

**TESTIMONY OF MAME FATOU DIOP SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HIGHER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 24, 2015**

***H.B. No. 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget For the Biennium Ending
June Thirtieth 2017, and Making Appropriations Thereafter and Other Provisions
Related to Revenue***

Mame Fatou Diop, appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **H.B. No. 6824- An Act Concerning the State Budget For the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2017, and Making Appropriations Thereafter and Other Provisions Related to Revenue.** It is imperative that the funding for the CT AHEC Network be restored (\$456K).

I currently intern with the Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) with Eastern AHEC, Inc. The YHSC program provides me the opportunity to get more experience in my field of study. The program allows youth to be involved in their community and also learn about leadership skills and community service. YHSC helps the students to set goals and realize them. I believe it helps not only the students that are in the program but the community they are living in as well as the interns.

AHEC is based at the University of Connecticut Health Center and is implemented through four regional centers located in the Willimantic, Hartford, Waterbury, and Bridgeport areas. The four centers enable the AHEC Program to carry out local programs with great efficiency. As a statewide program, it functions locally to provide high quality, efficient, effective and flexible services that meet local needs.

Fiscal support for AHEC is as diverse as its programs with state, federal, foundation and private support. Withdrawal of state support will jeopardize these other resources. In an era of healthcare transformation, maintaining the \$456,000 AHEC line item in the 2016-2017 state budget is critical to assure that the CT AHEC Network will be there to deliver its unique services and programs to our residents as it creates the diverse, well trained and cost effective interprofessional healthcare workforce that Connecticut requires and deserves.