



Written Testimony in Support of, and Seeking Amendment to, H.B. 5129

To: Public Health Committee

From: Christine O'Connor, Senior Counsel
National Healthcareer Association (NHA)

Date: February 13, 2016

Subject: **H.B. 5129, An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists and Medical Assistants and the Listing of Certified Medical Assistants**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **H.B. 5129, An Act Concerning the Administration of Vaccines by Pharmacists and Medical Assistants and the Listing of Certified Medical Assistants**. NHA supports the proposed legislation but also requests that the proposed legislation be amended to list National Healthcareer Association in Sections 2.2(A) and 3.

NHA is pleased that many of the suggestions it made in March 2015, in its support of the 2015 Senate Bill 981 An Act Concerning Medical Assistants, have been incorporated into H.B. 5129, most particularly the requirement that medical assistants be certified through a certification program accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) (see Section 2.2(A) of H.B. 5129) and the repeal and substitution of Section 19a-6f of the General Statutes (see Section 3 of H.B. 5129).

Like the three organizations listed in Sections 2.2(A) and 3 of the proposed legislation – American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA), American Medical Technologists (AMT) and National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) – NHA also offers a medical assistant certification that has been accredited by the NCCA for many years. NCCA accreditation assures regulators, employers and other stakeholders that the psychometric soundness and quality of the certification program have been thoroughly scrutinized by an impartial accreditor.

Nationally, NHA, AAMA, AMT and NCCT, combined, award the vast majority of medical assistant credentials, with each of the organizations serving a near-equal share of the market. When choosing between NCCA-accredited providers, key factors considered by individual medical assistants include: (i) preferences expressed by teaching institutions and employers; (ii)

price; (iii) supportive services offered by the certification organization; and (iv) the community of medical assistants available to credential holders. Approximately 28% of medical assistants seeking certification choose NHA's certification.

Exclusion from a statutorily-specified list of providers will negatively impact NHA, its credential holders, and the academic institutions and employers that prefer NHA's certification program. We know this from experience. Section 19a-6f of the General Statutes – which the proposed legislation will repeal and substitute (see Section 3 of H.B. 5129) – requires the Commissioner of Public Health to publish a list of certified medical assistants in the State, but only those medical assistants certified by AAMA. Ten plus years of experience under this statute has shown that many employers falsely assume that only medical assistants on the list published by the Commissioner are permitted to practice in Connecticut or that the certification and credentials of other medical assistants are not valid. This mistaken assumption has led to a near monopoly by AAMA in Connecticut. Section 3 of the proposed legislation will eliminate this confusion with respect to medical assistants certified by AMT and NCCT, but, as currently written, not for those certified by NHA.

We therefore urge the Committee to add National Healthcareer Association to the group of certifying organizations specifically named in Sections 2.2(A) and 3.

We also would like to suggest a technical correction to Section 2.2(A). The proposed language includes the following clause: “. . . or other certification organizations accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, . . .” NCCA does not accredit “certification organizations” but rather accredits specific certification programs offered by certification organizations. Accordingly, we suggest that Section 2.2(A) be changed as follows: “. . . or other certification organizations offering a medical assistant certification accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, . . .”

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Committee on this bill.