



# KILLINGWORTH HEALTH DEPARTMENT

*Maura Esposito, M.P.H., Director of Health*

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## Testimony in support of Raised *Bill No. 5528: An Act Concerning Essential Public Health Services*

To: The Distinguished Co-Chair of the Public Health Committee, Senator Gerratana and Representative Johnson along with all members of the Public Health Committee

Date: March 17, 2014

Good Morning, distinguished co-chairs and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Maura Esposito. I am the Director of Health for the Town of Killingworth. It is a real pleasure to be here to offer my support of Bill no. 5528. This is my first time before you and my goal today, is to educate you on the importance of this Bill and how it will impact my profession and be an asset to those that work and support local public health departments and districts.

I presently work in a small part-time municipal health department. I became the Director of Health over two years ago, but I am not like most health departments in this state. I am the department. You are looking at the sole part-time employee besides a part-time secretary that I share with two other land use officials.

As a new Director of Health I needed to be extremely organized to efficiently operate my new health department. The most challenging task of my new employment was educating my public health board, which consists of 10 very educated individuals, on what a "functional local health department" was. This was vital so they would understand my role and the challenges that I would face being a part-time health department and provide them the services that were necessary and mandatory.

I researched Public Health Code 19a-76-2 which states that if you are eligible for state grant funds, then you *shall* ensure the provisions of a basic health program which includes public health statistics, health education, nutritional services, maternal and child health, communicable and chronic disease control, environmental services, community nursing services and emergency medical services. As a part-time health department we are allowed to either do all the mandated services ourselves (the one of me), contract them with other public health agencies or may regionalize our services.

I was perplexed as to how I was going to do all this on a very limited budget which is 100% paid for by local taxpayers.

I came across the 2005 National Association of City and County Health Officials operational definition of a functional local health department and I felt relieved. Their national organizational membership of over 1,450 local health directors created **standards** of which all local health departments should be accountable regardless of size and resources. These standards are known as the 10 Essential Health Services of Public Health and are the foundation of House Bill no. 5528.

House Bill No. 5528 represents what I and the other 74 Director of Health in this state do on a daily basis. We monitor the health status of our communities, we protect our residents from health hazards, we provide information so people can make healthy choices, we engage the community to solve health problems, we develop health policies, we enforce health laws and regulations, we help people receive health services, we



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maintain a competent public health workforce, we evaluate programs and we contribute to evidence based public health research.

Lastly, I use the 10 Essential Health Services to organize my board of health meetings and to show my members that although we are part-time, we are **SO** functioning as a local health department should.

I urge your support of HB No 5528 so *all* Local Health Departments in Connecticut are operating not only consistently but functionally. Thank you for your time.