

Attn: Appropriations Committee

Regarding: Governor's H.B. No. 6824

Good Day Senator Bye, Representative Walker and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

I want to thank you first and foremost for all the work that you do for the State of Connecticut, and, in turn, our local communities. I am writing to you today as a humble student, and imploring you to restore funding for CT-AHEC (CT Area Health Education Center).

There are certain beneficial aspects to AHEC that I would like to address prior to describing my personal story. AHEC provides an opportunity for the underrepresented, minority, and disadvantaged students, it partners with local organizations to address health issues (and, in many ways addresses and bridges the gap in health disparities), and provides continuing education which improves the care received by vulnerable populations, and is utilized in the outreach provided to the homeless, senior citizens, migrant farm workers, amongst countless others. Furthermore, it develops community based inter-professional training opportunities.

Personally, I can attest to the value that AHEC provides local communities. I have witnessed firsthand the influence it has amongst us students, in particular the program Urban Services Track (UST-AHEC). Under UST, students from many healthcare professions (UConn School of Nursing, Medicine, Dental, Pharmacy, and Social Work) learn an interdisciplinary approach to healthcare practice. This is invaluable, when you think about the return involved when we, as students, are fully practicing coordinated, and effective, patient care. A well known phrase comes to mind where a "small investment has big returns;" except this investment is in people. The education and experience provided now, as students, will impact on how we practice in the future. A solid academic foundation has boundless rewards for the community.

Again, I implore you to restore AHEC funding, and, I thank you for your time, investments made in our future, and the work you do for the state.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Yi
UConn SON-DNP Graduate Student