



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE, INC.
 134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3784

Testimony of Michael C. Culhane
 Executive Director
 Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference

MICHAEL C. CULHANE
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
 LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Public Health Committee
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 Legislative Office Building, Room 1D

SB 413, “An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health’s Recommendations Regarding Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment”

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference (CCPAC), the public policy office of Connecticut’s Catholic Bishops, would urge the members of the Public Health Committee to *support in concept* SB 413, “An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health’s Recommendations Regarding Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment”.

The underlying goal of SB 413 is to clarify the health care wishes of patients with serious, life threatening illnesses and the use of extraordinary means to keep an individual alive. The CCPAC notes that SB 413 reiterates the same provisions of HB 6521 from the January 2013 Session, but includes a new Section 1 (e) to this current legislation. It is noted that this section addresses the specific requirements as to MOLST procedures and forms, which includes the training of medical providers relative to *talking points* on MOLST, the methods of choice, the importance of properly informing patients, as well as the procedures for properly completing the MOLST form. The concern of the CCPAC is that this legislation *should place more* emphasis on the involvement of family members and trusted friends as opposed to a medical provider who may not have a relationship or knowledge of a patient’s medical history. More emphasis should also be placed on a patient’s wishes and actual circumstances at the time of need. Therefore, the CCPAC prefers the utilization of an Advanced Directive which would clearly involve a close individual in the decision-making process at a very delicate time.

It must be noted that Catholic Moral Teaching allows for the withholding or discontinuation of medical treatment in certain circumstances when life expectancy could be prolonged or excessively burdensome to a patient; decisions to discontinue treatment must be made based on the actual circumstances and the medical situation of the patient at a specific point in time.

The CCPAC also notes that the Department of Public Health must establish a pilot program in one or more geographic areas and it is our hope that our concerns are addressed during the regulatory process regarding this legislation.

With the aforementioned points noted, CCPAC supports SB 413 in concept.

Michael C. Culhane
 Executive Director