

**TESTIMONY OF STEPHANIE BRIN SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2016**

***H.B. No. 5044 - An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending
June 30, 2017.***

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, my name is Stephanie Brin and my AmeriCorps experience at Northwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC) has proven to be pivotal to my future in school and career. I have learned many valuable lessons that I use in my everyday life. Not only have the resources provided by Northwestern CT AHEC benefitted me, but the students and the community I worked with while I was there. Students learn about medical careers and are able to volunteer when they may not have had an opportunity to previously. In addition, the community benefited from service learning projects lead by students, including community gardens, clothing drives, and a multitude of other services provided. I am a resident of Bristol.

The CT AHEC Network directly supports primary care workforce development in the state by “connecting students to careers in health, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.” Funded since 1997, the CT AHEC Network provides state-wide services to more than 10,000 residents, annually (<http://www.publichealth.uconn.edu/ct-ahec.html>). As the demographics of the state continue to change, the primary care workforce must expand and respond to meet those changes: he CT AHEC Network is an invaluable resources to address these challenges.

The CT AHEC Program utilizes federal, state and private funding to support:

- Inter-professional education and community based training programs for health professions students
- Promotion and retention of primary care providers in collaboration with state agencies
- Cultural competence and medical interpreting training to health professionals and trainees
- Dissemination and recruitment of health professional trainees in the National Health Service Corps
- Continuing medical education programs for public health and health care professionals
- Pipeline educational programs to raise awareness of health careers for pre-health professions learners

As part of the primary care workforce development in the state, the CT AHEC Network provides leadership for the State Innovation Model grant’s Community Health Workforce Development and Integration (<http://www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/site/default.asp>) bringing collaborative stakeholders together to build infrastructure, policy and sustainability to the development of a Community Health Worker workforce in Connecticut. CT AHEC’s support of the Health Occupations and Technology Careers in Connecticut (HOT Guide) provides residents with an invaluable resource to learn about health and biotechnology careers (www.healthcareersinct.com).

Supported by federal, state and private dollars, the CT AHEC Network’s Program Office is located at UConn Health. The 4 regional AHEC Centers, in collaboration with the Program Office, extend UConn Health’s reach state-wide. The CT AHEC Network responds to local community health needs which include oral health, veteran’s mental health, youth and adult mental health first aid, teen health literacy, homeless and migrant farm worker access to health care.

I have been fortunate to be part of this program which allowed me to further my life and educational experiences. What I was a part of was only a small portion of what AHEC does. I cannot express the consequences and unreplaceable void this would leave for the state of Connecticut. AHEC addresses a plethora of needs in the community and it would be a disservice to discontinue the program.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Below is my contact information for your convenience.

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