



CCM 2014 Testimony

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

March 19, 2014

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 5542, "An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Primary Service Area Task Force"

CCM **supports HB 5542** as a logical means to provide local officials with the necessary authority to determine their Primary Service Area (PSA) providers. To this end, CCM urges the Committee to amend HB 5542 to include recommendation #5 -- "the Alternative Provision of PSA Responsibilities" -- as recently approved by the Connecticut EMS/PSA Task Force, and found in section 8 of HB 5580.

Background:

Currently the law provides municipalities limited input, let alone the option to choose their local emergency medical service (EMS) provider. Such prohibitive law has resulted in another state mandate on local resources. Municipalities have always put the needs of their residents first, and have done so through the services they provide. It is therefore, counterproductive to not permit local officials the option to decide their EMS provider - - and the terms of contracts, particularly with any company that fails to adequately provide such essential services.

The Town of South Windsor is an example of how such a proposal could relieve municipalities from this state mandate. When the town sought an EMS provider for Advanced Life Saving (ALS) services -- they were still required to maintain their contract with their current provider -- whom only offered Basic Medical Services (BMS).

Handcuffed without any options, the Town requested that their provider adjust the contract by expanding its scope of services to meet the changing needs of South Windsor. This request to tailor services for ALS was denied -- and as a result, the town of South Windsor was forced to pay an additional \$700,000 for a stand-alone ALS service contract. South Windsor was informed by the ambulance provider that if they could perform both the BMS and ALS contracts, then they would not charge the town anything. The law did not allow for this change, and South Windsor is paying \$700,000 a year to upgrade the level of service to their residents.

HB 5542, with CCM-recommended language, would create a process for municipalities that seek the alternate provision of PSA responder responsibilities. As a result, this would provide hometowns a reasonable structure by which they can request the reassignment of their PSA. Local officials could submit a

request to the state Department of Public Health (DPH) for the alternative provision of PSA responsibilities for any of the following purposes: (1) Providing improved patient care; (2) delivering efficient emergency medical services; (3) allocating resources more efficiently; (4) aligning with a new emergency medical services provider better suited to meet the community's current needs; (5) regionalizing services; or (6) improving response times. The Commissioner of DPH would then, review such requests and upon approval reassign the PSA to a new provider.

Municipalities are continually being asked to do more with less. Creating a process by which towns and cities have greater say regarding their PSA providers would increase the ability of local officials to select a provider that best fits their needs, and would encourage EMS providers to offer the best quality and cost efficient means of service.

CCM urges the Committee to amend HB 5542, as recommended above, and to favorably report the bill.



If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Senior Legislative Associate for CCM, at rcollins@ccm-ct.org or (860) 707-6446.