



Connecticut Department of Public Health

Testimony Presented Before the Committee on Public Health

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**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA
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Senate Bill 5383: An Act Concerning Screening Protocols For Urinary Tract Infections

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is opposed to Senate Bill 5383.

This bill mandates DPH to establish protocols to be implemented by each nursing home to detect the presence of urinary tract infections in its residents and post notice of such protocols on its Internet web site. The DPH conducts annual nursing homes inspections to ascertain compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Nursing home inspection activities include patient clinical record reviews and multiple observation of direct patient care to ensure that quality care is provided. The Public Health Code and the Code of Federal Regulations require nursing homes to provide care in accordance with professional standards. One such existing standard includes infection control standards issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), regarding urinary tract infections which are guiding principles in identifying and treating infections. Mandating DPH to develop screening protocols for urinary tract infections is counterintuitive to the work that is currently being done with stakeholders across the healthcare continuum to address healthcare acquired infections. However, the Department would be happy to share any pertinent studies pertaining to infections in nursing home settings with the providers. Statutory language is not necessary as the Department already has the authority to disseminate information to providers and does so on a regular basis. Also of note, detecting the presence of a UTI is standard knowledge for all licensed nurses.

Studies conducted have concluded that many nursing home residents can be "colonized" with bacteria, meaning that germs can live on the skin, wound surfaces or even in the bladder without making the person sick. Challenges with separating colonization from true infection can contribute to antibiotic overuse in this setting. Studies have consistently shown that about 30%-50% of frail, elderly long-term care residents can have a positive urine culture even without any symptoms of a urinary tract infection. Unfortunately, many of these patients are placed inappropriately on antibiotics.

A routine screening for UTIs is not effective in infection control or prevention. Additionally, use of antibiotics must be limited to prevent the increase of antibiotic resistant organisms.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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