

**Connecticut Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses**  
American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), Region I, Chapter 2  
Connecticut Advanced Practice Registered Nurses Society (CTAPRNS)  
Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists (CANA)  
Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA)  
Connecticut Chapter of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA-CT)  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP), Connecticut Chapter  
The Northwest Nurse Practitioner Group

FTR

INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 17, 2015

**TESTIMONY In support of SB 16: AN ACT CONCERNING BENEFITS PAYABLE FOR ASSESSMENTS TO DETERMINE TREATMENT OF MENTAL OR NERVOUS CONDITIONS AND RELATED CONSULTATIONS.**

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and Members of the Committee

My name is Sasha Durso, MSN, APRN, FPMHNP-BC, CNS-BC. I am an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) and I am credentialed as a board certified Family Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) and a board certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). I currently practice in several home-based psychiatric treatment programs at the Yale Child Study Center, and am attending at a Yale-New Haven Psychiatric Hospital inpatient unit, and teach graduate PMH specialty students at the Yale School of Nursing. Additionally, I serve as the PMH representative to the Connecticut APRN Coalition and write on behalf of PMHNPs in Connecticut.

As a community practitioner working with psychiatrically acute youth and young adult populations, I wholly support SB 16 and proposed changes to facilitate access to mental health care, particularly the aim to increase health consumer access to mental health assessment and consultation. However, I write to request inclusion of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioners to the list of mental health providers those for whom benefits are payable. Because the current bill seeks to modify an existing statute, the statute itself requires updating to ensure inclusion of all who can provide said services, and to ensure access to those who can provide the specialized service of mental health assessment.

In the state of Connecticut, all APRNs may evaluate, diagnose and treat patients in the population or treatment focus area for whom they are board certified. Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners evaluate and diagnose patients using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders for patients across the lifespan and in all treatment settings. PMHNPs similarly select and prescribe indicated psychopharmacological medications, collaborate with other mental health professionals and medical professionals as part of comprehensive care delivery, and develop/deliver psychotherapeutic treatments.

PMHNPs also constitute a significant proportion of mental health professionals in Connecticut as noted in the table below (BLS, 2013). It should be noted that, aside from board certified psychiatrists, PMHNPs are the only other mental health professional with prescriptive authority and capacity to fully assess both medical and mental health status.

ensure w/scope of practice to provide mental health assessment	No. in CT
LMFTs, LADCs, LPCs	1,480
Psychologists	1,710
Psychiatrists	910
APRN/PMHNPs	400
LCSW	360

In line with this bill's spirit to increase access to **available** mental health services, please take this opportunity to add and properly list all psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses to those for whom benefits are payable. Your time and consideration are much appreciated.

Sasha Durso, MSN, APRN, FPMHNP-BC, CNS-BC

Yale School of Medicine

Yale Child Study Center

Yale School of Nursing