacterial infections due to improperly sterilized solutions or equipment, and possible cross contamination; and the risk of allergy from the coloring agent. Such risks carry an economic burden not only for those affected, but to society as a whole. Costs associated with disease investigation, containment and treatment of these conditions must also be considered. The response to the recent non-tuberculosis mycobacterium skin infections in 22 individuals from 5 states consumed the resources of pharmaceuticals, medical facilities, local and state health departments, the FDA, and the CDC.

The education and oversight addressed in this bill has the potential to make the tattoo business safer and more reputable, decrease the incidence and costs of disease and infection, and protect the community. As a public health professional, I applaud the introduction of this bill and would be pleased if the tattoo artists, my communities, our friends and our families could be better protected. I support Raised Bill 6590.

Thank you for your consideration.

Quinnipiack Valley Health District

A Regional Health Department Serving Bethany, Hamden, North Haven and Woodbridge, CT

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