

**TESTIMONY OF CELIA MEYER 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 Celia Meyer and I work at Northwestern CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Inc. where I serve as the AmeriCorps Program Director. Since I started working at Northwestern CT AHEC in 2008, I have seen firsthand the immense impact that the agency has on the students and communities it serves. The agency's programs have a positive domino effect, from AmeriCorps members mentoring and educating college and high school students on health careers, to serving communities in need. My personal experiences with those who serve with and have been served by Northwestern CT AHEC have clearly demonstrated the impact the Youth Health Service Corps, Collegiate Health Service Corps and AmeriCorps programs have on our youth. As a resident of Bristol, and a registered voter, I strongly support the CT AHEC Network and its continued funding.

To highlight just one of the programs of the CT AHEC Network, the CT AHEC Network AmeriCorps program has placed more than 70 AmeriCorps members in all four of the AHECs across the state. The students that our AmeriCorps members work with come from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds. With valuable hands on experience, these students have expanded their knowledge and horizons in order to move on to attend health professions programs, work for health serving agencies and continued to serve their communities.

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

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 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.

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