TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH R. GORMAN SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

H.B. No. 5044 - An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for FY June 30, 2017.

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I currently serve on Northwestern AHEC's board of directors and believe that Northwestern AHEC's programs and services are invaluable to maintaining access to health care for Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens. Maintaining state funding for Northwestern AHEC is necessary to preserve its ability to implement myriad programs including Mental Health First Aid, Youth Health Service Corps, Primary Care Workforce Recruitment and Community Health Workers as well as maintain its capacity to respond to emerging community health care needs. In addition, it is important to note that Northwestern AHEC successfully leverages state funding to attract federal and private funds to increase its capacity to implement community based programs.

The 4 regional CT AHEC Centers, in collaboration with the CT AHEC 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. 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: the 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).

It is my opinion that it would be detrimental to vulnerable communities across Connecticut if the CT AHEC Network is not supported with state funding. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Below is my contact information for your convenience.

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