

**TESTIMONY OF SHADAAB KAZI 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 Shadaab Kazi, and I am a graduate of the University of Connecticut and an AmeriCorps Alumni, having served with Northwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC). As a student involved with AHEC throughout my four years in college and for an additional year with AmeriCorps, AHEC has given me invaluable service learning experience revolving around issues of health disparities faced by medically-underserved populations in Connecticut. Through CT AHEC, I have gotten the chance to work with attendees of a soup kitchen in Willimantic, farm workers around Hartford county, and low-income adults with various health conditions in Waterbury, among others. With roles ranging from coordinating interdisciplinary health clinics to providing health education presentations (and much more), AHEC has given my peers and I insight into the diverse communities across Connecticut and the barriers to health they face across the state and nation - a perspective vital to me as a future healthcare provider seeking to be involved in addressing social determinants to health. I am a resident of Seymour.

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: the CT AHEC Network is an invaluable resource 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 fully support AHEC's ongoing work in facilitating my generation's dialogue with vulnerable populations in our state, in the hopes that one day we may achieve better health for all in our nation. I cannot express the consequences and unreplaceable void this would leave for the state of Connecticut. I personally feel that if CT AHEC Network is not restored its funding that it would be very detrimental to the community.

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

Shadaab Kazi
30 Brookfield Road
Seymour, CT 06483
(203) 751-3900