

Testimony  
Public Health Committee  
Proposed House Bill # 5525 An Act Concerning Cytomegalovirus  
Friday, February 20, 2015

To the Chairs, Senator Gerratana and Representative Ritter, distinguished vice-chairs, Senator Crisco and Representative Riley, ranking members, Senator Markley and Representative Srinivasan, and committee members:

I am Dr. Nancy Bruno, a clinical doctor of Audiology and currently serve as the Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the Connecticut Academy of Audiology. The Connecticut Academy of Audiology is a professional organization with current membership of approximately 60 fellows. The Connecticut Academy of Audiology would like to testify in support of H.B. 5525: AN ACT CONCERNING CYTOMEGALOVIRUS.

Congenital Cytomegalovirus, or cCMV, is the #1 viral cause of birth defects. It causes mental retardation, liver disease, cerebral palsy and deafness as a result of infection in pregnant women. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ([www.cdc.gov/cmV](http://www.cdc.gov/cmV)) in the U.S.:

- Every hour, cCMV causes one child to become disabled.
- Approximately 1 in 150 children is born with cCMV infection (30,000 each year).
- More than 5,000 babies born each year are permanently disabled by cCMV.

Audiologists see firsthand the impact of cCMV through our role as health-care professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat, and manage hearing loss and balance disorders. Congenital CMV is the leading non-genetic cause of childhood hearing loss. Of the more than 5,000 babies born disabled by congenital CMV each year in the U.S., 50 are estimated to be born in Connecticut. Audiologists advocate for and participate in activities supporting prevention of hearing loss, early identification of children with hearing loss, and timely intervention to mitigate impact of hearing loss on development.

In addition to the significant social, emotional and developmental impacts cCMV has on children and families there are devastating financial impacts on families and beyond. According to researchers and the Institute of Medicine, the annual cost of cCMV is \$1 - 4 billion. Using a conservative \$1 billion per year, the annual cost per disabled child is approximately \$200,000 per child annually. The annual cost of caring for children disabled by congenital CMV in CT can be calculated: 36,359 births X .0013 cCMV disabled = 47 children X \$194,590/year/child = \$9,145,730, or over \$9 million annually to care for CT's children disabled by congenital CMV.

Unlike most disabilities, CMV is preventable. According to studies in the U.S. and France, congenital CMV is reduced when women are educated about prevention. Unfortunately, survey of expectant mothers indicated less than 20% surveyed know how to prevent congenital CMV.

Connecticut can reduce the impact of cCMV by passing H.B. 5525, requiring its Health Department (Children's Hearing and Speech Services) to provide cCMV prevention brochures for doctors, parents, and daycare providers and test newborns for cCMV if they fail two hearing screen tests so their families can be educated about early intervention services and treatment options.

To see a list of sources for the above information, click on: [Congenital Cytomegalovirus \(cCMV\) Fact Sheet\\*](#)

If I can be of assistance in answering any questions or providing additional information, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



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