

March 21, 2014

Written Testimony:

HB No. 5580: "AN ACT CONCERNING THE PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PRIMARY SERVICE AREA TASK FORCE AND THE ELIMINATION OF A MUNICIPAL MANDATE".

Submitted by:

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The Primary Service Area Task Force did a great job with the charge presented to them and developed recommendations that will begin a long awaited process to improve the delivery of emergency medical services in Connecticut. Five recommendations were developed and presented to you and I urge you to adopt all five recommendations. The most important recommendation is Recommendation #5. Recommendation # 5 provides the development of a process to allow the municipality more responsibility in the selection and appointment of its Primary Service Area Responder (PSAR).

This is not the first time the current EMS regulations have been investigated. In 1999, The Connecticut General Assembly tasked the Legislative Program Review and Investigation Committee to review "accountability in the EMS system". The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee

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was a joint, bipartisan, statutory committee of the Connecticut General Assembly. It was established in 1972 to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and statutory compliance of selected state agencies and programs, recommending remedies where needed. While many of the recommendations of that committee were adopted either in principal or practice, the PSAR recommendations were tabled and here we are today more than a decade later. The committee provided alternate approaches altering the fundamental regulatory structure. One of the approaches and recommendations was to assign the PSAR to the municipality with DPH oversight. The current Task Force recommendation # 5 provides a process to accomplish this.

The ultimate responsibility for municipal services is local government yet the change in PSAR is the authority of CT DPH. The law does not require PSAs to be renewed; the assignments are indefinite unless revoked. In the world of procurement at the municipal level, selection for services is a competitive process with performance measures. Today the ultimate decision on the PSA assignment is with CT DPH and not with the responsible party, being local municipal government. PSA Holders are able to surrender a PSA at will if they no longer chose to provide the service. Municipalities are not granted that same right; presently a municipality is not able to have a PSA removed if the municipality no longer wishes to have the service provided by the PSA Holder.

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The irony is that CT DPH doesn't require what electronic charting software is used for EMS response, or whom provides training for EMS responders, or what public health district the municipality belongs to. These are all choices made by the municipality and its agents to deliver the best service possible. The PSA assignment should not be different.

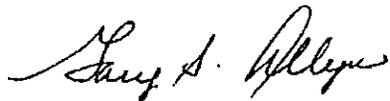
For example, West Hartford has a performance contract with our ambulance provider for ALS and transport services. The performance measure is arrival time based. In the last 4 years, compliance has been at less than 60%. With penalties being paid for non-compliance quarterly, there is no improvement. During storm NEMO, we lost our ambulance transport services completely after arrangements were made to guarantee their response in the community. A problem that we were able to rectify quickly with only a short service disruption. But the control of the situation was not with the responsible party, the local municipality.

Changes to the PSAR assignment process will affect every community. It will, however, not affect communities that believe they are receiving the best services. Those communities will have an avenue for change if the need arose.

As members of the Planning and Development Committee, representing your local municipalities and their ability to provide efficient transparent, accountable patient care and public safety based on their choices should be job 1.

The Passage of HB. 5580 with the 5 Task Force recommendations will allow our community to insure that we have the best possible public safety and health services, will help to reduce the cost of healthcare and will allow the town to utilize our resources and perhaps partner with bordering municipalities in the provision of services.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary S. Allyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

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Fire Chief

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