



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



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Executive Director

Mui Mui Hin-McCormick

Legislative Analyst

Alok Bhatt

February 25, 2015

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Mui Mui Hin-McCormick and I am the Executive Director of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, serving as Treasurer for the Commission on Health Equity (CHE) and Chair of CHE Data Committee. I am testifying today to request funding be reinstated to CHE.

This Commission was signed into legislation in 2008 under Public Act No. 08-171, "an Act Establishing a Commission on Health Equity." The purpose of CHE is to affect legislation to improve the health outcomes of residents based on race, ethnicity, gender and linguistic ability. The Connecticut General Assembly recognized that: (1) attainable standard of health is a human right and a priority of the state, (2) Connecticut residents experience barriers to the equal enjoyment of good health based on race, ethnicity, national origin and linguistic ability, and (3) that addressing such barriers requires data collection and analysis and the development and implementation of policy solutions. Once the infrastructure was established, in the latter part of 2010, the Commission received funding for one staff person to engage in this work.

The work of this CHE is critical; its mandate cuts across all other State Commissions and agencies. Populations that are the focus or within the scope of all other Commissions/task forces, and state agencies fall within the purview of the CHE. The populations that can and will benefit from the work of CHE include children, adults and children with mental, physical, and/or cognitive disabilities, people who live in rural areas, people of African descent, women, men, LGBT populations, Native Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, Asians, poor people, middle income people, victims of abuse and neglect, the elderly, and all other residents of Connecticut. Health, access to quality health programs and services, affordable health programs and services, opportunity, education and other social determinants of health are across all populations. The state of one's health determines ability and readiness to learn and apply what one has learned; health status determines work productivity, and health determines civic engagement. A productive society needs to have children who are ready to learn and adults who are ready and able to work. The power and authority to pursue remedies that ensure quality and equitable health for all, based on the legislation, lie within the purview of the CHE.

Managing and monitoring the budget for the CHE has been a difficult task. The budget comes from DOI but the Office of the Health Advocate currently has administrative responsibility but does not have budget oversight. The previous treasurer has had to reach out to OPM to get budget reports. The process of making expenditures on behalf of CHE remains unclear. The Legislature allocated \$150,000 to CHE to provide CLAS training but the CHE has not been allowed to access this resource. The CHE needs to have staff to move forward in order to do the work it has been assigned to do; which requires not only an Executive Director, but a Legislative Analyst as well.

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The plan of the CHE going forward has been developed, the funding and RFP for a consultant to roll out the enhanced CLAS standards to eliminate health disparities is in place, and the commitment of the seated commissioners to elevate diverse leadership throughout our health care organizations in order to achieve social justice for the residents' of the State of Connecticut is critical.

We ask that you reinstate the funding for the CHE in order to support our efforts in achieving our mandate of eliminating health disparities across all populations in Connecticut. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mui Mui Hin-McCormick

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