

**Testimony Presented Before The  
Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee**

*February 10, 2015*

Nomination Of  
**Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, FACP**  
For Commissioner of the Department of Public Health

Good afternoon, Chairpersons Duff and Janowski, Ranking Members Kane and Buck-Taylor, and other distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I am Dr. Jewel Mullen, nominee for re-appointment as Commissioner of the Department of Public Health (DPH). I am pleased to present some of the accomplishments of my past four years. They are the foundation on which we will continue to create a healthier state. I would like to thank Governor Malloy for re-appointing me. I recognize that my nomination is an honor that confers ongoing, tremendous responsibility for the well-being of Connecticut's residents.

Four years ago when I appeared before this Committee, I stated my commitment to:

- Improving departmental performance, despite looming budget cuts.
- Collaborating with partners such as local public health departments, community providers, foundations, professional societies and academia to establish realistic goals and priorities for the department.
- Prioritizing chronic disease prevention and control. I still believe that it is the key to ensuring the well-being of all our residents and to controlling health care costs.
- Keeping DPH central in efforts to transform our health system.
- Creating a brand for the work of our department and for public health in general.
- Using the right data to address health care shortages and disparities across the state.
- Modernizing our licensing and regulatory functions.

Some of our agency's major accomplishments under my leadership include:

- Several initiatives that promote a culture of quality, including the completion of the LEAN process to improve programmatic areas, leadership training for over ten percent of agency staff, and an agency quality plan, which provides a comprehensive performance management framework for how DPH establishes, manages, deploys, and monitors quality throughout the agency.

- *Healthy Connecticut 2020*, a state health assessment and comprehensive plan that includes goals, objectives, and strategies to improve the health of Connecticut by 2020. Additionally, our five-year strategic plan establishes a unified vision for the agency's future and the shared work ahead.
- *Live Healthy Connecticut*, a coordinated chronic disease prevention and health promotion plan, which identifies achievable goals in 12 priority areas including obesity, diabetes, heart health, and asthma. The plan incorporates policy and systems changes that are likely to have the broadest and longest lasting impact.
- Participating in the state's successful health insurance exchange, the All Payer Claims Database and the State Innovation Model (SIM) initiative. Connecticut recently received a 45 million dollar federal grant to undertake health system transformation. I am certain that DPH's national recognition as a leader in performance based population health improvement contributed to that success.
- Developing *Lead Public Health*, the department's intra-governmental initiative to ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to a robust and equitable local public health system. This link takes you to the web page that describes this effort: <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3115&q=538774>
- Establishing a new Office of Health Equity, which supports state and federal initiatives that emphasize the principle of health as a human right and social good for all people as well as the recognition that Connecticut residents hold multiple statuses in addition to race and ethnicity that may predispose them to toward health inequity. Our persistent focus on reducing racial and ethnic disparities in low birth weight and infant mortality is just one example of this work.
- Upholding our statutory obligation to regulate health care providers and facilities, striking the balance between protecting the public and supporting the business needs of entities we oversee. Additionally, we have modernized the state's hospice regulations, taken steps to improve the work of the Medical Examining Board, and formalized a framework for assessing scope of practice requests.
- Recognition by the national organization representing local health departments due to Connecticut's five emergency planning and preparedness regions' ability to respond to Public Health emergencies. The strength of our public health emergency preparedness work is exemplified by our agency responses to Tropical Storm Irene, the October 2011 winter storm, Hurricane Sandy, the February 2013 blizzard, and the tragic Sandy Hook shootings.
- Finally, we continue our intensive, multidisciplinary work in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa; work that exemplifies why public health is a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week enterprise. While doing so, we have strengthened collaboration between hospitals, the Emergency Medical Services system, and local health departments.

Four years ago, colleagues in other states told me that being public health commissioner would be the very best and the most demanding job of my career. They were right. Most people are overwhelmed when they learn the breadth of Department of Public Health's work. Performing this public service helps make being Commissioner my best job ever. Living our mission to protect and promote the health and safety of Connecticut residents, always vigilant to new threats, is what makes it the most demanding one.

I confirm my ongoing commitment to this role. I will continue to work hard, maintaining my spirit of collaboration, my integrity, transparency and my willingness to listen to new ideas. I believe that under the Governor's leadership, DPH has worked well with colleagues in the legislative branch to craft and implement policies that advance public health improvement. I look forward to continuing our collective work to accomplish even more.