



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Department of Public Health  
Testimony before the Appropriations Committee  
February 18, 2014**

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Good morning, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Dr. Jewel Mullen and I am here to testify in support of the Governor's proposed midterm budget for the Department of Public Health (DPH) for 2014-2015 biennium.

The basic "headline" for the Governor's proposed midterm budget is its continuing support for DPH's services and programs. Budgetary changes include the following:

Funding (\$144,268) is recommended for 4 positions associated with establishing a background check program for employees of long term care facilities, as federal funding for this purpose is scheduled to end this coming September.

Support of an additional 3.5 positions in the area of newborn screening is recommended to address resource needs. This staffing expansion will be funded by existing newborn screening fee revenues (\$585,000).

The adopted 2014-2015 biennial budget assumes the transfer of the child day care regulatory function from DPH to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), effective 7/1/14. The Governor's proposed midterm budget similarly transfers responsibility for youth camp regulation from DPH to the OEC next fiscal year. Support for 3 full-time positions, seasonal staff and other expenses is recommended to be reallocated (-\$373,196).

Additionally, an adjustment (\$227,661) is made to reflect DPH's retention of 4 staff that had been transferred to OEC within the adopted biennial budget. These positions support the child day care licensing unit, but they also play important roles in support of other departmental programs. An interagency agreement will be developed under which DPH will continue to provide needed support services to the OEC.

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One minor adjustment of \$8,858 in the Local and District Departments of Health line is recommended to cover per-capita expenses associated with increases in municipal populations.

Finally, you may note that the Immunization Services account has a sustained appropriation of \$31.5 million; with the source for this funding shifted from the General Fund to the Insurance Fund. The authorization for 3 positions supported under this account is correspondingly moved between Funds.

Our focus at DPH remains to continue refining our performance as a high quality organization, as we also lead creation of a vision for an efficient and effective public health system to benefit all Connecticut residents. The Public Health Quality Forum, a group of experts convened by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, defines public health quality as: “The degree to which policies, programs, services, and research for the population increase desired health outcomes and conditions in which the population can be healthy.”

Over the past year we have addressed policies, programs and services through our State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan initiatives to prepare us for accreditation. We have participated in an Excellence in State Public Health Law project that supports our work to build a strong public health system statewide. We have commenced a systems improvement project for the State Public Health Laboratory. And we have established new communications to strengthen our partnerships with and provide technical assistance to municipal health departments and districts.

We also remain sharply focused on foundational public health functions such as surveillance and epidemiology as we complete information technology and vital records projects whose modernization is critical to the efficient and effective work of a number of state agencies and organizations, not just DPH. Additionally, our environmental health staff continues to advance programs such as food safety modernization and the development of a statewide water plan, which are critical to protecting the health of state residents. Federal or foundation dollars support many departmental initiatives, and we are impacted by changes in these funding sources. What you can anticipate is that with level funding, DPH will work to preserve the status quo for the state programs funded in the midterm budget.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Governor’s proposed FY 2015 midterm budget for the Department of Public Health.

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