

March 4, 2015

Attn: Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee

Re: Testimony in **Support of Proposed Bill 6276 – AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION.**

My name is Pamela Mautte, and I am the Director of BHcare's, Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council (VSAAC). VSAAC is also an active member of the CT Prevention Network (CPN). I am writing this testimony in support of Proposed bill 6276 in which the legislation increase training for health care professional in youth suicide prevention: This bill seeks to:

- Increase suicide prevention training for various social service professionals by mandating they attend a three to six hour training every six years in suicide prevention and that physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, naturopath, licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, advanced practice registered nurse, physical therapist and physical therapist assistant to complete a onetime, three to six hour training course in youth suicide prevention.

As a Regional Action Council director who has been part of the CT Suicide Prevention initiatives spearheaded by the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and Department of Children and Families, I see the need for this required training first hand. Over the past two years, I have trained more than 800 people using evidence based suicide prevention curriculum. Upon completion of the courses, participants have demonstrated knowledge and skills in effective suicide prevention techniques, learned the signs and symptoms of suicide, and how to effectively ask the question and refer to services. I have had many class participants share with me how the course was needed to refresh their skills. In addition, I have had past class participants share with me how the training helped them reach out to people and save lives.

Lastly, I would urge you to strengthen the proposed legislation to include utilizing evidence based suicide prevention curriculums and mandating the primary care providers to take the course at least once every 3 years instead of just a one time course for the following reasons:

- Suicide is a public health problem.
- It is the top three leading causes of death in CT among people aged 10-44.
- Research has also shown that three-fourths of all suicide victims visit a doctor in the four months before their deaths, and half in the month before.
- 90% of those who die by suicide had a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pamela A. Mautte
Director