

Public Health Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
March 14, 2014
By
University of Connecticut Health Center
Anne Diamond
Interim Chief Executive Officer, John Dempsey Hospital
and
James Brown, Fire Chief

Members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Jim Brown, Fire Chief at the University of Connecticut Health Center and with me today is Anne Diamond, Interim Chief Executive Officer, John Dempsey Hospital. Thank you for raising **HB 5503 AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR CERTAIN STATE FACILITIES**. We appreciate the opportunity to share testimony with you in support of the bill. The UConn Health Center is home to the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, John Dempsey Hospital, UConn Medical Group, UConn Health Partners, University Dentists and a thriving research enterprise. The Health Center campus consists of 37 buildings totaling over 2.1 million square feet on 200 acres. We have over 5000 employees and more than 500,000 medical encounters occurring on our main campus annually. With this volume and research activity, the Health Center maintains an active fire department to ensure the safety and security of our employees, students, patients and visitors.

As was shared with the Committee last legislative session, the Health Center's fire department has a long history of serving as first responders whenever there is a medical need on the campus. 16 of our firefighters are certified paramedics and while our firefighters are first on the scene to stabilize a patient, current law does not allow them to transport that patient to a higher level of care on the campus, which is typically to our emergency room at the John Dempsey Hospital. Current law requires us to contact a private ambulance service to move that patient to our emergency room, which could be just yards away. Having to call an outside provider to transport the patient to our emergency room, even after our first responders have stabilized the patient, is inefficient and has the potential to create a significant delay in patient care.

We have seen an increase in the number of medical incidents on campus requiring emergency medical transport, from 56 in 2009 to 206 in 2013. With the addition of our new partner, the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, and the planned expansion of our clinical services, we expect the number of medical incidents requiring emergency transport on our campus will continue to rise.

This past August, we convened a meeting with our local ambulance provider and the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), who served as facilitator, to discuss the Health Center's interest in providing ambulance transport on our campus and also in re-negotiating the reimbursement we receive, through bundle-billing, from the provider for Advanced Life Support (ALS) intercept service we provide to the Towns of Farmington and Avon. Through the Primary Service Area (PSA) Task Force, we were made aware of concessions by other commercial ambulance providers in the State that allowed for the division of an existing PSA for emergency transport in a portion of the PSA. It was our hope to negotiate a similar arrangement for transport on our campus. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts to negotiate these issues with the provider, we have been unable to come to an agreement. We are therefore seeking a legislative remedy that would enable the UConn Health Center to provide for emergency transport on its campus by designating the main campus at 263 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, as a primary service area.

Thank you for your attention and we ask for your support of HB 5503.