

**TESTIMONY OF TRISHA MURPHY SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON 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, I currently attend the University of Connecticut School of Law where I am a second-year law student. I served as an AmeriCorps member with the Central Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Inc. Through AHEC, we were able to provide underserved Greater Hartford youth with resources and hands-on experiences to explore different health careers. Through YHSC, we were able to take students to tour the LifeStar Helicopter at Hartford Hospital, present on varied integral topics such as Health Careers, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Eating Disorders, and LGBTQ Awareness. The students learned and practiced valuable skills such as leadership, volunteer service and cultural sensitivity. Through AHEC, we were able to provide underserved students with the resources they need to enter the medical field.

The CT AHEC Program or 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 Program 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 Program is an invaluable resources to address these challenges at both a state and local level.

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 Program 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. Likewise, 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 and opportunities in the state (www.healthcareersinct.com).

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

I have been fortunate as a staff member to be part of this program which allowed me to further my life and educational experiences. As an aspiring lawyer, I so value an understanding of Hartford and the inequities that persist throughout Connecticut. After working with hard-working students from mostly single-parent and low to middle-income homes, I was better able to understand the socio-economic issues that CT faces. I can tell you that after spending time with these young individuals, I have all the hope for the future of our state.

I cannot express the consequences and irreplaceable void this would leave for the state of Connecticut if funding for AHEC was discontinued. I personally feel that if funding is not restored for CT AHEC Network it will be very detrimental for the community.

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

Trisha Murphy
University of Connecticut School of Law
18 Lancaster Road, West Hartford, CT 06119
860 462 3020